



Lifelong Learning Networks

NATIONAL FORUM

# 14-19 Report on Good Practice Developed by Lifelong Learning Networks

February 2010



# Valuing vocational learning and providing clarity of progression

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1. Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) have been established in England since 2005. They are networks of Universities and Further Education (FE) Colleges, although they incorporate very wide partnership models beyond Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Every LLN has developed differently in response to local partnership conditions. They were initially funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and many remain so, however, the aim for the LLNs is to move to self-sustaining models.
2. The LLNs were set up to improve progression to Higher Education (HE) for vocational learners, in particular from FE. As the potential and activity of the LLNs has grown and the national policies developed, LLNs have found themselves in a good position to support the 14-19 reforms, particularly in terms of HE sector engagement with the reforms and progression to HE from the new Diplomas and Apprenticeships. This has involved close working with local 14-19 consortia, HEIs, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Local Authorities.
3. In addition, during 2007 and 2008 five LLNs were funded by HEFCE to develop five 14-19 HE Engagement Pathfinders. The information and lessons learnt from these have been invaluable in the general development of activity relating to the 14-19 agenda.
4. This report provides an insight into the role that the LLNs can play in supporting the wider 14-19 agenda. This information is accompanied by examples of good practice. A separate report regarding LLN's support of Apprenticeship progression to HE: 'Apprentices and the role of Lifelong Learning Networks' (September 2009, fdf), can be accessed at: <http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk/documents/document598.pdf>

# How LLNs support the 14-19 agenda

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5. Although LLNs differ in their structures, membership and business plans, most are involved in some way in working with 14-19 consortia and will be carrying out one or more of the functions below:

## 5.1 Defining and mapping progression pathways from Apprenticeships, Diplomas and other vocational and non-vocational qualifications and supporting them through Progression Agreements and Accords

A core aspect of LLN's activity has been to clarify progression routes from vocational qualifications and this for many has now included Diplomas. Many LLNs have developed 'Progression Agreements' or 'Progression Accords' (PAs) in order to formalise the pathways. These are often useful tools in promoting awareness amongst tutors, teachers, parents and young people about the existence of the progression route in the first place. The process of establishing the PAs also supports the development of closer relationships between 14-19 consortia staff and those in HEIs, encourages Diploma students to aspire to HE, and provides a basis for Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) professionals to advise Diploma students effectively.

Some examples of LLNs which have developed agreements in relation to Diplomas are:

- The National Arts Learning Network worked with the Creative Way to develop PAs from the Level 3 Diploma being delivered by the Newham 14-19 consortiums. Progression routes from Music, Broadcasting, Interactive and E-Media, and Graphics and Digital Media Diplomas follow onto provision at three HEIs within the Network and the Creative Way.
- The Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull LLN worked with the University of Wolverhampton to specify the exact achievements that 14-19 Diploma learners will require to enter a number of Engineering HE programmes, including a range of B Eng Courses, a Foundation Degree (FD), and a Technology Foundation Year. This information can be found on the LLN's website at: [http://www.bbcsln.ac.uk/Content/pdf/hte/progression\\_agreement\\_uow.pdf](http://www.bbcsln.ac.uk/Content/pdf/hte/progression_agreement_uow.pdf)
- Cumbria Higher Learning developed PAs with all of its HEI partners to link all of the Diplomas currently offered in Cumbria to identified HE programmes. Each PA gives the guarantee of conditional places for Level 3 achievers from feeder organisations to HE pathways, both in Cumbria and North Lancashire.
- Higher Futures created Progression Pathways from Level 3 Health and Social Care courses.
- The Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN have developed 'Progression Passports', including a new Progression Passport solely for those undertaking an Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship in partnership with Aimhigher St. Helens.
- Higher York developed PAs for a number of Diplomas, including Society, Health and Development, and Construction and the Built Environment, into the local HE provision.
- Linking London developed a number of PAs including PAs to support progression from the Advanced Construction and Built Environment, Engineering, Society Health and Development and Information Technology Diplomas. Where practical all borough consortia with relevant provision have been included. The PA for Construction and Built Environment and Engineering, for example, includes eight borough consortia and identifies progression onto ten Undergraduate Degrees and FDs.
- The West Yorkshire LLN is funding institutions and partnerships in the five local authorities in West Yorkshire to develop PAs between the Diploma providers, Universities, and Colleges.

- MOVE have a hundred PAs with the first round of Diplomas and are currently working on Accords for the second round of Diplomas.
- Western Vocational LLN developed nine Apprenticeship PAs for a range of curriculum areas including Accounting, Customer Service, Engineering, and Children's Care, Learning and Development. They are currently exploring the potential for transferability agreements in certain curriculum areas to expand the choices which currently face Apprentices. In addition, Western Vocational LLN has developed five PAs for the new Diplomas in the following curriculum areas: Engineering, Health and Social Care, Creative Industries, Business, and Environment and Conservation.
- The Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin LLN developed PAs for all of the first fourteen Diploma lines with three of the HEI partners in the Network. This has been achieved by working with the four local authorities in the Network and producing simple IAG information in consultation with IAG colleagues across the authorities. LLN staff have also been involved in raising awareness of Diploma PAs with IAG staff across the sub-region through staff development activity. The Network has also developed two large PAs for learners taking NVQ Level 3 and Advanced Apprenticeship qualifications. These agreements have been developed in partnership with the two provider associations that represent Staffordshire and Shropshire. The Network is supporting two IAG specialists to act as a resource to work with private training providers to raise awareness of progression for this group of vocational learners.
- South East London LLN developed PAs for Business, Administration and Finance Advanced Diploma learners.
- The Cheshire and Warrington LLN is developing a Progression Agreements System (PAS) which enables students to plan their future education plans, both at FD level and other courses. A sophisticated interface allows for a geographic, as well as contextual, search. The system has been developed directly out of the JISC SOLVS project in response to a need from the association of the local LLN. The system allows students to select multiple Progression Pathways, allows Colleges to update these Pathways, and various reports to be printed, including transcripts. Statistics of usage and student interest are available to administrators.
- As well as the SOLVS project, aspects of the PAS have been developed by MOVE, Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN, and Yorkshire and Humber East LLN. It is hoped that the system will be trialled in spring 2010.

## **5.2 Supporting HEIs to understand the 14-19 agenda concepts through training and support to complete UCAS entries and develop the offer**

An important feature of developing progression routes and embedding PAs has been making sure that staff within HEIs understand the Diplomas and how to make offers to UCAS applicants. This has involved delivering a significant amount of training to HE staff often involving 14-19 consortia, SSCs, Diploma Development Partnerships, Aimhigher and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) staff supporting with their expertise. Training has taken the form of seminars, paper and online information materials, conferences and workshops.

Some examples of LLNs which have provided training include:

- Cumbria Higher Learning
- Higher York
- Leap Ahead
- Higher Futures

- Linking London
- West Yorkshire LLN
- Progress South Central: [www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk/sectors/14-19-diplomas.html](http://www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk/sectors/14-19-diplomas.html)
- South West LLN
- Western Vocational LLN
- Cheshire and Warrington LLN

### 5.3 Embedding progression routes through widening participation activities and IAG

Impartial and accessible IAG is an important aspect of supporting potential learners to aspire and progress to HE, as well as embedding PAs. In many LLNs a dedicated IAG service including aspiration raising events and materials development has supported progression. Often partnerships with Aimhigher, institutional widening participation teams, and admissions teams have been important features of delivering this activity.

Some examples include:

- West Yorkshire LLN ran projects such as one linking Creative and Media students from Campus Calderdale with the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield, this includes visits to the University, talking about student life, careers and HE opportunities. The LLN also delivered two projects focussing on engaging potential HE learners who were not attending one of the partner institutions. The University of Leeds and Leeds City College Technology Campus supported 150 and 357 individuals respectively.
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN held a conference in June 2009 on 'Diplomas: A Progression Pathway into Higher Education' in order to ensure links between FE and HE are clear, identify best practice in IAG, and clarify how HE can contribute to Diploma development.
- The Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance developed a mapping document produced to illustrate how learners who have successfully completed the Advanced Diploma may be able to progress to a vast range of HE programmes. This is a useful tool for providing information about progression for HE staff, teachers, lecturers, training providers, employers, and IAG staff.
- Hampshire and the Isle of Wight LLN carried out a research project looking into possible routes from Apprenticeships to HE, and research into how progression is viewed by apprentices. HE provision was mapped against that of Advanced Apprenticeships and admissions policies, publicity materials and practice relating to Advanced Diplomas was researched. This was a two stage process focussing firstly on mapping Advanced Apprenticeships, numbers and types of learners, and identifying employers providing Advanced Apprenticeship places; and focussing secondly on HE provision and admissions.
- Linking London produced a range of Diploma resources including 'Progression from the 14-19 Advanced Diplomas to Higher Education: A Guide for Learners' and 'The New Advanced Diplomas: Emergent Issues and Priorities from Gateway 1'. The LLN has also created a Progression Pathways database and has developed a Progression Advice Line aimed at IAG, FE and HE staff involved with Diploma applicants planning to progress to HE. Linking London is also working closely with HE partners to ensure entry criteria for Diploma applicants are fair, transparent and consistent.
- Kent and Medway LLN worked with partner HEIs to produce a resource identifying some of the local Progression Pathways available for learners considering studying Diplomas.
- Western Vocational LLN published a Diploma Consortia Directory for the South West region. They have also developed leaflets to promote all PAs, including those for Advanced Apprenticeships and

BTEC National Diplomas. In addition they have established a 14-19 Regional Strategic Group to facilitate HE engagement with individual consortia to strengthen Diploma partnerships and facilitate connections between consortia and HE. As a direct result of this group they held a conference in November 2008 entitled 'Diplomas and HE - Progression and Curriculum' in order to share good practice and facilitate links between HE and consortia. The event received support from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, Local Authority 14-19 advisors and Aimhigher.

- Higher York developed a series of 'Progression Pages' showing routes into local HE opportunities from the Diplomas. The documents have been circulated to local 14-19 consortia and are used by IAG practitioners in guidance sessions; they are also useful for events such as parents' evenings and raising aspirations activities: <http://www.studyork.com/diplomas.aspx>. More recently, Higher York developed an information sheet relating to progression from the International Baccalaureate in response to local 14-19 consortia.
- South East London LLN produced a series of factsheets on staff development activities, mentoring, and work experience in conjunction with the Royal Academy of Engineering, for employers on the Diploma in Engineering.
- West London LLN produced guides for students, employers and Universities to improve the understanding of the Diploma; the Network has also given contacts for further information. The LLN has also facilitated bi-lateral agreements between FE providers and HEIs, an example being a progression route between Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, and the Royal Holloway University of London where Diploma students and staff spend a week at Royal Holloway understanding what University life is all about. The LLN is working with two SSCs - E-skills and Travel and Tourism, to hold Diploma information and guidance days with master class type activity for delivery teams to build up networks and share good practice.

#### **5.4 Supporting the teaching of the Advanced Diplomas including the creation of content, the Extended Project, provision of facilities and equipment**

As engagement activities with the HE sector have developed, more HEIs have become involved in supporting 14-19 consortia to write Level 3 Diploma contents, supporting projects within the Extended Project for A levels, making arrangements for access to facilities and equipment on campus, and along with academic staff time through aspiration raising activity and delivery of some Diploma content. This has been an important resource for 14-19 consortia particularly where they are keen to promote progression to HE and where facilities and equipment are scarce.

Some examples of LLN activity in this area include:

- West Yorkshire LLN's establishment of links and PAs between FE and HE institutions has also provided HEIs with an opportunity to influence the programme the Diploma student takes.
- London LLNs brokered the involvement of HE in the setting and assessment of the Extended Project.
- Higher York worked with Learning City York's 14-19 Partnership to input into the content of the Advanced Diplomas in Creative and Media, Society, Health and Development, and Business, Administration and Finance. The Network has also developed a 'Transition to Employment or Higher Education' module which has been piloted with Society, Health and Development Advanced Diploma students in York. The module was developed, accredited and delivered by York St John University.
- Through the development of the External Knowledge Exchange Network (EKEN), the Western Vocational LLN held an event which focused on the Extended Project bringing together consortia and HEIs in order to share good practice and develop relationships. The Western Vocational LLN has also supported the curriculum at the feeder stage of vocational education, with extensive practical work to underpin Diploma consortia. In addition, existing and new BTEC and Diploma units are being

strengthened, particularly in the areas of science, to meet the needs of professional training programmes to facilitate entry to undergraduate programmes.

- Cumbria Higher Learning brought together 14-19 delivery representatives and the University of Cumbria Secondary Education Programme Lead which led to a cohort of Secondary Education students gaining valuable classroom experience in 14-19 Diplomas during their degree studies. Cumbria Higher Learning also introduced representatives of the Open University (OU) to 14-19 delivery representatives, to explore the potential of the OU's Young Applicants in Schools and Colleges Scheme for provision of additional and specialist learning.
- South East London LLN organised an event in conjunction with the Financial Services SSC for practitioners promoting good practice in Recruitment, Induction, Curriculum Development, and Employer Engagement on the Business, Administration and Finance Diploma.
- West London LLN produced IAG in the form of training sessions to help staff understand the content, delivery and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) issues around the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). The focus is on the link between HEIs and the Diploma delivery institutions to achieve a common understanding of the skills being developed by EPQ.

### **5.5 Facilitating links between 14-19 consortia with HEI's, including raising the profile of FE Colleges (FECs) as providers of HE**

In 2008 five national pilot projects were developed to focus on the engagement of HE providers with the development of 14-19 Diplomas. The LLNs involved were tasked with identifying and developing progression opportunities, increasing understanding within HEIs, and making recommendations for the sector. Project recommendations for LLNs or 14-19 HE Engagement Pathfinder Projects were:

- Engage early!
- Share contacts
- Share resources

Examples include:

- West London LLN made contact with Borough Diploma Development Partnerships and organised events bringing together FE and HE representatives in order to develop progression opportunities for Diploma students.
- Linking London has instigated and chaired a series of meetings since June 2008, bringing together representatives from nine 14-19 Diploma consortia, FECs, HEIs, awarding bodies and representatives from the DCSF. The focus of the meetings is sharing good practice and identifying issues and potential solutions to HE progression.
- MOVE has been working with 14-19 Diploma consortia and partner HEIs to develop PAs. With additional HEFCE funding, MOVE has initially concentrated on the Construction and the Built Environment Diploma, having developed a Diploma Progression Accord Template allowing an HEI to state which components of the Diploma they would like applicants to have completed in order to be guaranteed a place on a specific HE course, and which can be used to recommend helpful areas of Diploma study for HE programmes. MOVE engaged first with the North Hertfordshire Strategic Area Partnership Group and Open Opportunity Norwich by brokering relationships between the consortia and HEIs in the region. The first Diploma PAs signed were between the Open Opportunity Partnership and the University of Bedfordshire. Subsequently MOVE has also provided funding to other consortia and HEIs to develop PAs from the Advanced Diploma.

- Higher York used its own curriculum groups and the Diplomas groups within the 14-19 consortia to bring HE and 14-19 staff together.
- Western Vocational LLN has developed the EKEN which aims to:
  - I. Provide a supportive network to connect and engage individuals and specialists from regional stakeholders on the subject of 14-19 Diplomas and progression to HE
  - II. Promote the development and sharing of practice and, where relevant, research
  - III. Create virtual and physical 'safe' spaces for discussion and enquiry
  - IV. Facilitate region-wide staff or professional development and events focused on 14-19 curriculum developments and progression issues

The EKEN comprises of representatives from all the LLN partner HEIs, including Open University South West, Local Authority 14-19 advisors and groups, 14-19 area partnerships and consortia, and other regional and national 14-19 networks. The EKEN aims to extend existing internal networks and arrangements within the LLN's partner HEIs, develop the interaction and impact of Diploma Champions and key contacts across the region in new ways, and create regional coherence in the HE response to 14-19 developments. They aim to achieve this through website delivery via knowledge management exchange including newsgroups and a repository of resources and events. The EKEN was launched in October 2009 and has offered an event in December 2009 on the Extended Project. A further event is planned for March 2010 which will focus on progression for those undertaking Diplomas. It is planned that all of the work of the EKEN will be undertaken with sustainability in mind so that activities will continue past the life of the LLN.

- The Cheshire and Warrington LLN has worked with local 14-19 schools in developing the Diploma Curriculum for the ICT line. The University of Chester is directly involved in this line and is offering lectures, workshops and training for both school students and staff.

## 5.6 Promotional and IAG materials, events and support, e-systems

Underpinning IAG support for potential students and the wider guidance community, LLNs have developed various materials including e-systems.

Close links have been made to systems in place elsewhere, for example 14-19 online prospectuses, Aimhigher online applications, and those developed by individual institutions. Some examples are:

- Yorkshire and the Humber East LLN were involved with development and application of e-systems to enhance learner experience and supporting the work of tutors and administrators.
- Cheshire and Warrington LLN's PAS also sits at the centre of a complex network of IAG programs designed to meet the needs of the emerging Diploma students. It incorporates an Individual Learner Portfolio (ILP) and a central resource area, which can be accessed by students from any of their study locations.
- The Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull LLN has worked with Aimhigher locally to produce a series of 'A-Z' guides for vocational learners focused on HE progression, and specifically tailored Apprenticeship publications linked to the full range of FDs available in the HEIs within the sub-regions
- Leap Ahead are working with organisations within the LLN to trial learner-centred e-Portfolios with over 1000 learners. An e-Portfolio is a flexible online tool that enables activities such as: personal development planning, communication and feedback, action planning, evidence collecting and assessment, skills recognition, appraisal, group project, work placement, journal, photo diary, CV and application to employment, preparing for transaction, decision making and much, much more.

- Linking London have developed and disseminated a detailed guide for Advanced Diploma applicants to HE. This guide supports Diploma learners through the process of considering HE, to application and progression. The guide details a range of progression opportunities from each of the Diplomas into HE. Linking London has also delivered a number of staff development sessions with HE admissions staff, IAG and FE staff on the Advanced Diplomas and progression to HE. These include events on the Additional and Specialist Learning Strand, Functional Skills, and Providing IAG to Advanced Diploma students. They have produced a number of resources aimed at HE staff including 'The New Advanced Diplomas: What they Mean for HE in Curriculum Terms', 'The Advanced and Specialised Learning Strand of the New Advanced Diplomas', and 'The Extended Project: 14-19 Reform. Key Principles and Processes'.
- South East London LLN introduced e-mentoring for the Creative and Media Diploma, involving communication with professionals in the field.
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN introduced a 14-19 Diploma Guide for admissions tutors, developed in conjunction with West Midlands Aimhigher.
- Aimhigher, in partnership with and all the West Midlands LLNs, has produced a booklet for tutors in HE 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 HE.
- London LLNs produced factsheets for learners, parents, tutors, and IAG and admissions staff; aiming to work with IAG staff in institutions and the community to raise awareness of benefits and availability of the 14-19 Diploma.
- West London LLN has produced 'The Diploma: A Guide for Students', a similar guide for employers, and have put together information on their website about Diplomas, including links to relevant websites. The LLN also ran a pan-London conference with Linking London, South London LLN and South East London LLN on 14-19 Diplomas into HE in 2008, focussing on progressing the Diploma learner into HE, it was aimed at IAG staff, Careers and Connexions staff, HE admissions staff, FE subject tutors, 14-19 advisors and funding organisations.
- Western Vocational LLN has, through the Royal Agricultural College, supported the development of a virtual farm and associated environment to facilitate support for a wide range of land based and environmental courses, including the 14-19 Diplomas. In addition, Western Vocational LLN, as part of the consolidation process for their PAs, has developed a series of reciprocal FE and HE student and tutor visits and presentations to highlight the positives of progression for vocational learners. The visits are being embedded within the institutional outreach departments so that they will be sustainable beyond the life of the LLN.
- Cumbria Higher Learning arranged for 14-19 Diploma Coordinators to attend the University of Cumbria's Widening Participation Committee to establish closer working relationships.

### **5.7 Influencing the agenda locally, regionally and nationally including being a conduit for messages between local groups and organisations**

It is important that outside agencies and organisations understand the contribution that LLNs can make locally, regionally and nationally and the wealth of knowledge that they can bring to the wider agenda. Each LLN will work in different ways to reflect local and regional organisations, their structures and partnerships. Often key agencies will be formal parts of LLN governance structures. A few examples are as follows:

- Higher York takes an active role in bringing together local organisations, for example through chairing and serving as secretariat for a North Yorkshire 14-19 HE group which reports into the North Yorkshire Strategic Group for 14-19; and an HE admissions group covering York and North Yorkshire. The Director of Higher York has spoken at various national and regional conferences and workshops

relating to progression to HE from the Diplomas. The LLN National Forum has LLN lead Directors for each Workstrands, there are two Directors - Sue Betts, from Linking London and Jessica Grant from Higher York, who focus on the 14-19 Workstrand. This includes working with government departments to raise awareness of issues and opportunities relating to the work of LLNs.

- Western Vocational LLN established a 14-19 Regional Strategy Group to facilitate HE engagement with individual consortia to strengthen Diploma partnerships and facilitate connections between consortia and HE.
- MOVE and the Aimhigher Healthcare Strand hosted a Diploma event 'Focusing on Progression' in April 2009 at the Trinity Centre, Cambridge. It included presentations on national and regional perspectives, a practitioner's perspective, progression routes from the Diploma to HE (Yorkshire and Humberside project), IAG and the new Diplomas, Universities, Diplomas and 14-19 reforms, and an employer engagement workshop.
- Linking London have disseminated their findings on progression issues and potential solutions to HE progression at a number of national conferences including Aimhigher, Action on Access and the Forum for Access and Continuing Education during 2009 in addition to staff development activities aimed at 14-19 consortia staff, Connexions and IAG staff in FE and sixth forms in the London region. These findings have also been shared at a meeting with Iain Wright, the Under Secretary of State for 14-19 Reform and Apprenticeships. A further meeting, at the DCSFs request, will be organised by Linking London with UCAS and SPA and representatives from the LLN National Forum in spring 2010. A letter highlighting issues relating to the Additional and Specialist Learning Strand was also published in the summer of 2009 in the Times Educational Supplement.

## 5.8 Providing a platform for future partnership working and brokering relationships

LLNs provide ready-made structures for their members to develop joint initiatives to respond and proactively engage with the 14-19 agenda. LLN teams also provide an important single point of contact for external organisations, agencies and partnerships. This means that these external bodies do not have to spend time contacting, setting up separate partnerships and developing activity with many individual HEIs.

Some examples are:

- Linking London are represented on four national and regional HE Diploma advisory and steering groups, including Creative and Media, Retail, Sport and Active Leisure and Public Services.
- Western Vocational LLN has brought together a range of providers and organisations together to form the 14-19 Regional Strategy Group. This group comprises representatives from HE, Local Authorities, IAG specialists, DCSF, employer engagement departments within Local Authorities, Aimhigher, FE and other related projects. In addition, through the subject strand co-ordinators and as part of the 14-19 Strategy Group the LLN has engaged with a considerable number of consortia. Their Director has been the South West HE representative on Diploma Gateway 3 and will replicate this role for Gateway 4.
- Higher York hosts an HE Admissions Forum and sits on various local and regional strategic groups. This allows the partnership to understand local issues and the Higher York governance structure enable the members to work collectively to respond swiftly and proactively develop activities to address future needs of, for example, the local 14-19 consortia.
- The Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull LLN has worked closely with the regional team of the National Apprenticeship Service to facilitate HEI involvement in a series of 'Real Apprentice' road shows for young people considering the Apprenticeship route into work and further study.

- Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance is part of a forum facilitated in partnership with Aimhigher, which brings together representatives from HE and local consortia responsible for implementing 14-19 reforms, they plan to meet four times a year. For more information on aims, see 14-19 delivery table.

## 5.9 Providing useful links into employer engagement

Often one of the challenges for schools and colleges within 14-19 consortia is to engage employers. Many LLNs and their members are already engaging with employers through activities such as FD development, work-based learning delivery and through SSCs. They are therefore well-positioned to support 14-19 consortia. Some examples of such support are:

- Kent and Medway LLN, in association with the Open College Networks and a range of providers, are helping to develop the Diploma in Access to HE in Land-Based Industries for the South East region, with PAs to land-based providers.
- West Yorkshire LLN presented perspectives on higher level skills and the roles West Yorkshire institutions can play, focussing on employer engagement in their inaugural annual conference in December 2008.
- Leap Ahead worked in partnership with the six Construction SSCs to deliver an event that aimed to improve the links between FE, HE and the Construction sector.
- MOVE are involved with employer engagement in the Health and Social Care sector, including innovative work placements for young apprentices and those in Society, Health and Development Diploma.
- West London LLN have developed and produced an employer research pack, to support placements in conjunction with the Royal Academy of Engineering. Factsheets for learners, parents, tutors, IAG and admissions staff have also been produced. They have developed 'The Diploma: A guide for Employers', which includes information on how employers can influence course content.
- Progress South Central is working to support 14 -19 consortia with employer engagement, and to inform employers about the potential the Diplomas offer. Construction Skills, Skills for Care, and Skills for Health are involved in a range of projects relating to 14-19 diplomas.
- In conjunction with the LSC, County Council, Connexions and Aimhigher an information leaflet for employers was produced by Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN.
- Western Vocational LLN is working with the Institute of Mechanical Engineers to secure free membership of the professional body at Technician Level for Level 3 engineering students studying at partner FECs.
- Cumbria Higher Learning runs a rolling programme of employer consultation events leading to the development of ground-breaking curriculum in Cumbria; notably Salon Management for the hair and beauty industry, Construction Management, Engineering and Food Manufacturing FDs. Each new FD pathway links in content to that of the related Diploma content.
- The Cheshire and Warrington LLN, via the NTI at the University of Chester, has developed a Postgraduate Certificate in Multimedia Techniques for teachers in the Merseyside region. The teachers work with Apple technology and are accredited for the work they are preparing for their students, as well as learning the very latest in video and audio technologies.

## 5.10 Student tracking systems and research about the student experience



An important aspect of ensuring that added value and impact is captured from progression activities is student tracking and capturing views on their experiences. This can often be time consuming and costly. LLNs provide economies of scale and an overarching view on this activity, covering data across a number of institutions at once rather than just one at a time. This can support 14-19 consortia to establish the broader perspective relating to progression of their pupils particularly on the local progression.

Some examples are:

- In November 2008, West Yorkshire LLN began an innovative nineteen month project working directly with vocational and work-based learners to evaluate their experiences of entering and progressing through HE. It will capture the experience of guidance and support received by learners in the second year of FE and considering progressing into HE and will also evaluate the experiences of vocational and work-based learners in the first and second year of an HE course.
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN facilitated the involvement of six colleges in a student tracking system – Level 3 students were followed to determine intentions post-College, looking at actions and interventions and their effectiveness. General destination data and information about actions will be collected and analysed, but also each College will have specific research areas, for example, why students 'drop out' at clearing and do not progress to HE and parental impact on student decisions.
- Within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight LLN's Apprenticeships Project, research was undertaken into how Apprentices view progression.
- Linking London is in the process of tracking and providing IAG support to Advanced Diploma learners on the Society, Health and Development and Creative and Media Diplomas, from their first year of study through to their progression onto HE.
- Western Vocational LLN has carried out two projects through the Western Training Provider Network and Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Partnership to enhance the understanding of issues surrounding progression for Apprentices and to strengthen practices in relation to encouraging and supporting progression to HE. The projects have now been completed and were undertaken through discussions with both current and former Apprentices and employers. Through some of their partner institutions entry profiles have been enhanced so that students with non-traditional qualifications can be monitored. This could be potentially used for future analysis.

### Useful links

Department, Schools, Children and Families: [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19)

Lifelong Learning Networks National Forum: [www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk](http://www.lifelonglearningnetworks.org.uk)



# LLNs

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Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull LLN: [www.bbcslin.ac.uk](http://www.bbcslin.ac.uk)

Cheshire and Warrington LLN: [www.lifelongcw.org](http://www.lifelongcw.org)

Coventry and Warwickshire LLN: [www.cwlln.org](http://www.cwlln.org)

Cumbria Higher Learning: [www.cumbriahigherlearning.ac.uk](http://www.cumbriahigherlearning.ac.uk)

Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance: [www.gmsa.ac.uk](http://www.gmsa.ac.uk)

Greater Merseyside and West Lancashire LLN: [www.merseyandwestlancslin.ac.uk](http://www.merseyandwestlancslin.ac.uk)

Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN: [www.hwlln.ac.uk](http://www.hwlln.ac.uk)

Higher Futures (Sheffield City Region): [www.higherfutures.org](http://www.higherfutures.org)

Higher York: [www.higheryork.org](http://www.higheryork.org)

Kent and Medway LLN: [www.gohigher.org.uk](http://www.gohigher.org.uk)

Lancashire LLN: [www.lancashirelln.org.uk](http://www.lancashirelln.org.uk)

Leap Ahead: [www.leapahead.ac.uk](http://www.leapahead.ac.uk)

Lifelong Professional Education: South London LLN: [www.southlondonlpe.co.uk](http://www.southlondonlpe.co.uk)

Linking London: [www.linkinglondon.ac.uk](http://www.linkinglondon.ac.uk)

MOVE (LLN for East of England): [www.move.ac.uk](http://www.move.ac.uk)

National Arts Learning Network: [www.naln.ac.uk](http://www.naln.ac.uk)

Progress South Central: [www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk](http://www.progresssouthcentral.org.uk)

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight LLN: [www.hi-lln.co.uk](http://www.hi-lln.co.uk)

Skills for Sustainable Communities: [www.le.ac.uk/ssclln](http://www.le.ac.uk/ssclln)

South East London LLN: [www.selln.org.uk](http://www.selln.org.uk)

South West LLN: [www.swlln.ac.uk](http://www.swlln.ac.uk)

Staffordshire, Shropshire, Stoke on Trent, Telford and Wrekin LLN: [www.llnstaffordshireshropshire.org](http://www.llnstaffordshireshropshire.org)

Sussex Learning Network: [www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk](http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk)

The Creative Way: [www.thecreativeway.org.uk](http://www.thecreativeway.org.uk)

VETNET: [www.vetnetlln.ac.uk](http://www.vetnetlln.ac.uk)

West London LLN: [www.westlondonlln.org](http://www.westlondonlln.org)

West Yorkshire LLN: [www.wylln.ac.uk](http://www.wylln.ac.uk)

Western Vocational LLN: [www.wvlln.ac.uk](http://www.wvlln.ac.uk)



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