



NW Higher Level Skills Pathfinder February 2007

During the first month of 2007 the NW Higher Level Skills Pathfinder made significant progress forward thanks to the new HLSP team and other partners in the region, details of this activity are given in the summary below. February also looks to be a busy month with rapid progress towards the first call for proposals from HE providers for the development of demand led HE provision, this call will be made at the NW HLSP event on March 16th, further details below. Significant steps are also being made with regard to linkages with regional brokerage activity both through Train to Gain and through the regional IDB service, HE providers will also be fully briefed on these developments at the March event.

January 2007

- **Sector Panels**

All sector panels met during January except for the Business and Professional Services. The three panels all agreed that the relevant sector skills councils could work together to produce a summary of their higher level skills needs. These summaries will then be presented to HE colleagues at the March event and utilised as the basis for the call for proposals to develop demand-led HE provision.

The panels have also agreed some initial criteria for the assessment of proposals; these criteria are now being further developed by the HLSP team and will also be agreed by all panels in time for the March event to allow a fully transparent process for the assessment of HEI and FEC proposals.

The panels were also keen to avoid duplication between HLSP activity and other projects within the NW; this has led to further meetings for the HLSP priority sectors involving the LLNs, the Cultural and Creative CPE, Aimhigher, FDF, SSPAs and the National Skills Academy for Construction.

- **Database of HE provision**

Development work is continuing on a database to hold the HE provision data in a searchable format which can be made available to brokers and other partners. HEIs have now been asked to update the information currently held by NWUA on their provision; this is the first step in the process before expanding the data to include HE in FE and other providers. Discussions are also ongoing with LLNs and Aimhigher around their mapping of provision for sub-regions / foundation degrees.

- **Brokerage**

The HLSP team have been working with the LSC to supplement the current broker training as a short-term measure while the full module on HE is being developed (led by the NE HLSPP). The team have provided the LSC with details on HE which will be delivered to brokers as one part of their current module on Foundation Degrees. The NW Foundation Degree module already included some information on the HLSP, thanks to close links with FDF in the NW, but for the next delivery of this module these have been further developed. This will assist brokers in developing their knowledge of HE and the resources available to them if they identify a HE need from an employer.

- **Partner Links**

The new members of the HLSP team have been busy travelling around the NW meeting key partners and providers. These visits continue through February to ensure that the Advisors

have a strong knowledge of the expertise within the HE providers and the areas where HEIs and FECs are interested in developing new activity. The Advisors have also been building stronger links to the LLNs across the region, Aimhigher, FDF, SSCs, NWDA, LSC and other partners. If you would like to meet with one of our Specialist Advisors please contact us, details at the end of this update.

Planned Activity for February 2007

- **Staffing**

The third Specialist Advisor, Eddie Keating, will join the NW HLSP Team on February 16th. Eddie will have responsibility for the Business and Professional Services sector and will be visiting HE providers along with other key partners to gain a full understanding of this area, if you are interested in meeting with Eddie, he can be contacted on ekeating@nwua.ac.uk

NWUA have also re-advertised the fourth Specialist Advisor post focusing on the Advanced Engineering and Materials sector. This post is being offered as a 0.4-0.5 FTE position with secondments considered. Further details are available on the NWUA website at <http://www.nwua.ac.uk/vacancies/> the closing date for applications is February 16th. Claire Lowe, has been appointed as a 0.6 FTE Specialist Advisor for this sector, Claire will take up this position when she returns from maternity leave in July.

- **Sector Panels**

The Business and Professional Services sector panel is now due to meet on 27th February.

- **Brokerage**

Discussions are ongoing with the LSC to arrange for the Specialist Advisors to shadow the Train to Gain Skills brokers to ensure a clear understanding of how the brokerage activity works and will begin to develop the strong relationships needed with the brokers, particularly the sector specific skills brokers.

Further links will also be made with the IDB team as staff are now recruited, a meeting is being organised with Peter Watson, Chief Executive of the NW Business Link to discuss skills brokerage and wider brokerage to business support offered by HEIs in the region.

NW HLSP Information Event – March 16th 2007

NWUA are organising an Information Event on Friday March 16th, 9.30am – 1.00pm at the Reebok Stadium, Bolton. This event is aimed at colleagues from HEIs and FECs across the NW who are interested in being involved in the NW HLSP. The first half of the morning will include presentations from the LSC and Business Link on the arrangements for regional brokerage activity and how the NW HLSP is going to integrate into these structures. The second half of the morning will break into four sector based sessions, where SSCs will present the higher level skills needs identified for their sector through the sector skills agreement research. There will be opportunity to discuss these identified needs and the event will then call for HE providers to respond to these employer needs by submitting proposals for developing demand-led HE provision. Full criteria for proposals and details will be provided at the event.

If you are interested in attending the event please contact Virginia Mitchell on vmitchell@nwua.ac.uk for a booking form and full programme.

Contact Us

Previous updates are available on the NWUA website at www.nwua.ac.uk along with full details of the NW HLSP.

For further information please contact:

Virginia Mitchell, Admin Assistant – HLSP, NWUA on vmitchell@nwua.ac.uk or 0161 2340431