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Lifelong Learning Network
Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

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Network News

The newsletter of the Lifelong Learning Network

LLNs meet to share National Research

On 21st May at York St John University we attended the inaugural meeting of the National LLN Research Forum. This forum is the result of the activities of the recently created working group which our Network helped to establish.

The Research Forum development was welcomed by all as an opportunity to meet with other LLN colleagues and share research. From this meeting it is proposed that the Forum will engage with other research communities, publish articles and establish an important central resource of useful papers, conferences and guides for all. The next meeting will take place on 14th July 2008 at Birkbeck in London. For more information contact Amelia Rout.

One Year On



Welcome to this, our second newsletter. An established busy team, working across a diverse geographical area, we're beginning to see the impact the Network can make.

The launch of our new website www.llnstaffordshireshopshire.org is making communication with employers, stakeholders and partners much more effective.

We're working with the other West Midlands Lifelong Learning Networks, developing a regional approach towards some initiatives. The Learning and Skills Council, for example, is supporting a post for each Lifelong Learning Network to enable learners to progress to higher level courses via the Train to Gain Service. The Networks are also partners in a European project led by the Paris Chamber of Commerce to establish a credit framework for vocational learners. Our regional research group, which holds its inaugural meeting on 9th July 2008, will link into the recently-developed National Research Forum.

Our partnership with Aimhigher continues, focusing on younger learners and the development of progression agreements and information, advice and guidance for those young people who would not traditionally access higher level vocational courses. Of significant importance to us are progression agreements and access to them. As with all our work, we've concentrated on the hard-to-reach groups; progression from NVQs, learners in the workplace and young people who decide to leave education or training early. Challenging work, but the most crucial.

We're already considering sustainability too, in order to identify how our work can be retained and further developed at the end of the LLN funding period. We're acutely aware that only toward the end of its lifespan will the positive impact of our work to change the HE landscape and culture begin to emerge.

Enjoy the summer!

Jill Ward
Director

The LLN goes live online



We are delighted to announce the launch of our new website

www.llnstaffordshireshopshire.org

Your engagement with this new website is vital, so please take a tour, make comments, ask questions and more importantly tell us your success stories as part of our Network so that we can tell everyone else!

You can view sectors, partners and the projects in development. We encourage employer participation, and soon we are launching the ONLINE FORUM which will allow the Network to really share their experiences.

Watch this WEB space!

Our First LLN learners!

Three new mental health awards were launched just before Christmas last year.

The Lifelong Learning Network funded the development of these awards which attracted their first students in January of this year. Students have come from a wide and diverse background including carpentry, housing support work, nursing homes, adult nursing, an independent training organisation and community workers.

The awards on offer are:

- University Certificate in Mental Health (60 credits at level 4)
- University Diploma in Mental Health (60 credits at level 5)
- University Advanced Diploma in Mental Health (60 credits at level 6)

The awards are modular and allow flexible

start dates in September, January or May. Four modules make up the award, of which only one is mandatory, the other three are selected from a list of options. Options include counselling, cognitive behavioural interventions, dementia, substance misuse, child and adolescent development. The delivery patterns vary; some modules are delivered as a block of one week whilst others are work based and only require 8 hours of contact. Students can choose their level of study and if they are uncertain about this they can arrange to meet one of the teaching team to get some advice.

Eight students started this January and a further seven started in May. One of the early starters has already applied to become a qualified mental health nurse and has been accepted subject to successful completion of his module.

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www.llnstaffordshireshopshire.org

LLN Team News



Nigel Beer joins us as Creative and Media Co-ordinator

Our latest recruit is Nigel Beer, who replaces Claire Jolin as part time Creative & Media Co-ordinator. Claire has returned to her full time role at the University of Wolverhampton. The other 'half' of Nigel's week is spent as a Senior Lecturer in Music & Popular Music at the University of Wolverhampton. Nigel is currently working with colleagues in developing new Foundation degrees in Creative and Media subjects, as well as exploring other opportunities for CPD, PG bridging and level 0 programmes. He is investigating opportunities for progression onto a range of awards in our Partner Higher Education Institutions.

Cluster Manager positions for FE

We are seeking to support colleges in their new expansion by recruiting five part time LLN Cluster Managers, working with a cluster of three colleges each. The posts are on a secondment basis and the post holders will be based at their home institution. They will bring new collaborations to the LLN by developing work across each cluster area.

LLNs create Train to Gain HE positions

Four identical full time posts are being funded for 12 months by the Learning and Skills Council for a Train to Gain Higher Education Manager, one per Lifelong Learning Network in the West Midlands. The managers will work with the Train to Gain and Skills Brokerage Services to support progression from NVQ Level 3 to Higher Education and to promote awareness of the Train to Gain service to HEIs.

Marketing the LLN

We are soon to be recruiting a part time Marketing Officer to promote the Lifelong Learning Network to its Further Education and Higher Education partners, stakeholders and employers within the region. This 2 day post will help ensure the consistency of our communication through the web and other media.

For details on any of these vacancies please contact Iain Mansell.

Engaging the region's employers



Sir John Jones in full flow...

The LLN met some of the region's largest employers at Aimhigher's "Keeping up with the Joneses" Employer and Education conference on 9th April. It was

a tremendous success, with 200 people there from education – schools, FE and HE, employers

and private training providers. Leading speakers Sir Alan Jones and Sir John Jones updated the audience with positive approaches to the new 14-19 diplomas and we heard from employer Ian Lawson at Kier Construction about their innovative approach to bringing new learners from the community into their organisation to assist with regenerating the local area.

The workshops in the afternoon were useful too, with Networking and discussions around the delivery of diplomas, progression into HE and recent local developments. If you have an event you would like the LLN to attend just call Clare Keegan.

Health & Social Care Employers engage in National consultation

The recent Health and Social Care Employer Forum was held on 4th June at Yarnfield Conference Centre, Stone. Over 30 of our local employers and educators discussed issues around the forthcoming 14 – 19 diplomas in Society Health and Development with Gordon Owers from the Torc Centre in Tamworth. Gordon presented some interesting ways of engaging students, delivering vocational learning and the forum discussed how they could find new ways of working with existing resources across the region with some exciting ideas coming through for work related learning.

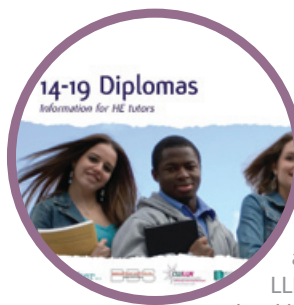
Foundation degrees in Adult Social Care - your comments please

The event also focused on the potential for Foundation degrees in the sector, presented by Gwen Chaney who is leading the consultation

to develop a Draft Foundation degree Framework for Social Care on behalf of Skills for Care. Comments were gathered on the new developments for the proposed framework relating to the roles in the sector, skills of the FD graduate and progression opportunities relating to recruitment and retention. Feedback from this workshop can be found on our website.

You can make your contribution to this valuable debate at www.skillsforcare.org.uk

For more information on the next Health & Social Care Employer Forum please contact Anne Longbottom.



14 – 19 Diplomas – What's happening in the West Midlands?

Aimhigher, in partnership with all West Midlands LLNs, have produced a booklet for tutors in Higher Education admissions, schools and colleges. The booklet contains information on each of the first five new diploma lines and details of the

key regional contacts, in order to give everyone a clearer idea about the diplomas and how they prepare learners for admission to Higher Education. We have recently distributed these to the region, but would like to hear your feedback about how useful the booklet is, or if you need more copies. Contact Louise Cope for more information.

Skills for HE – preparing learners for a new experience!

The Skills for HE module is a bridging module for NVQ learners, which now has been validated with an existing Portfolio module to form a foundation certificate. The skills for HE module is now running as a pilot with Acacia Training at Stoke and Stafford Colleges - we aim to enrol 30-40 learners, mainly those with NVQ level 3. A new progression agreement enables learners to progress onto HE awards. It is likely the college

learners will progress to Foundation degrees offered by the colleges, but we hope to offer these new learners progression to other awards across the LLN region. Long term tracking will be implemented to evaluate the ability of the module to prepare its learners for an HE experience. For more information contact Wendy Munro.

Sectorfocus

Public Sector & Services

Degrees in the Community

A new Foundation degree is being developed in Community Regeneration based on a partnership model involving Universities, Colleges and key employers in the region. The idea was initiated by Staffordshire University back in May 2007, and with our

support has developed into a collaborative project between Wolverhampton, Keele and Staffordshire Universities. It is predicted that this new qualification will give recognition of the skills, knowledge and practice that exists in this diverse industry and will establish clear progression into HE for learners in the voluntary and community sectors. If you would like to know more please contact Tim Crossfield.

Creative & Media

Mapping and Gapping - Information, Advice and Guidance

This project has involved all the FE and HE partners within the LLN and the results will be for the entire Network to use when required. This project will provide a clear indication of current Information, Advice, and Guidance provision in terms of value, accessibility and relevance in a regional context, and so provide indications of curriculum coverage and shortfalls for the sector.

It will evaluate the IAG related to Creative and Media in the context of the region. A measure of the success will be the extent to which curriculum development activities, and therefore additional learners, arise as a consequence of the study. A further outcome will be recommendations for improvements to the IAG Network. For more information contact Nigel Beer.

Cross Cutting Themes

The new Foundation degree in Leadership and Management will have two Foundation degree pathways, sharing some common resource.

Both generic and health pathways are scheduled for a September delivery. The aim was to develop a series of modules as a Leadership and Management resource, which could form the basis of a number of Foundation degree pathways or stand alone as 15 CPD modules. Each module will carry 15 credits which can be accumulated to make a Foundation degree in Leadership &

Management. Generic and Health pathways were developed first as these were identified as needed by various employer groups.

The academic partners are Staffordshire and Wolverhampton Universities, with a number of regional FE colleagues. The employer contribution has come from Coventry and Warwick Chamber Training and is based upon market research funded by Foundation degree Forward.

This project aims to address the regional skills deficit in Leadership and Management more broadly and is ongoing with other employers. For more information please contact Joan Lockyer.

Health & Social Care

LLN is complementary?

We have supported North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust to work with Staffordshire University on a new Foundation certificate in Complementary Therapies for Health and Well-being for service users. As a provider for Mental Health services, the Trust has been asked by service users and carers for development on how to use the therapies to enhance their health and well-being which impacts on self esteem and self worth.

Anne Longbottom, along with the co-ordinators from other West Midlands LLNs continues to meet and share information, to ensure the consistency of award development across the region. From this work we successfully supported the Health and Social Care Admissions Tutor Conference in March at Aston Science Park Conference Centre, Birmingham. This event was well attended and feedback on the day was excellent. We will be disseminating the information from the workshops at future events. For more information contact Anne Longbottom.

Technology

There are many new ideas coming forward with a technology theme, as it is such a diverse sector, from automotive technology to ICT. Current projects include a Certificate of Credit (or certificate of CPD) in Environmental Technology developed by Walford and North Shropshire College for local land based industries, who expressed an interest in developing their higher technical skills in sustainable technologies and anaerobic digestion amongst other areas. One of two modules, they have also developed a Practical Environmental Management module relating to the environmental standards such as EMAS. The project aims to engage employed learners interested in CPD and raise their knowledge of new legislation. It is hoped to write progression agreements to enable these learners to progress to further studies such as the Environmental Science and Management BSc delivered by Wolverhampton University.

Another current development from Rodbaston College has been Commercial Industrial Fencing modules, CPD for businesses who have hundreds of vocational learners. Companies within the industry need to demonstrate CPD in order to develop links with major contractors and Rodbaston has identified the Highways Agency as a key employer to assist with the development. Progression is being discussed with Wolverhampton University as a route into Foundation degrees in Construction. For more information contact Rosie Borup.

Latest News & Events

The LLN National Conference 2009

**Wednesday 25th February 2009,
The Moat House Hotel, Acton Trussell,
Stafford ST17 0RJ**

Be sure to put this date in your diary for our first National Conference. Expect a full agenda including learners, employers, and some exciting workshops. For more details please go to our new website www.llnstaffordshireshropshire.org

The LLN Midlands Data & Research Group meeting will take place at the Octagon, Staffordshire University, Beaconside, Stafford at 10am - 2pm on 9th July 2008

We are working with all partner FE colleagues to identify numbers of level 3 vocational learners in FE, progression routes and gaps in progression. Findings will be posted on our website soon!