

**Regional Collaboration Fund (RCF) grant based intervention
Impact study template**

RCF Project title	Building a shared data management service for regionally dispersed providers
Name of lead contact	Humber Learning Consortium (HLC)
Consortium members	CERT, Engage, Probe, Llite and Christ Church
Other contributing organisations (if any)	N/A
The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	<p>HLC is a 'hub and spoke' delivery model where a range of small cross sector community-based learning providers are managed and supported by HLC. Data management is a fundamental component of the model. However, the volumes of data passing through HLC are presently acting as a bottleneck in terms of operational efficiency and future growth potential.</p> <p>Following an Ofsted inspection which called for a systematic approach to data collection and use, the consortium of regional dispersed adult and community learning providers co-managed the capture, processing and use of learner data across organisations.</p>
What was your solution	<p>It was decided that a digital approach to collecting data was needed, that could be deployed flexibly, so that it worked in wide variety of contexts yet would provide HLC with reliable data more rapidly and in a secure manner.</p> <p>Many learners and staff working with HLC are more comfortable with paper-based forms than online forms, so it was felt that digital pens might offer a useful way forward.</p> <p>These could capture enrolment data from learners and the information could be downloaded and sent to HLC for processing.</p>

<p>Describe what you did and what happened</p>	<p>Through discussion and further investigation it was decided that digital pens would not provide the desired solution. They have proved somewhat unreliable for some providers and would not have longevity, particularly as digital pen technology continues to evolve.</p> <p>They would not fit in with the culture of the organisations and also introduced some technical 'unknowns' into the system, particularly how to move data reliably from the pens to the MIS.</p> <p>Crucially funders are still mistrustful of digital signatures.</p> <p>A system that had a stronger track-record was selected - namely PICS MIS system.</p> <p>To make it work in the context, bespoke interactive pdfs were required that would enable data to be captured by providers, passed conveniently to HLC and also to capture learner signatures in a conventional manner.</p> <p>The project then focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• developing appropriate pdf ILR forms for two contracts that reflected the particular needs of HLC (e.g. drop-down menus that enabled users to conveniently enter address information)• creating server-side software to receive the data in a secure manner and process it• link this data in with PICS• trialling the e-forms with 5 providers/partners• benchmarking the new data-capture process against the previous system. <p>The project will continue beyond the period of support from LSIS as the system will be rolled out to other providers, and the savings made resulting from the new process will fund it's continual development.</p>
--	---

The collaboration	
<p>How well did the collaboration work and what were the key factors that led to this</p>	<p>One of the key benefits of the project was that it helped to enhance partnership working between HLC and several providers.</p> <p>Key benefits were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced established relationships between HLC and partners including personal/professional relationship between actors. • Specific expertise within the HLC's staff team that engaged in the project. This was enhanced by the project and was used to the benefit of all partners. • Willingness of the partner organisations to engage and go beyond the initial remit of the project. • LSIS Associate developed a good working relationship with the partners, which enabled them readily buy-in to the subsequent changes in the project remit.

The benefits and impact of the project	
What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::	<p>a. the work/ effectiveness of the organisations in your consortium</p> <p>The project has already begun to demonstrate positive benefits such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced learner data error rates • Reduced staff/learner time capturing and processing data • Reduced inefficiencies re-processing inaccurate data • Reduced data lag times.
	<p>b. the cost/ efficiency of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed an entire step of the process regarding data input. Admin are no longer required to process (the cost benefit of these efficiencies is currently being evaluated). • The necessity to type directly into the pdf has eliminated previous issues relating to legibility. • Immediacy of the ILR while the learner is still in situ enables us to remedy identified issues, e.g. eligibility. • The built-in rule violations of the form prevent users from transmitting inaccurate or incomplete data, therefore reducing the inefficiencies of reprocessing or chasing data. • The pdf form also auto populates additional fields within the MIS, which means that admin users no longer have to manually enter generic contractual data.
	<p>c. any other aspect(s) of your work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unanticipated outcome is that the project has unearthed specialisms within the partner base that has enabled us to distribute activities and responsibilities more widely than we had originally expected. For example, one of the partners had specific process management expertise that we were otherwise unaware of. • The genuine level of engagement by partner organisations has left us with a legacy of champions who will enable us to cascade and drive the future roll-out of remote data process improvements.

<p>What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>LSIS funding</td> <td>essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LSIS Associate</td> <td>essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other contributors (please identify)</td> <td>In-house expertise and partner buy-in essential</td> </tr> </table>	LSIS funding	essential	LSIS Associate	essential	Other contributors (please identify)	In-house expertise and partner buy-in essential
LSIS funding	essential						
LSIS Associate	essential						
Other contributors (please identify)	In-house expertise and partner buy-in essential						
<p>What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your consortium's contribution</p>	<p>The LSIS funding of £30,000 supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the employment of staff to develop the interactive pdfs, trial them and refine them based on user feedback • develop the software for the server in order to process the data that was received • meetings of the organisations involved in the pilots • staff training (how to use the interactive pdfs) • project management • sharing outcomes with the sector. <p>A small amount was also used to contribute towards the purchase of the MIS system and the associated training.</p> <p>The consortium contributed to the main purchase of the PICs system and staff training (how to use the system as advanced users)</p>						
<p>What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to challenge your assumptions about the technology and be ready to change and adapt. Some 'wins' are hard to achieve. • Identify champions within your partner organisations who are willing to contribute to the project in terms of testing and feeding back. They require the right skill-set coupled with enthusiasm. They need to be willing to go beyond the initial remit of the project • Openness about challenges and benefits so it is possible to develop a 'true view' of the initiative, that is not 'rose tinted', otherwise problems are not fully revealed and addressed. 						

Telling others					
What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector	HLC presented at the LSIS Technology for Success conference in February, where they held a workshop session to explain the need and challenges of the project to date. QUIN network and informal disseminations at Teaching & Learning conference.				
Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS RCF project.	The LSIS funding 'kick started' the HLC to develop more cost-effective and reliable ways of gathering learner enrolment information. The funding also supported HLC and its members to develop more collaborative ways of working. The benefits will continue well into the future.				
Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Quote</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Contact information</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> </tr> </table>	Quote	Yes	Contact information	Yes
Quote	Yes				
Contact information	Yes				
Contact details for further information	Humber Learning Consortium 63-71 Anlaby Road Hull, HU3 2LL Tel: 01482 327438 www.hlc-vol.org				