



LLNs, progress, progression and sustainability

Kevin Whitston
Head of Widening Participation
HEFCE

Progress

Interim (formative) evaluation by CHERI

- Too early for a substantive judgement but there is progress, and this should, in time, make a difference for vocational learners:
- More accessible and coherent information, advice and guidance
- New and more accessible curricula, and improved curriculum alignment
- Improved transition between different episodes of learning

Challenges for LLNs

- Better and more standard monitoring of funding, activity, learner constituency and progression outcomes;
- move beyond the 'easy wins' to tackle more challenging aspects of vocational progression (e.g. work-based and adult learners, apprentices)
- IAG should build on existing networks and LLNs should review web based services
- Strengthen partnership working and embedding

And for HEFCE

- Develop policy across a number of areas (e.g. employer engagement) in a 'coherent and interlocking fashion'
- Improved guidance to networks on reporting including financial monitoring and learner outcomes
- Commission studies on the use of ASNs, and on web based developments
- Capture and disseminate findings from 'one-off' LLN studies to inform practice more widely

What is expected of LLNs

- ‘ ... my Department has now asked HEFCE develop a stronger, more focused remit for the Lifelong Learning Networks.
- Specifically we want all Lifelong Learning Networks to develop progression agreements for the new 14-19 Diplomas as they are introduced.
- They should also provide clear progression routes into higher education for people on vocational programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council and also for workplace learners’ (Bill Rammell)

Progression

- An achievement orientation
- Progression from level 3
 - BTEC, NVQ3, apprentices
 - 14-19 diplomas
- Professional qualifications, National Diploma and Foundation Degrees
- Workplace learners
- From smaller to larger learning experiences and qualifications

Learning and work

- Learning while in employment
- Learning at work, and learning through work
- Translating achievements at work into learning achievement
- Connecting discontinuous learning
- Higher education
 - Something more than the sum of the parts?

LLNs and employer engagement

- Few LLN employer engagement projects in terms of co-funded numbers (CHERI)
 - But they do offer key employer engagement themes; curriculum, information advice and guidance, and progression opportunities;
- Two forms of LLN involvement
 - LLN employer engagement projects
 - Institutional projects that draw on the expertise and work of the LLNs

LLNs and LLN institutions

- The expectations of LLNs and of institutions
 - That LLN employer engagement proposals would complement what institutions are doing?
 - That institutional proposals make appropriate use of the LLN resource;
 - And this contributes to the sustainability of LLNs
- HEFCE's expectation is that:
 - Employer engagement proposals will address progression issues;
 - That institutions will mobilise the LLN resource to help deliver progression outcomes;
 - And this contributes to the sustainability of LLNs

Sustaining LLNs

- Funding for LLNs has primarily been made available to support infrastructure, processes and innovation.
 - Working parties for curriculum development and progression
 - Advice, guidance and sustained contact with students
- Embedding processes within participating institutions
 - Who works with students?
 - Liaises with neighbouring institutions
 - And decides on admissions policy?

Progression and the diplomas

- Cautious but positive welcome for diplomas
 - Principal, Generic, and Additional Specialist learning
- What assurance can learners, their parents, schools and colleges have
 - That higher education is genuinely open to them
 - That higher education is really ready for them
- Progression agreements
 - Curricula alignment
 - Unambiguous answer to the question ‘what doors will this qualification open for me’

Sustainability and relevance

- LLNs evaluation
 - Formative evaluation should encourage focus and add momentum to change
- Positioning
 - The HE – FE relationship
 - The new diplomas (14-19)
 - Employer engagement
- The relationship between LLNs and ‘their own’ institutions