



Newsletter



Editor's comment

In this edition you will find a report on the consultation launched on 14th April to strengthen England's High Level Skills, an article on the results of a survey from the Sutton Trust on students considering higher education, an update from the Assistant Director Progression and an update on the FE development fund project at Action on Addiction by Ruth Waring.

The whole team would like to wish Wendy (Progression Co-ordinator based at the University of Gloucestershire) and her husband our very best wishes following their wedding on Sunday May 4th. We all hope that the day went smoothly, that there was plenty of sunshine and we look forward to seeing the photos!

We are very pleased to welcome Frank Williamson who will replace Alex Hawkins as Progression Co-ordinator at the University of Bristol. Frank will commence his role on June 9th.

Consultation launched to strengthen England's High Level Skills Base

A twelve week consultation to build stronger and more flexible links between business and universities was launched by Minister of State for Higher Education, Bill Rammell on 14th April.

The High Level Skills consultation will seek views from employers, students, colleges and universities on how to raise the skills of those already in work and also ensure graduates are equipped with the knowledge and abilities that businesses need to compete globally.

An independent review of the nation's skills requirements, carried out by Lord Leitch in 2006, highlighted the need for a significant increase in the proportion of workers with high level skills, from the 31% level already achieved to over 40% by 2020. With around three quarters of the 2020 workforce having already left compulsory education, new types of higher education provision need to be created to compliment traditional models, including more flexible courses designed and co-funded by employers.

Key areas of the consultation

include:

How business, trade unions, employers and employees can work better together to encourage demand for high level skills;

What incentives are working/ required to encourage colleges and universities to be more responsive to business and employer demand;

What support or incentives would help colleges and universities extend access to work placements to all their students;

How employers can become more involved in providing careers information, advice and guidance for pupils during their entire education; and

How to increase the number of people with the specialist qualifications that many businesses desire such as languages and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Minister of State for Higher Education Bill Rammell said:

"31% of the population are

currently qualified to degree level or above. To meet the economic challenge posed by rapidly-developing countries such as China and India, and to retain Britain's position as a key knowledge economy, we have to get more people in the workforce qualified to a higher level, at least 40% by 2020.

"Our higher education system is already world class but we can do even more to equip graduates and those already in work with the higher level skills demanded by employers. Every university, college and employer should be thinking hard about how it can respond to this important challenge.

"Research suggests that approximately four million people are already considering or would consider higher education.....There is latent demand for higher level skills within the workforce but releasing it will require changes to the design, delivery and funding of learning to be more responsive to employer needs"

For the full version see www.dius.gov.uk/press/index.html

More pupils than ever considering university—EducationGuardian.co.uk



According to a survey carried out by Sutton Trust in April more

school students than ever before are considering going to university, in spite of the potential burden of loans and recently increased interest payments.

Nearly three in every four students who were questioned on behalf of the Sutton Trust are seriously thinking about higher education, although many are dissatisfied with the stan-

dard of advice on the subject which they get at school.

Now in its fifth year, the poll by Ipsos Mori for the trust finds that the share of would-be undergraduates in the 11-16 age group has reached 72%. Just over half of the 2,387 school students questioned—39% - said that they were "very likely" to go to university or college while 34% said that they were "fairly likely" to do so.

The number of young people definitely set against higher education has dropped in proportion, with the number of those very or fairly unlikely to choose higher education falling to a record low of 8%. Most of these

- 52% said that they preferred to "do something practical rather than studying from books", with half also wanting to earn money as soon as possible and a third believing that well-paid work was possible to get without a degree.

The number of school students worried about getting into debt has dropped from 20% to 13%, but four out of 10 said that they were given "not very much" information about universities at school, with 9% saying they got none at all.

Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust, which encourages the widest possible take-up of university places, said "It is

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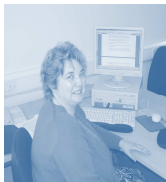
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Our aims for the next month

Elaine Fisher



In line with our strategic direction the WVLLN presented to the Management Board, held on the 8th May, draft Apprenticeship agreements in Engineering, IT, Health & Social Care and Children's Care

Learning & Development. On the whole these were well received and following minor changes will be taken to the Management Board in September for signing. It is anticipated that the progression co-ordinators will discuss the implications for their individual HEI with Management Board representatives prior to the September Board meeting.

Alongside the agreements a positional paper on AP(E)L and an AP(E)L work stream scoping document were presented to the Board.

It is planned that the positional paper will form the basis of an AP(E)L agreement which is it anticipated will be presented to the Board in September.

The work stream scoping document details all the work that the WVLLN is currently involved with in relation to AP(E)L. This

includes a learner's guide, enabling curriculum projects and a review of non-accredited training by employers.

Planning for the new Diploma event to be held on November 6th is ongoing and an early alert e-mail will be sent out to all relevant stakeholders at the end of May.

The second round of the FE Development Fund ended with 8 bids being received. These will be individually reviewed and then brought to the assessment panel on 29th May.

Work on the IAG 'signposting' guide continues with anticipated completion in July. The guide will be produced in the format of a CD which will raise awareness of staff across a range of agencies and educational providers in the SW of the range of existing resources and the means by which these can be accessed.

The WVLLN is developing a website designed to encourage adults to consider higher education as an option.

Research through a series of focus groups has shown that potential students are particularly interested in case studies of adults who have gone onto higher education, and how they overcame some of the perceived barriers to studying.

If you have returned to studying and are prepared to talk about your learning experience we would very much like to hear from you. The collection of the information would involve being videoed on a very informal basis for approximately 5-10 minutes for inclusion on the website. If you are interested, please contact Janet Lonsdale Support for Learners Project Co-ordinator for further information email j.lonsdale@bath.ac.uk or telephone 01793 328807.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Upcoming Events

- 8th May—Management Board, Oakfield Campus, Swindon
- 12th May—Progression Co-ordinator team meeting, Oakfield Campus, Swindon
- 22nd May—WVLLN/SWLLN AP(E)L workshop, SCAT, Taunton

Considering HE

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encouraging that three quarters of young people aspire to university, but less than half that number currently end up in higher education.

"Those from poorer families are the least likely to progress, so we need to offer more support to young people throughout their education, then they will be in a position to realise their ambitions at 18 and beyond.

"That is why it is worrying that so many students feel they are not being provided with enough information about higher education by their schools."

The trust published research in February from Staffordshire University, which showed that few school students knew about the bursaries or maintenance grants on offer at universities.

Lampl said "Support and guidance about higher education needs to start early on—at primary school upwards—and be a core part of the school day, so that no young person loses out"

Taken from an article by Martin Wainwright

New progression route

One of the WVLLN's priorities in 07/08 is to facilitate the development of progression routes into higher education for adults through the mechanism of AP(E)L. Therefore, the network was really pleased to receive a bid to the development fund from Action on Addiction in order to develop a progression route into the BSc Hons Addiction Counselling via a new package of advanced standing.

Action on Addiction is an organisation based in Wiltshire dedicated to tackling the issue of addiction through research, treatment, family support and education and training. Over the past 20 years they have established an international reputation for high quality addictions training courses and have been recognised by employers in the field as tackling a long standing shortage of well trained professionals in the substance misuse field. The Foundation Degree in Addictions Counselling is validated and awarded by the University of Bath and taught at the new Centre for Addiction Treatment Studies at Warminster. It caters for newcomers to the field of addictions treatment through the full-time route, whilst the part-time route enables current practitioners to gain a level 5 qualification alongside their work.

Building on their successful AP(E)L package Action on Addictions were interested in opening up access to the work-based learning honours year programme which was delivered for the first time in 06/07. After a successful bid for funding from the WVLLN, the team are now in the process of developing an advanced standing package which will map these candidates' more general qualification & experience to the entry requirements and underpinning knowledge and skills attained through successful completion of the foundation degree. (article by Ruth Waring, University of Bath)