

LOCAL GOOD PRACTICE

STRAND 1: Raising Attainment Now

Increased Flexibility Programme

- The Hertfordshire Increased Flexibility Programme involves all FECs and 55 schools, with joint staff training. 1500 learners are engaged in the programme.
- There are 3 well established and effective Increased Flexibility Programmes partnerships in Suffolk, based on FECs.

Work related learning, EBL and applied/practical learning

- In order to provide an improved WRL offer and in preparation for future commissioning of EBL activity, the LSC in Norfolk commissioned an external review of education business links in the county which reported in April 2007. This review involved a wide range of key stakeholders, schools, colleges, employers, and young people and their carers. The report highlights areas for development to deliver higher quality and better “value for money” WRL activity for the amount of time and other resource currently being invested in EBL activity. 14 recommendations are included and a stakeholder seminar to share the outcomes of the report is happening in July.
- Two projects with the EBL consortia in the region (led by the EBL consortium in Essex) are developing support for the employer engagement element of the first Diplomas and developing best practice across the region for joint working on issues such as health and safety and quality assurance.
- We are supporting collaborative key stage 4 practical learning opportunities for young people through funding from the flexible element of our regional 14-19 reform budget, to ensure collaborative vocational provision is available to young people whose learning styles and needs are best suited this type of programme. All areas are working with their providers and LAs to ensure that this is viewed as a transitional arrangement and are working towards aligning budgets (notably the practical learning element of the DSG) to sustain future collaborative delivery.
- Extended access to applied subjects has been introduced across Suffolk for 14-16 learners through the ESF funded GOALS Project (Greater Opportunities for All Learners in Suffolk) delivered in partnership in all 12 local 14-19 consortia areas. Over 1300 young people who previously would not have had access to applied learning have completed an applied course and arrangements are in place for this provision to be sustained.
- Vocational learning centres are being developed to promote additional access to applied programmes for young people e.g. in Maldon, Halesworth and Sudbury. In Cambridgeshire £250k of LID funding has been utilised by providers to improve the resources for widening and developing their vocational learning.

- In parts of Essex, vocational lecturers are working in schools, for example SEEC lecturer working in Beauchamp School, Wickford (NB this is not an alternative education programme).

Key Stage 4 Schools Engagement Programme

- The region was successful in securing funding and approval from DfES for 1420 places on the KS4 Schools Engagement Programme for the 2007/08 academic year. This includes the continuation of the two pilot schemes from this year in Essex, (including Thurrock and Southend) and Norfolk and the introduction of two new schemes in Peterborough and Luton. The programme focuses on engaging disengaged young people in education through a highly personalised approach including mentoring, practical learning and work experience.
- Norfolk is one of 21 LAs piloting the KS4 School Engagement Programme for 220 Norwich students and 62 in West of County at risk of disengaging. It has received national acclaim for the way it has been set up. Although it is too early to measure impact, it is looking very promising. It is perceived locally as a model of good practice.
- In Essex, the 14-16 Engagement Pilot involving Southend FC and the YMCA has been successful in re-engaging young people.

Progression Pathways

- There is much activity around promoting progression pathways, both as part of the area prospectuses and work at a local level. The LSC is collaborating with Aimhigher to map and promote vocational progression routes in key sectors from level 1 to higher education.
- Fourteen new level 1 and 2 post 16 courses have been introduced and funded in schools across Suffolk, focusing on areas where access was previously poor. This has resulted in improved local access and choice for young people, particularly in rural areas, to progress to post 16 study at level 1 or 2 with a particular focus on progression beyond school. This now gives around 120 young people a progression route within their local school at Level 1 or 2.
- The 14-19 Information Strategy Group in Suffolk is leading on the delivery of a series of 'Informing Choices' workshops to teaching staff in each secondary school to raise awareness of the various progression routes available with a focus on apprenticeships. Suffolk CEIGS Standards developed through Connexions working in partnership with the Lowestoft area have now been introduced across the county.

Apprenticeships Online

- The Apprenticeship On Line project is being developed and implemented in Cambridgeshire, with discretionary funding, and is also being used as a pilot for the East of England. It is a collaborative project between employers, training providers and Connexions to increase the post-16 offer to young people. Apprenticeship On Line is a website which will have employers' vacancies linked to an apprenticeship or

advanced apprenticeship. A young person will complete a common application form and apply for any vacancy which appeals to them. All young people can be tracked on this system as reports show Connexions staff if the application is pending, if a provider has responded, or if the young person has been successful with their application. This will enable Connexions to monitor the young person on line. The project aims to reduce the NEET group and the unknowns. It will assist with the 14-19 agenda, improve accessibility to progression routes and increase E2E progressions as the young person can see at a glance what opportunities are available.

Area prospectus

- The 14-19 area prospectuses are operational in all areas in the region.
- The Suffolk model (www.future4me.org.uk), which was the first to be developed, was operational from September 2005, and has been adopted with variations and local branding, by Essex and Hertfordshire. This model was also used as an example of good practice by DfES to inform their guidance on developing the area prospectus.
- The Essex version (www.stepon.org.uk) has been operational from September 2006 and is seen locally as an example of good practice. It covers Essex, Southend and Thurrock.
- The Hertfordshire version (www.hertschoices.org.uk) was launched in 2007. See also <http://www.hertsahead.co.uk/>
- Bedfordshire and Luton are using the 'vis' model for their prospectus, this has been used in other parts of the country and was launched in July. For Bedfordshire, see http://www.bedfordshireprospectus.co.uk/home.asp?parent_id=64 and for Luton http://www.campuslutonprospectus.org.uk/home.asp?parent_id=1
- Norfolk have developed their own prospectus (<http://www.helpyouchoose.org/>) building on an existing Norfolk-wide post 16 prospectus and job vacancies site that Connexions has been developing since 2003. The Norfolk 14-19 prospectus was piloted in West Norfolk, with the full launch at the end of August 2007.
- Cambridgeshire have adopted the AP4L model 'Futures4me' (also used in some other regions), this will allow easy future access to other related AP4L products such as 'plan-it', an electronic Individual Learning Plan (being piloted in Peterborough) and the newly launched apprenticeship clearing system. The prospectus for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was operational in line with the September 2007 target date. See <http://www.cambscoursefinder.com/cmd/ShowPage?page=1> and [http://www.coursefinder-cp.com/\(S\(n0geu33rt0vryijcjkxaa3v\)\)/campsboro/Home.aspx](http://www.coursefinder-cp.com/(S(n0geu33rt0vryijcjkxaa3v))/campsboro/Home.aspx)

Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

- In Cambridgeshire 516 young people, NEET or at risk of being NEET are benefiting from 6 ESF projects e.g. alternative E2E provision, with many positive outcomes recorded. Cambridgeshire are working with both LAs to ensure that the revamped

structure of their 14-19 planning groups includes ensuring NEET/NET are a key focus and the groups will plan and monitor interventions and activities for NEET, based on local profiles of NEET. Local action plans also include further targeted activity with Pupil Referral Units to support care leavers and teenage parents.

- In Hertfordshire targeted meetings have been initiated to discuss NEET numbers in each geographical area ('patch meetings') to agree and then arrange appropriate provision required to meet the needs of the NEET young people in each area. The LSC has provided £250K of funding to the Connexions Service under the "Budget Holding Lead Professional" initiative which enables Connexions staff to directly purchase provision and support to meet the needs of the learner. This "personalised approach" enables more direct action to help young people. A strategic County Partnership Steering Group has been established to monitor in-year progress; plan the long term approach; ensure efficient data exchange and intelligence and plan action where rapid response is required. This will include arrangements for ensuring that the "September Guarantee" is met through the tracking of young people and providing opportunities. The group has also informed LSC planning for E2E & WBL in 2007/08. All FE colleges are preparing a NEET Strategy linked with their Development Plans.

YESS (Young Employee Support Scheme) started in Herts on 1st December and is aimed at getting NEET young people and young people on E2E into employment. The initiative is managed by Connexions who find supportive employers who agree to employ the young person. The young person gets help towards the first 4 weeks wages and a larger grant after 13 weeks and the help of a work place mentor. The intention is then to encourage and support the young person and employer into further training.

- In Essex the LSC is supporting the reduction of the NEET group through 12 ESF funded programmes. The most innovative and successful project is supporting the NEET group with employment and life skills training through reality TV activities. The LSC is part of the Connexions NEET Strategy Group working in partnership with other organisations such as the LA to focus on an early intervention strategy, focussing on the top 25% of secondary schools that contribute to 50% of the Year 11 leavers that are classified "Unknown" or NEET on leaving school. The activities to be used in this approach include; targeted mentoring in identified schools, improved information sharing via inter-agency working and improved referrals to and from voluntary sector funded programmes
- In Suffolk a Participation Champion post has been funded for three years, and will be appointed from June 2007 to lead on a new participation strategy for Suffolk. This strategy is nearing the final stages of drafting and will place a much greater emphasis on this area of work in Suffolk. This work will include the development of particular strategies to address the needs of 17 year olds – "a 17 safety net". Connexions has now integrated with the Youth Service within the County Council and is an integral partner to the participation strategy. Investing in Communities funding has enabled specific NEET advisers to be appointed by Connexions to undertake additional support work for the NEET group, this work will continue.
- In Norfolk a participation strategy to reduce NEET has been shared with partners and is a key priority of the 14-19 plan. Schools are being provided with NEET data for young people leaving their institution and local targets will be agreed for the reduction

of NEET. The LSC has supported the Connexions Service in the development of their detailed NEET Action Plan and have agreed stretching targets with them.

- In Bedfordshire and Luton NEET is being tackled through the respective 14-19 Partnerships. The 14-19 Director for Luton (jointly funded by LBC and the LSC) is leading on the NEET Strategy Group, established in February 2007 consisting of key stakeholders and providers tackling key issues around Prevention, Intervention and sustainability. The Group has focused on key challenges around forensic use of MIS, referral and tracking; best practice in advocacy, brokerage and IAG; alignment between pre and post-16 curriculum and progression routes and improved incentives to participate. This model ensured the problem was addressed by a small, tight group of the people most directly accountable.
- Running parallel to this piece of work, the LSC have undertaken an analysis of E2E provision to establish key issues in relation to the NEET cohort, namely what the key risks are in relation to engagement and retention for particularly disadvantaged young people. Luton is specifically focusing the School Engagement Programme on the Year 11 cohort and aligning it to the Augmented Curriculum Programme managed by LBC.

Young Parents to Be

- New 'young parents to be' pilot programmes are currently being developed through the region with the purpose of increasing the engagement and participation of this cohort and encouraging progression to further learning through providing appropriate learning programmes leading in due course to the take up of Care to Learn.

Learning Agreement Pilot

- Essex is one of 8 National Learning Agreement Pilot Areas (as part of the DfES initiative). Working jointly with the local Connexions service the pilot is aimed at engaging young people currently in employment without training to undertake further training. The Learning Agreement Pilot in Essex has moved from its Planning Phase into the delivery phase. Essex is piloting the no incentive model (one of three models, with the other two providing incentives for either the employer or the learner). The pilot has been branded 'Train for your Future' and to date has achieved 433 signed agreements with 243 young people actually on a training programme. The relationship between the LSC and Connexions is good; the LSC team is fully staffed and Connexions have employed 57 training advisors alongside a project manager and employer engagement officer. A launch programme was held in April across four town centres, supported by local PR and radio campaigns. With the extension of the pilot until December 2008 we are confident of achieving the target of 2905 starts

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

- A number of events have been held across the region to promote EMA including conferences to update staff from schools, colleges and training providers. These

have included sessions on the EMA system and workshops on completing application forms to facilitate the effective support of students.

- A regional marketing campaign has taken place this year including targeting promotional material to the households of year 11 students in the region; cinema advertising in all the major cinemas in the region, results envelopes for schools and colleges with EMA details on plus EMA business cards.
- A focus on EMA as part of the Level 2 PR campaign resulted in media coverage and radio interviews.