

REGIONAL RESPONSE FUND FINAL PROJECT REPORT

1. Project Title :

Supporting sector improvements in Adult and Community Learning in the NW

2. Lead organisation:

Wirral Metropolitan Council on behalf of NW LEA FEA

3. List the partners involved in the project

NW LEA FEA is a network of the Heads of Adult Learning from the 23 NW Local Authorities (LA):

Blackburn	Cumbria	Oldham	Tameside
Blackpool	Halton	Rochdale	Trafford
Bolton	Knowsley	Salford	Warrington
Bury	Lancashire	Sefton	Wigan
CWAC	Liverpool	St Helens	Wirral
Cheshire East	Manchester	Stockport	

4. Overview of the project

The project planned to support leaders, managers and front-line staff in adult and community learning to prepare to meet the challenges of the possible radical reform of the sector that will be implemented as a result of the review of Informal Adult and Community Learning (ACL) contained within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) New Challenges, New Chances publication in August 2011. This review was foreseen and the project wanted to plan for the new responsibilities expected of the sector by jointly developing performance accountabilities and quality assurance.

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

Planned Outcomes	Actual Outcomes	Impact*
Development of benchmarking data for ACL	3 workshops for the Quality Managers. Between 18 and 21 people attended each time. All 23 LA agreed on the data to be collected, the process for collection for each of the funding streams, PCDL ⁱ , FL ⁱⁱ and NLDC ⁱⁱⁱ . The type of data collected includes achievement, retention and penetration rate into LSOA ^{iv} . The data is being analysed to produce ranges minimum, maximum and mean that will be available to all providers and funders. The collated set of comprehensive data from each LA will be available for reference for each of the 23 NW LAs.	<p>The sector does not have any national benchmarks to refer to for SAR reports and general comparisons of delivery. The statistical neighbours produced by the LGA^v does not take into account the very diverse delivery mechanisms and local priorities of the LA. The data sets produced are a valuable tool or framework for comparison that will enable similar LA (with reference to IMD^{vi} and local priorities) to compare their delivery.</p> <p>There is now a consistent approach across the NW of reporting on data, definitions have been devised and agreed.</p> <p>We have defined NW deprivation as the top 30% of IMD by LSOA with priorities 1,2 and 3 (10%, 20% and 30%). Previously deprivation has been defined by different percentages across the region.</p> <p>One manager says ‘the QM workshops have been really valuable and have been the start of further research for us into recording data outcomes and the implementation of a data system that will be based on ward information. This will hopefully show the impact of ACL for my LA. It really helped to hear members’ views on capture and impact of ACL data. On the basis of the work extra software has been purchased and will be used to produce reports to underpin our curriculum planning for 12/13, together with the compilation of the SAR for 11/12.’</p>
The development of local impact and performance measures for ACL	Quality managers at their workshops and the Heads of Service at their 2 workshops have	A better understanding of provision across the region, the activity has encouraged senior staff to raise their heads from the local and to look at how other services are run in terms of cost and reaching deprived communities. The project has provided a valuable insight into how services are delivered across the region and will influence how services are shaped in the future. One manager said ‘I see the importance of involving elected members and senior council officials now that I can provide some impact of ACL. I will be identifying an elected

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	<p>considered developing new performance measures that relate to the sector, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Society • Economic • Health and well being • Best Value <p>Work has started across the region to define and agree the measures for each of these areas but there is more work to do in this area.</p>	<p>member who can champion in our area of work.'</p> <p>Improved communication between quality managers across the region.</p> <p>LAs are aware of Social Return on Investment (SROI) and can see its value, but appreciate the amount of resources needed to complete the process. However, LAs are prepared to explore the model and there are more SROI pilots in the NW than in any other region. One manager now sees the 'value of SROI for briefing managers / senior leadership team re value of work of ACL and will arrange a presentation to the Corporate Leadership Team'.</p> <p>Recognition that the NW is leading the way for the government's agenda on performance and this is acknowledged by the National LEAFA lead at NIACE.</p>
Identification of important regional information to inform service planning	<p>Quality managers and Heads of Service attended a workshop to discuss the changing demands and priorities while developing services to meet the national agendas.</p> <p>The current government's policy principles and how ACL contributes to several different policy agenda including skills, employment and employability, health, growth and job creation, Big Society and localism and the NW priorities.</p> <p>An input about making the most of statistical data and in particular IMD data helped to services to review their approach planning in the future.</p>	<p>The workshop refreshed some members thinking and informed others about the contribution that ACL makes to other government agendas and to identify the current key policy drivers. It provided a good forum for discussion and debate. A typical comment 'Thought provoking information to take further'.</p> <p>There is a better understanding of IMD data and how to use it. There is now recognition across the LAs that in future there will be fewer prescribed targets and areas will be responsible for setting their own goals using local data. To do this effectively there may be a need for more statistical analysis. The project has highlighted some weaknesses and strengths in the sector in their approaches to using data, in particular joining up with local research and intelligence data alongside learner data</p> <p>The project has developed a closer working relationship with LSIS that will enable suitable responses to ACL issues in the future. Likewise good links have been maintained with NIACE especially around SROI which NIACE is leading on for BIS, despite their regional presence diminishing.</p> <p>NW LEAFA has tried to make links with LEPS during the life of the project but this has not been successful.</p>

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<p>NW ACL providers to develop their services to provide high quality appropriate local learning opportunities by identifying occasions to work together to support change and explore new models of delivery.</p>	<p>The six curriculum workshops have provided an opportunity to develop services. Topics discussed include:</p> <p>Financial Capability 1 - update from the National Academy for Financial Services (NAFS) sharing resources and ideas</p> <p>Financial Capability 2 – tutors started an online course (NAFS) to gain a qualification in Financial Capability</p>	<p>100 participants attended the 6 workshops an average of 18-20 per workshop; this represents significant reach for the project. The content of the workshops was tailored made CPD for the needs of the sector.</p> <p><u>Financial Capability x2</u></p> <p>The workshops provided a broader understanding of subject area with new ideas and approaches for both existing and new provision. Tutors valued sharing and finding good quality resources.</p> <p>From the evaluations:- ‘This was a key session in the development of my curriculum area and I intend to implement some of the resources into the service cross curriculum areas.’ Tutors are completing the on line course and one has submitted her assignment and achieved the qualification.</p>
	<p>Curriculum Building and Supporting the Development of the Big Society – 5 inputs from around the region including Knowsley and their social enterprise model – Total Approach. Blackburn with Darwen and their community monitors (based on the Northern Ireland approach) in response to community tensions. Manchester - intergenerational mentoring between primary schools and community groups and the impact this has had on learners. St Helen’s intergenerational learning and developing practitioners to run their own groups. Stockport presented their approach to participatory budgets and the Wirral outlined their strategic approach to training using</p>	<p>Curriculum Building and Supporting the Development of the Big Society</p> <p>The link between ACL, community learning and the Big Society was clearly understood. Organising the workshop emphasised the breadth of activity going on across the region. It highlighted the needs for strategic approaches to multi agency working. The day prompted one tutor to plan to ‘meet with her Assistant Principal to re-evaluate their structure and offer’. The workshop showcased the passion within the sector for Adult Learning another tutor felt the day had been ‘filled with enthusiasm for learners and learning’. Another appreciated the ‘wide variety of approaches to the Big Society and the links created by ACL and FL in particular.’</p> <p>The presentations demonstrated how creative the sector is with relatively small amounts of money</p>

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	volunteers to support lifelong learners.	
	Employability with the context of literacy – sharing resources and ideas for all the stages of employment from initial engagement to sustainable employment.	Employability with the context of literacy To quote one manager ‘this was an excellent good practice sharing event, the presentations were inspiring and interesting, helpful advice was shared and discussed. It is always helpful to see what others LAs are doing’. Another was ‘taking inspiration from one approach to design my Writing for Work course with emphasis on factual, objective writing that is accurate enough to be used for a range of audiences including legal ones. The course has been very successful with waiting lists for the next courses’.
	The ICT curriculum for the future ACL service ICT is seen as the way to empower local citizens. The workshop examined if we have the right curriculum to ensure that local people can participate and to examine the difference between digital skills and digital capability. Discussion followed on how to design a relevant curriculum.	The ICT curriculum for the future ACL service Tutors and managers welcomed thinking about things differently; one tutor said ‘I gained a good overview of the breadth of provision within the area. I also gained insight into tried and tested software that has been recommended by other practitioners. In particular the ideas for the practical implementation of incorporating learners own ICT equipment into the classes.
	Training mentors and volunteers These types of roles are playing an increasing part in ACL delivery. The qualifications available and how mentors and volunteers are supported was shared and discussed, effective practice was identified.	Training mentors and volunteers Links strengthened with the VCS and developed with the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (M&BF). As LAs use the (M&BF) Approved Provider Standard quality will be maintained. A valuable workshop for maintaining the quality of existing provision and for those that are developing new provision.
Conclusion The workshops have maintained and /or established links with the wider sector including college staff who have attended several of the curriculum workshops, often providing an added dimension and the Voluntary and Community sector who have been generous in their support. There is excellent practice in curriculum development across the NW which the project has highlighted and provided an opportunity to share, this is leading to planned		

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<p>changes in curriculum design and delivery and new services delivered in local areas.</p> <p>The project activity has extended the reach of NW LEA FEA with local authorities who were not previously active members of the network now attending meetings; we expect this to continue after the project. All the 23 NW LAs ACL services are working more closely together and developing approaches to take forward good practice and to work together during the next period of change.</p>		

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KEY to terms

- i) Personal and Community Development Learning
- ii) Family Learning
- iii) Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities
- iv) Lower Super Output Area
- v) Local Government Association
- vi) Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010

6. How was the initial issue for development identified?

As policy is changing the sector has been encouraged to move towards local planning and policy areas such as the Big Society. NW LEA FEA was seeking funding opportunities to develop the sector when the Regional Response Fund was launched.

7. What were the key activities?

11 workshops were held in all:

- 3 workshops focussed on data and devising the methodology for the benchmarking work with Quality Managers.
- 2 workshops focussed on measuring the impact of ACL with the Heads of Service
- 6 focused on curriculum development areas with curriculum managers and tutors.

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

Within the NW

When the output concerning the data is finalised the findings will be discussed at NW LEA FEA. Locally the data will be used in the SARs produced this year. Members will also be encouraged to attend the LSIS road show in November.

National - other local authorities outside the NW

NW LEA FEA is an active member of National LEA FEA that meets 3 times a year, attended by the regional chairs and Heads of Adult Learning from all 9 English local regions. The NW project has already been outlined to the network at the May 2011 meeting. At the next National LEA FEA meeting on the 10th February 2012 the findings from the NW project will be shared either by a presentation on the agenda or a briefing paper produced for members.

Government

A representative from NIACE has attended several of the NW LEA FEA meetings funded by this project and has informed BIS on the benchmarking developments. Of special consideration is the number of Social Return on Investment pilots that have taken place in the region recently, as a direct result of the work of NW LEA FEA. This work is informing BIS developments in other areas and has been of direct relevance to the current consultation on the Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning. See NIACE publications on Social Value <http://shop.niace.org.uk>

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

There is more work to be done to develop Local Performance Indicators.

The benchmarking work needs to be embedded across the region, there is a range of expertise and understanding of data and we have identified opportunities for collaborative work between councils and their research and intelligence teams to inform ACL planning.

We need to continue to develop and refine the skills needed for local planning and to make closer links to the LEPs.

As the outcomes from the New Challenges, New Chances consultation are published, Informal Adult Community Learning (IACL) will have to respond to the new direction.