

REGIONAL RESPONSE FUND (RRF) FINAL PROJECT REPORT

The purpose of the Regional Response Fund is to provide activities that allow providers to deal collectively with the operational, funding and planning implications of the changes to funding mechanisms and allocations.

1. Project Title: PROACTIVE East Midlands

2. Lead organisation: Nottinghamshire Training Network

3. List the partners involved in the project

3.1 The group consists of representatives from Independent Business Association (IBA), East Midlands Further Education Council (EMFEC), East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (EMCETT), Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), NACRO (Previously the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders), Joint Information Systems Committee Regional Support Centre for the East Midlands (JISC RSC EM), Public Sector Compacts, Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), Jobcentre Plus(JCP), Derbyshire Learning and Development Consortium (DLDC), Voluntary and Community Sectors

4. Overview of the project (*max 100 words*)

4.1 PROACTIVE East Midlands is a regional voice for work-based learning. Acting on behalf of our members, we provide excellent value for money through collaboration, dissemination and the sharing of good practice. PROACTIVE 'networks the existing networks' to:

- Influence government strategy on work-based learning at national, regional, local and institutional levels and lobby Ministers.
- Work strategically to influence key decision makers
- Celebrate success focusing on what can be done rather than what can't
- Demonstrate added value
- Identify key themes for the sector and share good practice and produce case studies

5. What were the planned and actual outcomes and associated impacts?

Planned Outcomes	Actual Outcomes	Impact*
Network set up	Six meetings held. Terms of Reference agreed. Links made with other RRF projects. Case study produced. Four Press Releases produced. Proactive Pledge signed.	Ensuring that the East Midlands is well placed to be able to bid for further funding, projects and development activities. The group has worked very well together. The impact has improved / increased

		<p>partnerships and collaboration including – accessing funding for community development, possible ‘roll out in other areas’, influenced exemption for Minimum Contract Level (MCL), etc.</p> <p>NEET Apprenticeship Bid value £400,000</p> <p>Used contact made with Education Manager to strengthen Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) bid. (No need to seek out contact independently)</p>
Two key areas identified and agreed with LSIS	Transition from Train to Gain to Apprenticeships. Subcontractor Management.	<p>Awareness raising of issues identified and addressed for the two key areas resulted in smoother transition and improved subcontractor management. Providers are developing their apprenticeship programmes</p> <p>Three of NTN's subcontractors made the transition from Train to Gain to Apprenticeships in 2010/11.</p> <p>The types of apprenticeships they delivered were in Management, Business and Health at Levels 2 and 3.</p> <p>Fed back to members and lead organisations and subcontractors have an improved understanding of roles and responsibilities.</p>

More for less	Identified over £62,000 of value for money. Please see attached list.	A financial impact which demonstrates added value of 3:1 i.e. for each £1 contributed by LSIS the project/sector will benefit by £3 through a true partnership shared approach thus providing 'more for less'.
Visited Swindon College	Learn more about the BEACON status for subcontracting arrangements.	Good practice shared e.g. Swindon College's Quality Manual can be shared with other providers, who can adopt/adapt it to suit their needs. Confirmation of NTN's revised systems and procedures.
Links made with other RRF projects	Teresa Mullen Hairnet facilitated one of the conference workshops Jon Brown, Loughborough College presented at NTN's Quality Meeting benefits of Data-dashboards Julian Jones presented the Northampton College 'Selling School' at NTN's Network Meeting.	Excellent net working continues within the group and across the RRF projects. Dissemination at PROACTIVE Conference.
Dissemination strategy	Blog up and running PROACTIVE Conference held on 30 th September 2011.	Sector/network feedback on future issues to address.
Linked into the Skills & Employer Responsiveness (SER) Programme	Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) event held on 13 th July 2011. Two apprenticeship events held on 7 th July 2011 and 13 th July 2011.	Excellent feedback received – making a real difference to continued benefits to all beyond LSIS funding. "Valuable discussions from the groups – great to hear about other providers practice." "Enjoyed all the input from other delegates. Informative discussions on SASE."
Future sustainability	Members have agreed to continue the group. Meeting booked for 24 th November 2011.	A sustainable network which could be replicated.

6. How was the initial issue for development identified?

- 6.1 The key areas have improved the experiences of learners and employers. The funding was used to establish the PROACTIVE East Midlands Network which was developed 'by the members for the members' and is part of a long term approach. It has not competed with other long established successful groups but genuinely complemented their activities. The dismantling of the Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) and the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) left a vacuum which this network has in part sought to fill. It has also fed into and contributed to sharing information on a regional basis to the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Employment and Skills Board. By including employer representation through the Independent Business Association we have ensured that we are aware of (rather than paying lip service to) the employer voice.
- 6.2 The key aim of the fund was to provide 'activities that allow providers to deal collectively with the operational, funding and planning implications of the changes to funding mechanisms and allocations (resulting from current government policy)'.
- 6.3 It was recognised that there was a lot of duplication and therefore Members of PROACTIVE East Midlands agreed roles and responsibilities linked into clearly defined terms of reference which will be used to manage activities which members have 'signed up' to. Monthly reports on progress were circulated to members to enable them to attend meetings fully informed and able to make decisions.
- 6.4 LSIS suggested to NTN that in view of the short timescale, it would be better to focus on two key issues rather than the three originally planned and therefore employer / learner contributions was not a key focus.

Key benefits and impacts were:

- A sustainable network which could be replicated
- Awareness raising of issues identified and addressed for the two key areas-Subcontractor Management and Train to Gain transition into Apprenticeships
- A regional 'sector voice' to lobby influence and share good practice
- Case studies
- A financial impact which demonstrates added value of 3:1 ie for each £1 contributed by LSIS the project/sector will benefit by £3 through a true partnership shared approach thus providing 'more for less'
- Four workshops delivered at the East Midlands Conference Centre
- Sector/network feedback on future issues to address
- Providing support on a regional basis to help to fill the void left by GOEM, East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) etc
- Complement existing networks

7. What were the key activities?

- Four press releases issued
- Over £62,000 recorded in value for money
- Transition from Train to Gain to Apprenticeships Workshop held at EMFEC, 25th
- May 2011. Feedback from 12 delegates was good and identified a measurable financial impact for some.
- Conference held 30th September 2011 – Excellent feedback received. See Annex One
- Visited Swindon College 16th May 2011 to follow-up on how they have achieved BEACON status for their subcontracting arrangement and share good practice
- Project Manager attended meeting with other regional response projects on 26th May and 27th July 2011
- PROACTIVE Pledge signed
- Links made with other RRF projects
- Theresa Mullen, Hair-Net, is involved in one of the conference workshops
- Jon Brown, Management Information Manager, Loughborough College of Further Education presented at NTN's Quality Group Meeting on 16th August 2011 on the use of Management Information. Also linked into Liz Butterworth's research.
- Julian Jones presented the Northampton College 'Selling School' at NTN's Network Meeting 15th June 2011
- NTN used Julian Jones to help facilitate its Team Away Day
- Blog up and running
- Case Study produced
- Future sustainability discussed and future dates agreed – 24th November 2011.
- Involvement in PROACTIVE has had a positive effect on members e.g. Lisa Vernon - MCL exemption
- Linked into a regional group East Midlands + (EM)+, EMFEC and Local Authorities whose purpose is:

An action focussed, collaborative group of Training Provider networks and umbrella organisations striving to make learning more effective, accessible and sustainable for learners across the East Midlands through;
- Lobbying for positive improvements through joint representation and a solution focussed approach, by;
 - Recognising and celebrating success
 - Networking and communicating
 - Embracing learner views and democracy
 - Focussing on collaboration not competition
 - Providing opportunities through economies of scale, critical friend support, CPD etc.
- In the context of local and regional needs (i.e. MCL, RPA, the replacement of FL etc) and stakeholders (in 14-19, Next Steps, Job centre+, PROACTIVE East Midlands, LSIS etc).

8. How were the findings and developments disseminated within the region and more widely?

- Four press releases issued
- Case Study produced and circulated to the Network. See Annex Two
- Blog up and running
- PROACTIVE Conference held on the 30th September 2011 – 92 delegates attended
- Updated EM+ members, voluntary and community, adult and community, JCP, RSC on key issues

9. What further issues has the project identified and how might these be addressed?

- 9.1 Discussions have developed around how the group could respond not only to the riots but also to the Big Society issues through true partnership and collaboration. It was recognised that PROACTIVE East Midlands needed to continue as the diversity of the membership ensured that there was a true understanding of the issues and a willingness to address them in a new and innovative way.
- 9.2 This strong shared voice has already started to lobby ministers and will also respond to consultations e.g. a letter to John Hayes regarding FE sector not just being about colleges.
- 9.3 In addition, the group will work together to access funding and address current learning and skills issues that are within their gift.

Annex One – PROACTIVE East Midlands Evaluations

New World - Same Learners?

Delegates had the option to attend two of the following workshops:

Subcontracting - Both Sides of the Story
Partnership Working and More for Less
Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners
Free Tools for Collaborative Working

These are some of the questions NTN asked at the evaluation stage:

What did you most enjoy about the event

22.5% of delegates preferred the Keynote Speaker
90% of the delegates preferred the Workshops
15% of delegates preferred the Plenary

What did you enjoy least enjoyed:

57.9% of delegates least enjoyed the Keynote Speaker
15.8% of the delegates least enjoyed the Workshops
36.8% of delegates least enjoyed the Plenary

Delegates were asked to record any benefits (in financial terms) made by attending the conference e.g. Networking £100, CPD £250, etc

Well over £5,000 of added value was identified at the conference. To date, £461,744.00 has been recorded. See attached list

Comments Received from Delegates on the Conference and Future Events

Subcontracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanted more events • Subcontracting - in the past I have known subcontractors who felt exploited by lead contractor. Some debate about fair levels of management fee and this linked to duties
Keynote speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needed more time
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glitches with technology and presentation • Some useful technology ideas • Free technology (free internet tools and software. Online/Video Conferencing, Remote storage, access and sharing of files, photos, video etc and making the most of YouTube)
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too rushed; too many slides with lots of text on
MCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing developing the diversity of the learner offer
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time to discuss with others • Be clearer on topics • Longer workshops
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see more conversations and exchange around how this is delivered between the sectors (college, Work Based Learning (WBL), voluntary)
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate heating • Acoustics challenging. had difficulty hearing speaker.
New inspection framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on preparing for and partnership working
WBL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) learners in WBL and non FE providers - what options for LLDD in these organisations
Value for Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership potential - priceless! • Networking potential joint bids - value to be confirmed • Awareness of organisations - hard to list financial benefit • Continuous Professional Development (CPD) • I am interested in working with/understanding what providers are doing in terms of cost savings around performance measurements A couple of contact/networking • Benefits for me would be key contacts for advice and support rather than financial • In service training • Value of being part of a network, accurate information, networking, best practice • Linking with other partners, sharing documents, save time as can amend documents rather than starting from scratch.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Networking with providers saved time, cost of calls• Finding out how other organisations work priceless• BKSB, support make things easier, knowledge• RSC - free support available, make things easier• Working with subcontractors and lead provider to standardise contract formats and data management info <p>Well over £5,000 of added value was identified at the conference.</p>
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