

REGIONAL RESPONSE FUND FINAL PROJECT REPORT

The purpose of the Regional Response Fund is to provide activities that allow providers to deal collectively with the operational, funding and planning implications of the changes to funding mechanisms and allocations

1. Project Title

North East Greater Manchester Partnership – Initial development and identification of phase one programme of activity.

Lead organisation

The Oldham College

2. List the partners involved in the project

Manchester College

Hopwood Hall College

Bolton College (affiliated member of the Steering Group joined July 2011)

Other colleges involved

Thameside College

Trafford College

3. Overview of the project *(max 100 words)*

To explore the way in which colleges in North East Greater Manchester can improve outcomes for learners and heighten their impact in communities through closer collaboration, developing a framework for working in Partnership in planning, employer responsiveness and delivery.

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

| Planned Outcomes | Actual Outcomes | Impact* |
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| Identify workstreams and priority areas for review and key actions | A number of workstreams have been identified and priority areas have been agreed across the partnership. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14-19• Employer Responsiveness• Higher Education• Community | The Steering Group has met regularly and this has created an opportunity to share issues and experiences with a view to developing a joined up response. We have now developed strong relationships and Trust which will underpin the work going forward. |
| Data gathering and analysis to inform | Data and management information is a cross-cutting workstream and a data | Initial data gathering took place between the three |

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| <p>priorities.</p> | <p>gathering and analysis was undertaken across partners and reported back to the Steering Group. As a result of this more detailed data analysis has been commissioned to understand the skills provision landscape across North East Manchester. In order to do this we have developed and agreed data sharing protocols and have shared data across all partners, something which has not been done before.</p> | <p>colleges and collected data covering:</p> <p>Institution, learner ref, age band. Funding, FT/PT, home post code, delivery post code, subject sector area, NVQ level, destination.</p> <p>This enabled us to establish a baseline of where learners were going across the region and what they were studying and to identify particular trends and behaviours in different age groups. Having reviewed this it was agreed that additional research and data gathering would be commissioned to produce a profile of all the learning that is taking place within the recruitment area regardless of the institution the learning attends. This must include other FE Colleges / Sixth Form Colleges. Schools with Sixth Forms and Training Providers.</p> <p>This has highlighted that very large numbers of students across all cohorts are using other providers and, many of these providers are small private sector organisations. We are now looking at what they offer that we do not.</p> <p>As a result additional work has been commissioned to drill down into retention, achievement, outcomes and progression routes for students using other providers.</p> <p>We are using the data received to undertake more detailed analysis of learner choices so that we</p> |
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| | | <p>can strategically improve our offer.</p> <p>What is apparent is that where equivalent A-levels are on offer for traditionally vocational courses (e.g. A-level PE) students are opting for these, this highlights the continued perception that A-levels are more valuable than vocational qualifications and the need to address this.</p> |
| Liaison with GM Colleges regarding project and potential scalability | Through GM Colleges group partner Principals have been working to promote the work of the partnership and to position our work as a scalable model that other colleges can join. | Communication – the profile of our work has been raised significantly, not only with GM colleges but also with the LEP and with partner local authorities. We are working hard to influence the skills agenda alongside other partners in Manchester. |
| Draft proposal paper outlining opportunities for joint working and draft framework for sharing of resources including governance models, and scalability, support systems, capacity building etc. | A statement of intent has been developed and is being shared with all partners governing bodies. An event is planned for February 2012 to bring all governors for each organisation together to review the work undertaken and to secure buy-in to the proposed work of the partnership. Initially this will just involve Manchester, Hopwood Hall, Oldham and Bolton Colleges. In addition we are using this as a briefing document for our teams and will be sharing this more widely as appropriate once Governor approval has been received from all partners. | This is a key communication tool for our work and clearly defines the remit and purpose of the partnership. It is essential that we are clear about the scope of our work, what we want to achieve and the principles that underpin this. We hope that this will then encourage other colleges to join us or adopt the models that we create. |
| Develop delivery programme for roll-out of proposal | Having reviewed in detail the opportunities for greater collaboration we have refined these to prioritise the areas detailed above. This then informed the Statement of Intent and we are now working on the detail for each of the priority areas including quick wins, governance, impact assessment etc | We have now agreed priority areas and have developed an initial phase one plan of activity which is underway. The detail of this plan will be formally agreed at the Steering Group meeting on 6 th January 2012. |
| Identify joint opportunities | Teams from each organisation have been briefed about the work of the NEGM partnership and as a result have identified a number of opportunities for joint-bidding pieces of work. | As a result of joint bidding Manchester College and Hopwood Hall were successfully appointed to the framework for |

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| | | <p>Rochdale Skills Outreach. By submitting a joint bid we were able to demonstrate the range of skills and experience required to submit an application.</p> |
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LSIS funding has enabled us to resource this project with a project manager and commission the additional research and data gathering activity. Remaining funding has been split between partner institutions to cover costs for the development of the partnership and activities involved including:

- Representation on the Steering Group
- Workstream meetings and development activity
- Research and data gathering including detailed analysis and feedback
- Document development and consultation
- Outcome analysis and planning of next steps

5. How was the initial issue for development identified?

The work of the NEGM Partnership stemmed from a number of changes in the world of Further Education and in the National Economy. At the first meeting of the group the work of the group was placed in the following socio-economic and political context:

- The relationship between the SFA and YPLA and how colleges manage this. The market is now seen as the quality mechanism for FE provision so that those colleges who fail to succeed will cease to exist.
- 30% FE colleges nationally have been identified as being close to failure.
- 25% cut in funding – language shift from funding to subsidy.
- Transformation and cultural change will be key to survival, there is a need to work more collaboratively and break down territorial boundaries.
- The need to develop relationships with HE to improve learner opportunities and economic growth.
- Intervention is needed to prevent academies failing, there is an opportunity to develop services around school improvement, teacher development, IAG and other areas.
- There is a conflict between sharing services and delivery alongside a market and competition-driven economy.
- There is a need to clearly articulate who colleges are and what our role will be going forward – shift away from traditional view of FE. This is particularly important in the new political landscape and with employers, people do not understand how colleges work, we need a coherent, flexible and responsive approach.

- There was a clear need for good quality data and strategic analysis of this to understand the current position and inform priority activity.

6. What were the key activities?

Having defined the context of the work of the group (outlined above) the group identified a number of workstreams to focus on specific areas. Having done this, it became clear that the main focus of our work initially should be around data and management information so that we could establish a baseline understanding of the current position which would then inform how we prioritised activity going forward. A detailed data analysis across all partners was undertaken and, as a result of this, more detailed analysis was commissioned to look at provision across the North of Manchester so that we could understand the offer in the region. As the work of the group continued it became clear that the work of the group should focus around the following themes:

- 14-19 and foundation learning
- 16-18 apprenticeships
- Employer Responsiveness
- HE
- Community

Once this had been agreed we developed papers looking at opportunities in these areas to facilitate discussion within the group and with our Governors. It also became clear that we needed a clear Statement of Intent which would set out what we intended to achieve.

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

Dissemination of findings has taken place at a relatively informal level at this point via existing networks within Greater Manchester and more widely. As a result of this a number of colleges have expressed an interest in getting involved with elements of the project and we hope to continue to bring partners on board as we develop the project. Regular updates are given at Greater Manchester Colleges meetings which take place every month.

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

14-19 education – including linkages between academies, studio schools, university technical colleges, and a wider aim of improving the quality of vocational learning pre-16, and supporting the secondary sector in this endeavour

16-18 and adult – recognising the need for a core local offer in every community, but that progression to further learning will require greater degrees of specialisation. This will benefit all stakeholders.

Employer Responsive – to consider options for closer working with employers, to stimulate growth, and for providing employers with outstanding customer service and high quality training tailored to their particular needs.

To seriously consider options for shared services, in order to provide an efficient foundation for further developments.