



Lifelong Learning Network
Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

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Network News

The newsletter of the Lifelong Learning Network

Changing times



Recent global events have brought about dramatic changes on both economic and political fronts. Regionally too, slowly but surely, the LLN's work is bringing about significant, positive change. We continue to engage

successfully with our stakeholders. The last meeting of this group was held in October and focused on links between Further Education Colleges, the LLN and employers. The meeting was particularly well attended with some seventy people filling the Old Library at Keele University. It was a prime opportunity to introduce our newly appointed College Cluster Managers, whose role is profiled in this newsletter, and also to share the many innovative developments currently taking place with our partners. The LLN has always been clear that a main focus of its work is to contribute to cultural change in HEIs, to develop innovative curriculum and support

people to progress who would not normally do so. One such initiative, which addresses gender inequalities, is the development of a foundation degree in Salon Management. This will enable progression beyond level three for a predominantly female workforce, where currently within the LLN area there is none; a great example of positive change. Another project, which is identifying the learning needs of care workers, is also addressing the problem of limited progression routes, where again, the workforce is predominantly female. Our work is also focusing on addressing the lack of progression to Higher Education among learners from minority ethnic communities.

It is these types of initiative and the associated, emerging culture change, which I hope will be the LLN's legacy beyond 2010.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with our work.

Jill Ward

Season's Plantings

We are very keen to support growth in our region, so have decided this year to plant trees instead of sending cards at Christmas, to put something back for all the print we create, although even this paper is from sustainable sources!

If you want to take part in a similar scheme contact the Woodland Trust at www.woodland-trust.org.uk

Progress!

One of the first of many planned Progression Agreements was formally signed on Wednesday 29th October. Hilary Jones, Dean of Faculty of Health at Staffordshire University, Jill Ward, LLN Director and Wendy Munro, LLN Progression Co-ordinator signed an agreement that enables adult learners to progress from a foundation certificate to a range of Health related Higher Education awards including foundation degrees, nursing diplomas and an Honours degree.

Hilary commented: "I am delighted to see progression agreements being developed. They will help clarify progression routes for groups of learners unsure of their next steps into HE."

left to right: Hilary Jones, Wendy Munro and Jill Ward sign progression agreement



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www.llnstaffordshireshropshire.org

FE and the LLN



Our new College Cluster Managers got off to a flying start at the recent Stakeholder meeting at Keele Hall. As they all work in FE they understand the sector very well and the increased pressures of time and funding. These part time roles have a remit to provide new opportunities for vocational learners to progress into Higher Education.

The main aims of the role are:

- To be the conduit between colleges and the LLN for consultation exercises
- To inform relevant college staff of developments within the LLN
- To keep the LLN team up to date with College developments

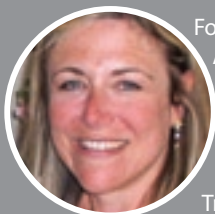
Kim Underhill, Curriculum Manager for Health & Social Care is based at New College, Telford. Kim will be working with New College plus Shrewsbury Sixth Form College and Ludlow College. Call Kim on 01952 641892.

David Alexander, Curriculum Manager for HE Business is based at Tamworth & Lichfield College and also looks after Cannock Chase Technical College and Rodbaston College. Call David on 01827 310202.

Mary Durose, Head of Psychology at Leek College is cluster manager for Leek, Stafford and Stoke Sixth Form Colleges. Call Mary on 01538 398866.

We look forward to welcoming two more College Cluster Managers in the near future to work with the remaining colleges in the network. Call us at the office to find out more about these positions.

New Marketing Officer



Former LLN Technology Administrator, Tracy Smith was appointed to the part-time post of Marketing Officer at the beginning of October.

Tracy, who has many years' experience of marketing, is now responsible for the successful promotion of the LLN to the network's partners, stakeholders and employers and with key activities including the organisation of our conferences, the upkeep of our website and the production of all our literature requirements, including the production of Network News, this exciting new role promises to keep her very busy.

TRAIN TO GAIN for Higher Level Skills



Stewart Critchlow
Train to Gain Higher Education Manager

Recent changes to the government's Train to Gain programme mean that funding is now available for employers and individuals who want access to higher level skills (level 4 and above).

Stewart's role is to coordinate the relationship between the West Midlands Skills Brokerage, responsible for promoting Train to Gain in the region, and

Universities, Colleges and other Providers of Higher Education. Stewart will help the Skills Brokers to learn about the wide range of HE provision available so that they can inform and advise the businesses they visit.

In return, we are helping the learning providers understand the market for HE skills and qualifications so that they can develop appropriate learning and progression routes and modes of delivery to satisfy business objectives. If you want to know more please contact s.d.critchlow@staffs.ac.uk

Team to Team

Stoke City's Britannia Stadium hosted a different kind of Midlands Derby recently that saw nearly 50 team members from Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Birmingham, Black Country & Solihull, Coventry & Warwickshire, Hereford & Worcestershire, Leap Ahead (Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire) and SSCLLN (Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland) LLNs coming together for the day to present on latest developments, to consider each other's mode of approach and how we might further improve the way we currently work.

As host LLN, we had wanted to encourage networking with table plans and workshops offering everyone the opportunity to get to know their regional peers a little better. Our icebreaker activity, 'Build the Perfect Team Member', certainly helped bring people together, with very interesting results!

Workshops were held on the following themes; Use of electronic methods in the

provision of IAG, Progression Agreements, Creative & Media, Health & Social Care, Research & Data, joint projects in Leadership & Management, Marketing, Events and Administration.



Interim Research & Data update

The Research and Data team has been very busy of late. Amelia Rout attended the National LLN Research Group meeting at Manchester Metropolitan University in October where her poster, a retrospective on the challenges of baseline data access and collection, was particularly well-received.

With the National LLN conference in York during late November, as well as the second Midlands Research and Data Group meeting at Staffordshire University in December, there have been many opportunities to meet and discuss best practice with peers from every LLN.

The team has also recently published interim reports following research undertaken for the Skills for HE module (literature review and questionnaire study) as well as the Shropshire Care Homes Providers initiative. If you would like further details on any or all of these

reports, or wish to download a copy, please go to www.llnstaffordshireshopshire.org/researchandreports/currentresearch

- Skills for Higher Education Research Project, Interim Report, Questionnaire Results
- Skills for Higher Education Research Project, Interim Report, Literature Review
- Shropshire Care Home Project, Interim Report, Literature Review

The team is now preparing for the next tranche of research projects for Creative & Media, Cross Cutting Themes and Public Sector, Public Services Discipline Groups, to begin during the first quarter of 2009.

Please check Latest News & Events section for details of 2009 Midlands Data & Research Group meetings.

Our National Conference Tuesday 3rd March 2009

Culture, Change and Collaboration

We're pleased to publish the agenda for our inaugural national conference to take place in March 2009 at The Moat House Hotel & Restaurant, Acton Trussell, Staffordshire ST17 0RJ

THE AGENDA

- 1 Welcome address
Jill Ward, LLN Director
- 2 John Selby, Director
(Education and Participation), HEFCE
- 3 Kavita Oberoi, Managing Director, Oberoi Consulting Ltd, Raising Aspirations
- 4 **Refreshment break**
- 5 Workshops
- 6 **LUNCH**
- 7 Prof Christine King, Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive, Staffordshire University
- 8 The Learner Journey
- 9 AOB
- 10 Ian Hart, Associate Dean of Educational Partnerships, University of Wolverhampton - Closing Address

Great Speakers!



John Selby, Director (Education and Participation)

John Selby joined HEFCE in 1999, initially as Regional Consultant for the East Midlands. In 2001, he became Regional Consultant for the West Midlands, with lead responsibility for widening participation. In his current role John has responsibility for all HEFCE's work in teaching, learning, and widening participation, and for the North institutional team. He also has responsibility for a number of key policy areas including HEFCE's links with JISC. Before joining HEFCE, John was Head of Educational Partnerships at Coventry University. He is a sociologist by background with a PhD from McMaster University in Ontario.

Kavita Oberoi (one of Channel 4's Secret Millionaires)

Kavita Oberoi has taken herself from a University Graduate, First class BSc (Hons) in Applied Chemistry to become the Managing Director of an innovative Healthcare company. Kavita launched Oberoi Consultancy in 2001 after working for nine years at medical firm Bayer. Now, her business provides IT training to more than one in five GP practices across the country.

Christine King

Professor Christine King CBE, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Staffordshire University, was recently presented with the Woman of Achievement Award 2008 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Higher Education and lifelong learning. She is an active and recognised champion of access, inclusion and diversity and is the chair of the West Midlands Higher Education Association.

As an academic, Christine has an international reputation as a Professor of History with research interests in medieval and modern pilgrimage and the history of religion, especially the non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

She is currently leading the part-time study in Higher Education on behalf of John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, which will consider how the HE sector can respond to the ever increasing numbers of adults entering part-time education from home.

Employers need for "Lean Principles"



Employers were invited to a "Lean" breakfast meeting with the LLN recently at Staffordshire University.

As many of the large organisations locally are already implementing these different ways of working we discussed the curriculum that Higher Education can offer and how we might help these organisations implement 'systems thinking' and continuous improvement through developing new modules, qualifications or progression agreements.

Tutors from Keele University shared their experiences of delivering the new postgraduate modules in Developing Leaders and Change & Transformation and how this might help senior managers to implement new business processes. We discussed how "systems thinking"

could fit into this new suite of CPD modules that were funded by the LLN for work based learners which are stand alone modules. The employers identified that the LLN might be able to help to educate better systems leaders, which might help them engage with HE and progress onto other leadership programmes.

We heard from David Vaughan, Lean Academy Manager at City of Wolverhampton College who is currently working with the Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull LLN on developing a Foundation Degree in Business Improvement Techniques.

Discussions around the table touched on the differences of how lean principles work in service organisations as opposed to manufacturing, the language issues and how

the word "lean" may be eventually replaced by better business language such as business improvement techniques, quality or continuous improvement.

The outcome of our meeting is to report on all current educational projects in our network relating to lean, quality and continuous improvement to the employers who are interested and see if we can help our partners build a framework and new modules. The meeting was started and finished Just in Time and even the Bacon was "lean"!

If you would like to discuss a business project that you think our Education partners can help you with contact our Employer Liaison Officer clare.keegan@staffs.ac.uk

Sector focus

Public Sector & Services

The planning for the Foundation Degree in Community Regeneration is progressing well & gathering pace. The LLN has supported this exciting initiative by buying in the time of a Project Manager, Phil Whitehead, and also by buying time for colleagues from the University of Wolverhampton School of Humanities, Languages & Social Sciences, Steve Iafrazi & Graham Tuckley, to write the modules and supporting documentation. We also have valuable input from Staffordshire & Keele Universities, employers, stakeholders and Telford College of Arts & Technologies, (TCAT), who will deliver the programme to our learners.

Colleagues are currently working on the paperwork for the planning approval sub-committee to approve the course so that we can move on to validation. The next foundation degree meeting will be a good opportunity to clarify how we are going

to move forward with advertising and publicity as well as continued engagement of partners.

Further work of the Public Sector, Public Services team is with Her Majesty's Prison Service. The team has visited a number of prisons within the region and it seems there is the potential to develop some interesting and innovative learning opportunities, ranging from a small 'bite-sized' chunk of learning, maybe towards a full Foundation Degree; time will tell!

On a different note, the LLN is involved with partners at Keele University in developing an MA in Urban Studies, which we believe will provide an ideal eventual progression route for the Foundation Degree Community Regeneration learners.

For further details please contact the LLN's Public Sector & Services Co-ordinator Tim Crossfield.

Creative & Media

Sweet Music

Creative & Media Co-ordinator Nigel Beer is delighted to confirm a tripartite agreement for four new Performance Industries Foundation Degrees.

Delivered and co-developed by Ludlow College, Stoke College, New College Telford and City of Wolverhampton College with validation from the University of Wolverhampton, each of the new degrees provides vocational training in Music, Musical Theatre, Creative Music Production and other related performance industry skills.

Nigel is also currently working with theatre agency Dalton Associates and Wolverhampton University to develop a one-year Theatre and Entertainment Industries Professional Practice completion award. Dalton Associates are recognised members of the Independent Theatre Council and the Directors Guild.

Technology

Our Technology Co-ordinator Rosie Borup presented at the recent Stakeholders meeting, highlighting the latest exciting developments within her sector.

One initiative, in automotive, that we're particularly proud of has led to two LLNs (ours and Leap Ahead, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire) working together to support four colleges in our region as well as colleges in Leap Ahead's area, joining forces to meet the specific training needs of their local employers.

Historically, each of the colleges had already identified learners willing to progress but in numbers that were not economic for the college. In addition, employers had recognised the need for training and indeed were happy to pay for it but felt that existing course content, such as the full Foundation Degree, was not tailored sufficiently well enough to meet their specific needs.

Stoke, Stafford, Burton and Tamworth & Lichfield colleges recognise the many benefits of working together to deliver bite sized modules of learning to Level 3 apprentices, meeting the needs of the employer while maximising the use of each college's resources and workshop facilities.

For further information contact Rosie Borup.



Rosie presents at the recent stakeholders meeting



Cross Cutting Themes

A celebration of collaboration



The first day of the new Leadership & Management Postgraduate course

The Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Lifelong Learning Network has successfully supported the development of a new programme in Leadership and Management. Operating at Postgraduate level the programme is intended for learners in relatively senior positions in organisations, with management and/or leadership experience. This programme can be taken as a full award (for example as part of a Postgraduate Certificate in Leadership and Management) or by accumulating skills, knowledge and academic credits which will contribute to the Postgraduate Awards at any of the participating universities. This gives learners and employers flexible learning patterns, with valuable experience which can contribute to organisational growth and success.

The first of the CPD modules to be developed was in Transformation and Change. This

module was the result of collaboration between Staffordshire and Keele Universities and the University of Wolverhampton. Although lecturers from any of the universities could have developed this module, it was decided to work collaboratively, with a system of peer review, in order to build confidence and strengthen the relationships between the institutions. The module was developed in close cooperation with the University Hospital of North Staffordshire (UHNS) as the principal employer partner.

The module was developed in direct response to the needs of the University Hospital of North Staffordshire (UHNS). However, while contextualising it to the needs of this sector, it was also intended to develop the core elements of the module in a way that would satisfy the needs of a wider audience. The first cohort was run at Keele University, with lecturers from Staffordshire and

Wolverhampton participating in the training. The first cohort involved senior members of staff from a range of functions within the hospital. Two training consultants also participated to assess the suitability of the module for Staffordshire County Council.

The development of this module has been invaluable in building stronger links between the Business and Management Schools of the three participating universities and has helped to iron out a number of issues in relation to collaborative module development and collaborative teaching.

The second module, Leading People is currently awaiting peer review and then validations and equivalencies will be established across the three Universities.

For further information contact Joan Lockyer, Cross Cutting Themes Co-ordinator.

Health & Social Care

The joint conference "**Better the Workforce, Better the Business**" was held on the 8th October 2008 at the Village Inn, Walsall and was well attended

by over 50 employers from across the West Midlands. This was the first of two joint events organised by the West Midlands Lifelong Learning Networks; Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin LLN, Hereford and Worcester LLN, Coventry and Warwickshire LLN and Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull LLN with Skills for Care West Midlands.

The event focused on exploring the opportunities for developing higher level skills in the social care workforce and how these might be relevant to the workforce of the future. Three case studies showcased how Foundation degrees have helped to support service delivery and benefited the employers

as well as the employee. One social care employer said: "The case studies were the highlight of the conference and demonstrated clearly how higher level skills and knowledge can impact on the delivery of services".

The next joint event for employers, Higher Education institutions, Further Education colleges and private training providers will be held on **Wednesday 28th January 2009 at the Village Inn, Walsall**. Details can be found on the Skills for Care and LLN websites.

A report is being compiled from the outcomes of the two conferences and this together with work recently completed for the LLN by Keele University, and our Shropshire Care Homes Project, will help inform the development of education and training across our region in the future.

For more information contact Anne Longbottom, Co-ordinator for Health & Social Care.

Latest News & Events

9th December 2008 - National LLN Marketing meeting at Staffordshire University

28th January 2009 - joint LLN and Skills for Care West Midlands conference

First Quarter 2009 - Health & Social Care Employer Forum

3rd March 2009 - The LLN Culture, Change and Collaboration Conference for Staffordshire and Shropshire

5th June 2009 - Midlands Research & Development Group meeting at Staffordshire University

For further details, visit www.llnstaffordshireshopshire.org

The team



Jill Ward
Director
Tel 01785 353773
Mobile 07824 461015
Email jill.ward@staffs.ac.uk



Iain Mansell
Director's Administrator
Tel 01785 353274
Email iain.mansell@staffs.ac.uk



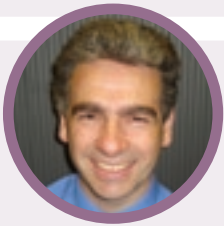
Wendy Munro
Progression Co-ordinator
Tel 01785 353609
Mobile 07919 334584
Email w.munro@staffs.ac.uk



Anne Longbottom
Health & Care Co-ordinator
Tel 01785 353484
Mobile 07901 968745
Email a.h.longbottom@staffs.ac.uk



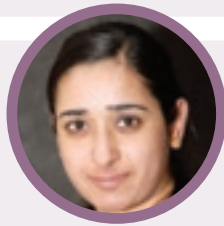
Nici Westraadt
Health & Care Administrator
Tel 01785 353588
Email n.a.westraadt@staffs.ac.uk



Nigel Beer
Creative & Media Co-ordinator
Tel 01902 322008
Mobile 07733 266956
Email n.beer@wlv.ac.uk



Tim Crossfield
Public Sector & Services Co-ordinator
Tel 01785 353875
Mobile 07817 915252
Email t.m.crossfield@wlv.ac.uk



Jatinder Shaheed
Public Sector/Creative & Media Administrator
Tel 01785 353875
Email j.shaheed@staffs.ac.uk



Rosemary Borup
Technology Co-ordinator
Tel 01785 353829
Mobile 07944 786736
Email r.borup@lln.staffs.ac.uk



Tracy Smith
Marketing Officer
Tel 01785 353811
Email tracy.smith@staffs.ac.uk



Joan Lockyer
Cross-Cutting Themes Co-ordinator
Tel 01782 734482
Mobile 07785 736193
Email j.lockyer@mngt.keele.ac.uk



Chris Drummond
Finance Co-ordinator
Tel 01785 353692
Mobile 07779 826274
Email c.drummond@staffs.ac.uk



Clare Keegan
Employer Liaison Officer
Tel 01785 353732
Mobile 07766 520349
Email clare.keegan@staffs.ac.uk



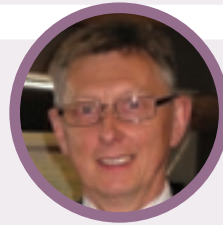
David Round
Information Advice & Guidance Co-ordinator
Tel 01782 734482
Mob 07702 573905
Email D.T.Round@acad.keele.ac.uk



Penny Copestake
Cross-Cutting Themes/IAG Administrator
Tel 01782 734482
Email p.l.copestake@acad.keele.ac.uk



Amelia Rout
Research Officer
Tel 01785 353545
Email a.c.rout@staffs.ac.uk



Stewart Critchlow
Train to Gain HE Manager
Tel 01785 353828
Email s.d.critchlow@staffs.ac.uk

We have moved



Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Lifelong Learning Network,
c/o Staffordshire University Campus, C306, Beacon Building,
Beaconside, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0AD



www.llnstaffordshireshopshire.org