Evaluation of Linking London Lifelong Learning Network

Final Report
April 2011

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Linking London Lifelong Learning Network commissioned CFE to evaluate its activities over the course of its HEFCE funding period. This report summarises findings from research conducted with Linking London’s partner institutions, the central team and other stakeholders. The research took place between May 2010 and February 2011, and included secondary research and consultations through online surveys and in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face and by telephone.

Overall, Linking London met all and exceeded many of its hard targets from HEFCE and feedback from partners was highly positive. Key findings from the evaluation include:

> Linking London has successfully adapted and evolved as partner needs have changed. For example, it changed to focus on all industrial sectors after beginning with a focus on the public sector only. Its governance and management structures have also adapted, becoming more streamlined as the Network has developed.

> Linking London has supported the signing and implementation of 77 progression agreements between partners, covering a range of courses. These agreements have formalised progression relationships between partners and opened up new routes for vocational learners into higher education. Many of the agreements directly supported learners to progress through the use of Additional Student Number (ASN) funding.

> The Network supported curriculum development and other partner led projects through its Development Fund. A total of 74 partner led projects relating to Linking London’s goals were funded and dozens of new courses were created. Partners felt that Linking London’s support was very helpful in supporting these projects, many of which would not have been possible otherwise.

> Careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) has been supported by a dedicated IAG manager and an IAG operational practitioner group. The Network has developed a considerable number of IAG related resources and publications, which feedback suggests have been very useful for partners.

> Linking London has supported increased collaboration and partnership through providing various forums and projects through which partner institutions can interact. Much of this helped cement and deepen relationships that already existed between partners, but Linking London also facilitated new relationships. Partners judged the Network’s communications activities as being high quality and these activities helped raise its profile among partners and beyond. Linking London also raised the profile of specific issues relating to vocational progression. Linking London’s programme of events for partner institutions was particularly important in supporting networking and communications between partners and supporting the professional development of staff in partner institutions.

Given the positive feedback from partner institutions, Linking London must now consider how its form and activities will change for the 2011/12 academic year, the first in which HEFCE funding will no longer be available. While feedback from partners broadly supports the continuance of the Network, it is difficult for partners to specify a particular operating model. A workshop with Linking London’s Board in April 2011 confirmed that both Linking London’s focus and operating model will again need to adapt to meet the changing needs of partners, especially so as the Network relies more heavily on partner contributions.
1 | Introduction and method

This chapter introduces the background to this evaluation and to the evaluations of Lifelong Learning Networks in general. It also summarises the method we adopted for the evaluation and provides a brief overview of the content of this report.

Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Networks

Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) were established in June 2004, following a joint letter from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to all heads of publicly funded higher education institutions (HEIs) and further education colleges (FECs) in England. LLNs were to comprise groups of institutions in a city, area or region working together, and with other key stakeholder organisations, to improve the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners.

In order to enhance vocational progression opportunities and address disparities between the experiences of learners on vocational and academic routes, LLNs were charged with the following objectives:

> Curriculum development – removing barriers and developing bridging provision to enhance progression.
> Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and learner support systems – enhancing support for vocational learners and developing systems for LLNs to engage and track progression.
> Progression agreements – developing mechanisms to ensure progression into and through higher education for vocational learners.

HEFCE outlined a three stage evaluation strategy designed to monitor and assess the impact of LLNs on policy and practice, at a local, regional and national level, including: interim evaluation (April 2008), peer evaluation, and summative evaluation (November 2010). In addition to HEFCE’s three stage evaluation strategy, most LLNs have undertaken some form of independent, external evaluation of their activities, as outlined in this report.

Project Background and methodology

In 2010, CFE was commissioned to undertake a summative evaluation of Linking London Lifelong Learning Network. The evaluation has focused on the following key themes:

> Governance and management;
> Progression agreements;
> Curriculum development and the development fund;
> Information, advice and guidance;
> Collaboration, partnership working and profile;
> Sustainability.

1 HEFCE, Lifelong Learning Networks, www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln/
2 CHERI, Interim evaluation of Lifelong Learning Networks, (HEFCE, April 2008).
3 SQW, Summative evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Network programme, (HEFCE, November 2010).
In order to conduct a thorough evaluation of the network, we undertook mixed method research with a range of Linking London members, including partner institutions, key stakeholders and the central team. This comprised the elements shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research method</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scoping interviews</td>
<td>The evaluation began with 10 telephone interviews with Linking London staff members – including the central team and the Chair of the Board – as well as selected partners. This stage informed subsequent stages of the evaluation by clarifying its scope and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document review and secondary research</td>
<td>The primary research stages were complemented by comprehensive and ongoing secondary research using key Linking London documents and data. This included the Linking London Business Case, the annual monitoring reports to HEFCE and Linking London Annual Reports, internal documentation including meeting minutes, event attendance records and feedback reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online surveys of partners and stakeholders</td>
<td>Two online surveys were conducted with Linking London’s membership base – the first was in July 2010, the second in February 2011. The purpose of the first survey was to explore Linking London’s impact in the four years up to July 2010; 83 individuals responded. The purpose of the second survey was to explore in greater detail the changes that occurred after Linking London’s re-structure from July 2010; 79 individuals responded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>We conducted 18 in-depth interviews. Eight of the in-depth interviews were with university partners, five with FE college partners, three with members of the central team, and two with other stakeholders. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or by telephone and most lasted around one hour. All of our key themes outlined above were explored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study development</td>
<td>We also produced five case studies to exemplify the impact Linking London’s activities had. These were developed through a mixture of secondary research and follow-up telephone interviews with key individuals involved in each activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability workshop</td>
<td>Board members and stakeholders participated in a workshop facilitated by CFE at which we discussed their attitudes to the Network, what activities should continue in the future, and what operating models were most appropriate.</td>
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Table 1: Evaluation methodology

This Report

This final report builds upon the interim findings presented to Linking London in October 2010 in order to provide a synthesis of all of our research activities to date. Wherever possible we present our findings in the words of the partner institutions and other stakeholders.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the background to and development of the Linking London LLN over its lifespan; Chapter 3 considers the effectiveness of Linking London’s governance and management structures; Chapters 4, 5 and 6 examine Linking London’s work across the three core LLN activities of: developing progression agreements, curriculum development and other development funding, and information, advice and guidance respectively; Chapter 7 looks at collaboration and partnership working within the Network, as well as Linking London’s profile; Chapter 8 discusses the important matter of sustainability; and, finally, Chapter 9 draws conclusions and offers some points for consideration for Linking London.
2 | Linking London background and development

In this chapter we give an overview of Linking London’s development over the course of its HEFCE funding period.

To evaluate Linking London effectively, it is necessary to understand its background and consider its performance in the context of its evolution over the five years – from 2006 to 2011 – in which it received HEFCE funding. This chapter looks first at Linking London’s aims and objectives, which provide a framework for the evaluation; it then outlines the geographical reach and membership of the network; the chapter concludes by outlining Linking London’s evolution through three key phases up to July 2011.

Linking London’s key strategic aims and objectives

The strategic vision for Linking London was contained in the Business Case document submitted to HEFCE in January 2006. The original ‘Linking London Concept’ was expressed diagrammatically (see Figure 1). The ways in which this concept evolved as the project developed is discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 1: The Linking London Concept, January 2006

Linking London’s twelve original aims were to:

1. enhance the knowledge of client groups of students and employers regarding flexible entry and progression routes to and through HE programmes,
2. maximise choice of progression routes for students through vocational programmes,
3. facilitate flexible modes of attendance and delivery to enhance students’ opportunities to progress,
4. identify and/or develop guaranteed progression pathways,
5. increase progression rates
   a. from FE to HE,
   b. through HE (for example from Foundation Degree to Honours top-up),
   c. from HE into further Postgraduate and post-experience study,
   d. from work into all levels of HE provision,
6. enhance employment and career prospects,
7. ensure, within the partnership, full value is given to vocational qualifications and experience through enhanced understanding,
8. enhance the status of learning through work,
9. encourage re-engagement with lifelong learning,
10. map and codify progression relationships in order to provide a coherent understanding of credit values, and levels,
11. provide effective guidance to students, employers, FE/HE staff and other stakeholders,
12. re-engineer the FE/HE curriculum in order to facilitate better progression ladders to underpin articulation agreements.

To achieve these aims, the Network’s architects identified four key foci for Linking London:

> Flexible learning provision, e.g., work based learning, e-learning
> Curriculum integration, e.g., mapping, curriculum articulation and development
> Credit relationships, e.g., credit recognition and transfer, accreditation of prior and experiential learning
> Guidance, e.g., information and advisory services, database processes

The original Business Case set out a series of key performance targets, spanning the first three years of the project. The quantitative targets that were set encompassed progression agreements, curriculum developments and learner numbers, and these are shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target / year</th>
<th>Year 1, 2006/07</th>
<th>Year 2, 2007/08</th>
<th>Year 3, 2008/09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progression agreements</td>
<td>5 – at least one per discipline area</td>
<td>5 – at least one per discipline area</td>
<td>8 – at least one per discipline area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum developments</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 – at least one per discipline area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner numbers</td>
<td>150 FTEs</td>
<td>200 FTEs</td>
<td>300 FTEs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Original targets for Linking London

Target setting prior to starting activity can be difficult and, as it transpired, Linking London overachieved considerably on these targets. In response, the central team continued to set its own internal targets throughout the duration of the project.

Funding

Linking London was fully funded by HEFCE from its inception in 2006 up to July 2010. Its original allocation was £3.7m. Linking London, in common with other LLNs, had a significant underspend (£0.9m), and was permitted by HEFCE to reprofile the remaining funds for an additional year. For the period August 2010 to July 2011, the Network operates on a combination of these reprofiled funds supplemented by a subscription fee paid by partner institutions. Linking London’s expenditure, as reported to HEFCE through the annual monitoring reports, is shown in Figure 2 alongside the expenditure across all LLNs nationally.
The significantly higher proportion of expenditure attributed to 'other' by Linking London is accounted for by the Network’s development funding initiative (as discussed in Chapter 5). Other noticeable differences include Linking London spending a proportionately larger amount on staff development events (discussed in Chapter 7) and a smaller proportion on curriculum development.

**Geographical reach and membership**

Linking London is one of five LLNs in London and covers the 14 boroughs of the Greater London Authority: the City of Westminster, the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

This area of London is characterised by a high level of diversity between boroughs, including in qualification levels and progression rates. Areas such as Camden and Westminster are ranked among the top London boroughs in terms of the proportion of the working age population that have a Level 4 qualification; contrastingly, Newham is the second worst performing of all London boroughs on that measure, and Enfield and Tower Hamlets are also below the London average. Furthermore, areas such as Hackney, Haringey and Newham also have high proportions of people that have undertaken no adult learning.5

Hence, Linking London’s constituency has broadly been central, east and north London, encompassing 35 partner institutions for the majority of the project – 16 higher education institutions, 19 further education colleges, with 4 adult colleges described as specially designated institutions. The map below shows the geographical spread of institutions, described by the Linking London team as a 'slice' out of London.

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6 This analysis is based on Linking London’s monitoring reports for the three years 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10. The figures for all LLNs are taken from the monitoring forms for 2007/08 and 2008/09, while the figures for 2009/10 were projected by LLNs from the 2008/09 monitoring forms.

Linking London’s membership has changed over time and some “outliers” shown on the map are members that have joined since the Network’s inception. This is an indication of the extent to which Linking London’s geographical boundaries have expanded, with latecomers including: Middlesex University, Barnet College, the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (COHNEL), and London South Bank University. Several new members have made a significant and important contribution to the success of Linking London; Middlesex University, for example, has signed six Progression Agreements, registered 73 additional student numbers in 2007/08 and 2008/09, and been involved in nine development funding projects.

Table 3 shows the members of the Network over the period 2006 to 2010 (an asterisk denotes a member that has joined the Network since its inception). Further changes to membership have occurred for 2010/11, and these are covered in the ‘Governance and Management’ section of this report.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher education institutions</th>
<th>Further education colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birkbeck, University of London</td>
<td>City &amp; Islington College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City University</td>
<td>City of Westminster College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Education</td>
<td>Crossways Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's College London</td>
<td>Hackney Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Metropolitan University</td>
<td>Kensington &amp; Chelsea College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine</td>
<td>Lambeth College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University (London Region)</td>
<td>Lewisham College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Mary, University of London</td>
<td>Newham College of Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Veterinary College</td>
<td>Newham Sixth Form College*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Oriental and African Studies</td>
<td>Southwark College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Pharmacy</td>
<td>Tower Hamlets College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College London</td>
<td>Westminster Kingsway College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of East London</td>
<td>Barking &amp; Dagenham College*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Westminster</td>
<td>Barnet College*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Southbank University, School of Health*</td>
<td>The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex University*</td>
<td>Adult education colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City Lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Ward Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morley College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Men's College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Linking London partner institutions 2006-2010

Linking London’s work has predominantly been within its locality and with its partner institutions, but the LLN has not been constrained by this geographical remit. Linking London has also engaged at both a regional (pan-London) and national level, as one of the higher profile LLNs.

Pan-London

Joint working between the five London LLNs has been particularly important, given that learners in London are not constrained by LLN boundaries. To that end, the directors of the London LLNs have met monthly to update each other on their activities and explore areas for joint working.

Much of the focus of pan-London activity has been on information, advice and guidance (IAG), to improve students’ awareness of progression opportunities across the city. This resulted in a pan-London IAG group chaired by Linking London’s IAG Manager, as one co-chair of the Operational Practitioner Group (OPG) discussed in an interview:

*At some point during the life of the OPG, it became clear that things needed to be done on a pan-London basis, not just around IAG, but IAG was a particular strength for pan-London working. So, there’s a group of [the IAG Manager] and his counterparts who meet pan-London to share resources, and we share programmes of events now as well. I think that the work that has gone on around that is quite important.*

University partner

The pan-London IAG group produced resources such as the Pan-London APEL Learners’ Guide, which explains Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL) in higher education. IAG and admissions staff development events have been held on a pan-London basis,
including the *Progressing the Diploma Learner into Higher Education* event at the School of Oriental and African Studies in December 2009.

Linking London has also worked across London in partnership with Skills for Health (the Sector Skills Council), NHS London and the other London LLNs, to establish a health sector ‘national demonstration site’. This involved the development of ‘bite-sized’ modules of learning for health sector staff in the workplace, with each LLN initially inputting £10,000 alongside funding from the other partners. Linking London had specific responsibility for work on a £25,000 project with Ealing Primary Care Trust and London Metropolitan University to upskill those working in mental health, and a £50,000 project with Whittington Hospital NHS Trust and Middlesex University to develop staff potential in planned care.\(^7\)

**National level**

Linking London has been active at a national and sector wide level, including engaging with the LLN National Forum, for instance by negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with Lifelong Learning UK (the Sector Skills Council) on their behalf. Two particular areas of work also stand out at the national level, namely Linking London’s research into university entry profiles (see the case study in chapter 6), and their work on the 14-19 Diplomas.

On university entry profiles, Linking London conducted research that concluded with the publication of a report entitled, *Quality of admissions information for applicants to full-time undergraduate study*. The report found that entry criteria for non-A-level applicants about progression to Level 4 programmes of study are of variable quality on UCAS entry profiles. While numerous interviewees commended this work, one in particular speculated about its influence:

> I think that the research on admissions profiles was a very important piece of research… I think it has been very influential and very important… I think that research has been documented quite widely, and I’m sure was influential in part of the review of the UCAS tariff.

**Linking London stakeholder**

This work was also disseminated on a national basis, for example through presentations at conferences for the Forum for Access and Continuing Education, NAEGA (the UK association for adult guidance practitioners), Aimhigher and the Academic Registrars Council Admissions group.

Linking London also engaged with national government on their work around the progression of learners from the 14-19 Diplomas into higher education. Having identified gaps in knowledge amongst both sending and receiving institutions, advice and guidance professionals and learners about the new qualification, the Linking London Diploma Team has successfully facilitated a series of events, publications, online resources, an advice line and mapping studies across the London network. Team members outlined the influence of this work:

> Another thing that we are very pleased with is flagging up issues and trying to look at potential solutions around, for example, progression from the 14-19 Diplomas… We’ve had press coverage on it. We’ve had meetings with DCSF, the Under Secretary of State for 14-19… with [the minister for Higher Education].

**Central team member**

Furthermore, Linking London, led by its Director, has engaged with Ministers on several issues related to vocational progression, and has returned submissions to a number of policy consultations. For example, in October 2010, Linking London submitted a response to Professor Alison Wolf’s independent review of vocational education.

**Project phases and the evolution of Linking London**

Linking London has continued to evolve since its inception, and is set to change once more as the HEFCE funding ceases in July 2011. There have been three clearly identifiable phases within the Network’s lifespan, characterised by changes in sector focus and/or structure.

**Phase 1: 2006 to 2008**

The first phase essentially operated under the model described in the Business Case, outlined above. However there were several departures from the original Business Case from the early days of the project, and delays in the appointment of central team members also necessitated a six month extension.

One early change from the original conception was to move away from the Network being directly learner facing. To begin with, both ‘Aim 1’ and ‘Aim 2’ for the LLN and the suggested ‘LLN Clearing House’, implied that the LLN would engage directly with learners and employers—helping both to better understand the progression opportunities available. However, Linking London opted to work instead through its partners, focusing on the ‘back of house’ processes and procedures within partner institutions that would facilitate opportunities and a better experience for learners and employers. The 2008 Annual Report acknowledged this shift in emphasis: “The focus of Linking London LLN has changed considerably regarding applications serving learners as the LLN is not learner facing as had originally been envisaged in the original bid.”

At interview a central team member explained this change and the motivations behind it:

> So, really, it was being a step removed from students and employees, and working with employers through organisations like sector skills councils and working with students indirectly through tutors and advisers. So, by upskilling staff who are on the frontline of delivering IAG…and providing them with staff development resources that plug gaps around the issues of vocational progression to HE, working with our institutions to make those pathways clear, we felt, was a more effective way of going about it and would have a longer-term impact. So, you are upskilling staff that would hopefully remain and pass that knowledge on, as opposed to working directly with students who would then move through the system…you wouldn’t have that longer-term impact. So that’s a key change from that original Business Plan’s diagrams.

Central team member

The first phase was also characterised by the Network’s original focus on the public sector, which included Education, Health Administration, Public Administration, and Community and Voluntary Services. As the ‘Linking London Concept’ diagram shows, there was always scope in the Business Plan to consider new themes, which did transpire in the next phase.

The supporting organisational structures during this phase reflected the focus on these public sector priorities, as Linking London established OPGs for each of the sub-sectors. OPGs for Credit and Guidance were also established at the outset.
Phase 2: 2008 to 2010

The second phase began in June 2008. It was characterised by an expanded remit to include all sectors, and accompanying changes in structures which moved away from the sector focused OPGs. Linking London’s interim evaluation acknowledged, and the interviews undertaken for the current evaluation reiterated, that the previous strict sector focus had presented a barrier to participation in the Network for some partner institutions. For example, Linking London’s formative evaluation included a case study in which a college partner wanted to access support for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, but had to join the West London LLN to access this support. The option of exploring new sectors was built into the original Business Case and identifying a new sector was an original target for the third year of operation. After consultation with network members and stakeholders Linking London agreed to include any sectors that met the regional economic needs of London, enabling partners to prioritise activity dependent upon the sectors with which they are engaging:

In the business plan there’s something about identifying another sector to work in…. In the end, we were just saying we could pick any sector, it doesn’t really matter, and at that point it makes sense just to open it up to them, which I think has worked pretty well.

Central team member

The change created an opportunity for additional partners to engage more; for example, an institution such as the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), with very little provision for the public sector, was able to get much more engaged with the Network. The central team felt that this change was popular with the membership:

I think that the advantage is that you make Linking London a lot more relevant to the Network because you can work... across the board, because some institutions wouldn’t be specialising, wouldn’t have available provision in [public sector] areas. So, in actual fact, I think that in that sense opening the sectors was seen by and large as a positive development and enabled us to work more effectively as well.

Central team member

This reflects a broader point made particularly strongly by one interviewee, that Linking London was very responsive to its membership base:

I think [the Director] has created that customer focused approach, and that has led to I think a very successful network... They listen to the customers. They drive it, but I think that they do seriously listen to what the members say. I think the development of the agenda, if you like, post-business case... has been driven by a combination of the network officers and the members.

University partner

As well as broadening Linking London’s sector remit, the change also allowed Linking London to focus on the processes that lie behind progression for vocational learners across all sectors:

[It meant] seeing our role more as kind of generalists and looking at processes and those kind of processes that could be used across all sectors. Institutional practice and things like that, rather than, as some other

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LLNs have done, focus on a particular narrow sector, but be real experts in that particular sector.

Central team member

These changes in sector focus were accompanied by changes to Linking London’s supporting structures. In particular, the curriculum OPGs – namely Education, Health, and Public & Voluntary Sector – were disbanded in their previous form and evolved into staff development forums. The OPGs that remained were those with a process focus: IAG, Credit and Progression.

Phase 3: 2010 to 2011

The third phase of the Network began in August 2010 and will run to July 2011. This phase is characterised by governance and structural changes, brought about by a reduction in HEFCE funding and the shift to a membership and subscription model. Under this model, partner institutions pay an annual membership to be part of the Network, while non-members also pay for attendance at events and for publications.

This model is not unique to Linking London and forms the basis of the sustainability plans for a number of the LLNs nationwide, including Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance, Higher York, West London, VETNET, National Arts Learning Network and South London.  

This phase saw a reduction in membership for Linking London, as 23 of the partner institutions signed up and paid subscription fees. There were also changes in the Network’s governance structure: the Steering Group’s membership was broadened and it subsumed the role of the OPGs (this is discussed in the ‘Governance and Management’ section of this report). The success of this approach, and its potential as a sustainability model for the Network beyond July 2011, are discussed in the ‘Sustainability’ section of this report.

Overall, partners and stakeholders we interviewed viewed the evolution across these phases positively, and they paid testament to the Network’s ability to be flexible and adapt to the needs of partners as they developed, in what is a fast changing environment.

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HEFCE’s funding guidance to LLNs gave some autonomy to determine their governance and operational structures, which has resulted in LLNs adopting a range of different models. The structures put in place by Linking London have evolved over the life of the Network, as its priorities and circumstances have changed (as discussed in the preceding chapter). Figure 4 below summarises the operational infrastructure of Linking London over its three broad phases.

By 2009/10, the operational structure included three process focused OPGs; in 2010/11 the structure was further simplified by merging the work of the OPGs into the Steering Group. The continuous process of reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the operating model, then adapting and changing to bring improvements, has been a key characteristic of the Network’s development.

Overall, some central team members identified early in the life of the Network that the operational structures might be “rather bureaucratic for a short life project”. Some partners also recognised the benefit of simplifying structures over time, and speculated that a simpler, more streamlined, governance structure would have been preferable from the start.

Figure 4: Linking London operational and management structures across its three phases
I think I’ve sat on both Steering Group and the main Board...the fact that I’m a little bit confused about the difference between the Steering Group and the Board...indicates perhaps that the structure was a touch over elaborate for the kind of organisation it was. I suspect that in terms of governance it was kind of top heavy and probably could have done with a kind of leaner model.

University partner

However, the governance structures of the Network were not judged to have hampered Linking London’s ability to respond quickly to changes on the ground and, overall, survey respondents judged that Linking London’s governance and management structures were effective (Figure 5).

![Figure 5: How would you rate the effectiveness of Linking London’s current governance and management structure? Base 31](image)

The Board

Linking London’s Board principally comprises senior members of staff from partner institutions, the Linking London Director, as well as other stakeholders, such as Sector Skills Councils and the London Aimhigher Director. The Chairman of the Board is an employee of the host institution, Birkbeck, University of London. The Board has had a wide ranging membership. There were potentially up to 41 members at its height in 2007 and meetings were well attended, particularly in the early days.  

The central team report that the Board is comprised of members of sufficient seniority within their organisations to perform its oversight role effectively and raise the profile of the Network among partners.

Within our partnership, we’ve actually hit the kind of just above middle management: people with some influence. We don’t get vice chancellors coming to the Board, but we do occasionally get pro vice chancellors and we do get vice principals... In a sense, that’s probably right because no one would want us to be just a talking shop.

Central team member

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The Board seems to be highly representative of the constituent institutions at the very high level, which I think is important. Any items that are brought to the Board from the Steering Group are for signing off, and they seem to deal with issues of strategic funding, lobbying and overall...coherence and success of the project.

The responsibilities of the Board, outlined in its Terms of Reference, include developing and monitoring Linking London's Strategic Plan, monitoring the annual operating statement and budget, and monitoring the effective use of additional student numbers (ASNs). We asked Board members, through the online survey, their perceptions of the Board's effectiveness in its core duties. Figure 6 below shows that the Board was judged to be highly effective; 9 of the 11 survey respondents that had sat on the Board stated that overall it was either 'effective' or 'very effective'; its other functions were also rated positively by the vast majority of respondents.

![Figure 6: Overall, how effective do you think Board meetings are? Base 14](image)

Respondents were divided on the extent to which the Board's had effectively monitored the allocation of ASNs. This could be a reflection of the Board's role which was primarily to approve plans drawn up by the central team, rather than take an active role in determining the allocations. One Board member felt that the model was not ideal:

_We’ve always discussed whether the resource allocations are discussed by the Board or whether they’re done by the Executive and presented to the Board, that’s an area of...concern for the college. For instance ASNs...I don’t think it’s always been fully transparent...why ASNs are going certain ways._

University partner

However, the feeling amongst the central team was that the Board were given several opportunities both to bid for and to question or debate suggested allocations made by the central team and that this was the most efficient way of distributing ASNs.
A key indicator of the success of the Board is the high level of attendance at Board meetings. Figure 7 plots the attendance at Board meetings, the number of apologies received and, by simply adding these together, the potential total size of each Board meeting. The chart shows that the potential size of the Board peaked in the middle of the project – with more than 41 potential attendees towards the end of 2007 – and has tailed off from the end of 2008.

Figure 7: Attendance at Board meetings, September 2006 to February 2010

Overall, it is clear that the Board has been effective at validating, approving and signing off the work conducted by Linking London, and also at providing support and reassurance to the central team.

I certainly think it’s been successful. Looking at the last Board meeting and just basing success on whether the Board members turned up, it was a very well attended meeting. So, I think there’s still an enthusiasm from the Network to continue to be involved and to make sure that their voice is heard.

Central team member

The Steering Group

The Steering Group’s role, outlined in its Terms of Reference, is predominantly to advise the Board and central team. It is also chaired by the Chair of the Board. Central team members and partners did question the extent to which the Steering Group fulfilled this role effectively and had a distinct role from the Board.

The Steering Group, whether it’s our fault or their fault, hasn’t been as active and as dynamic as I think you need it to be to make it significantly different from the Board. In a way, we kind of ended up using the Steering Group as a sort of sounding board before we went to the Board. There have been a few members that have been full of ideas, but I don’t think it’s been a particularly dynamic group.

Central team member

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11 Data derived from the recorded minutes of meetings.
I must admit that I have felt that perhaps there has been some unnecessary duplication of business across the two... So sometimes I've wondered...what we've added to considering things. ... Earlier on, perhaps when we had a lot of the practitioner groups and they were active, there were reports coming from the practitioner groups to the Steering Group and then on to the Board. So it felt a bit like...a treadmill perhaps of handling business – but committee structures are all like that.

University partner

However, the Steering Group did seem to provide an additional forum in which to engage with partner institutions and maintain a dialogue on the direction of the Network's activities, thus supporting and reassuring the work of the central team.

I don't think, hand on heart, you could say it's really steered in the sense that it perhaps could have done, in another project...They've provided a sounding board and they've certainly allowed us to work...in a sort of collaborative partnership fashion. So it hasn't been Steering Group to core team. 'We want you to do the following', neither has it been core team to Steering Group. 'We're doing this; we don't care what you think'. So it's actually ended up being more of a conversation about ensuring that we're heading in the right direction.

Central team member

Survey respondents who had attended Steering Group meetings mainly judged them to be effective (there was little change in their perceptions of its overall effectiveness across the two surveys); 19 of the 23 Steering Group members who responded to our July 2010 survey stated that it was either 'effective' or 'very effective'. Furthermore, regardless of the lack of a 'steering' function and the ambiguity about the group's role, the Steering Group members did believe it was of value.

I think it's a very open atmosphere. It's genuine contributions, it's genuinely a consulting group, and allowing people to input. I think it's a very useful group.

Stakeholder

Up to 2009/10 membership of the Steering Group comprised the two co-chairs of each of the Operational Practitioner Groups (OPGs, see below) and the Management Executive Group (the LLN Manager and Team Managers). When the Steering Group assumed responsibility for the work of the OPGs in 2010/11, it changed in form and function and membership was opened up to all Linking London members. In this sense the Steering Group has gained more of an operational function.

Eighteen Steering Group members responded to our survey in February 2011, which asked about the impact of these changes. Figure 8 demonstrates that the changes are perceived to have had no impact or a positive impact. Respondents were particularly enthusiastic about the impact that broadening the group membership had had. One interviewee suggested that this had reinvigorated the Steering Group:

I suppose now it's opened up from the strategic level to the operational level, which I think is good, it's healthy...Now, opening it up to the wider membership, it will be interesting to see if we get more, almost operational, ideas coming through.

FE college partner
Figure 8: What has been the impact of the following changes to the Linking London Steering Group? (Base = 18, excludes “don’t know” responses)

Attendance at the Steering Group has fluctuated from meeting to meeting, but it has been consistently well attended (Figure 9). Attendance tailed off through 2009, which led to a trial of online meetings (the first of these in January 2010). The membership of the Steering Group was then opened up to any members of the Network who wished to attend, accounting for a spike in May 2010.

Figure 9: Attendance at Steering Group meetings, February 2007 to November 2010

The Operational Practitioner Groups (OPGs)

Linking London has run a number of Operational Practitioner Groups (OPGs) over its five years of operation. These groups brought together operational and practitioner level staff from partner institutions with a view to improving vocational progression. As outlined previously in Figure 4, and shown in Table 4 below, the OPGs were based around specific subject areas and
then on institutional processes related to progression. The OPGs changed as the Network’s priorities evolved and in response to their perceived effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPG</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>No. of meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health (later incorporating Sport)</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>January 2008</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public &amp; Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>June 2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit relationships group / LLN Progression Subcommittee</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance / IAG</td>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Summary of OPGs, 2007 to 2010

The sector based OPGs did not necessarily disappear, but became combined with staff development events. This change was needed as the Network broadened its activities to include all sectors, but it also recognised that similar issues arose across the various curriculum OPGs, meaning that organising them thematically was more appropriate and strategic.

There might be a few sectoral variations or there might be a few examples where it’s working particularly well in a certain subject and so you might want to look at those reasons. Some of those reasons might be to do with the sector, but by and large, 90 per cent of what they say is going to be around the same issues of progression.

Central team member

Linking London’s original Business Case document envisioned OPGs taking, “responsibility for meeting objectives and the development of procedures and processes in their particular context... The Groups will be responsible for making things happen and for ensuring that the aims of the LLN in their particular contexts are achieved.” Their role was, in fact, less active than this; they did not fulfil an active decision making role and were not accountable for the LLN’s targets. This was felt to be a more appropriate role than that outlined in the Business Case.

The IAG OPG, which is the longest standing, has been closest to retaining its original remit and has taken an advisory role, supporting the central team’s IAG work, signing off publications and resources. Members involved with this OPG were very positive about its effectiveness and the range of tangible IAG outputs produced by Linking London.

Linking London’s OPG model differs from some other LLNs, in which significant responsibility and decision making power, for example around the allocation of funding, is devolved to sector based groups. The Linking London model assumed more centralised control and members reported that this was the most appropriate approach.

The research suggests that some OPGs were more effective than others which is part of the reason why some OPGs have endured. However, Figure 10 below shows that those who had attended OPGs were not on the whole negative about the groups, and partners appreciated the opportunities for networking and promoting partnership working and communication.

University partner
Some partner institutions did feel that the OPGs could have achieved more than they did; central team members felt that a major barrier was practitioners’ ability to commit sufficient time to the groups.

*I’m not altogether sure that the Network ever… really maximised the potential of those groups. It may have just been the one that I was involved in… There was something that needed to be done, but I don’t think there was ever any high degree of clarity as to what those groups could do, or what they should be doing.*

University partner

*[The initial idea was that] they would kind of run and implement projects, but in reality we had two or three meetings and it was different people each time because the same people couldn’t turn up and so it was all a bit stop-start.*

Central team member

The central team

Linking London is characterised by a centralised operating model, which necessitated a relatively large central team. Overall, interviewees considered the central team, and individual staff members, to have been effective in their roles. In particular, partners praised the team for its flexibility and ability to react to changes in the policy landscape, its responsiveness to the membership base, and for providing each partner institution with a dedicated central team link person. There were suggestions from some interviewees that the central team may have been over-sized at points in the Network’s history – it has been as large as 14 individuals. It should be noted, however, that not all of these were full-time posts, and the central team was deliberately enlarged by recruiting three Network Officers and two secondments from a partner university, in order to gain a higher profile among partner institutions and to embed work within partners.

The role of the host institution is also worth mentioning. As the host institution, Birkbeck, University of London has provided infrastructure for the LLN, including office space, IT...
infrastructure, human resources, and finance; it also provides key positions such as the Chair of the Board and Steering Group. Respondents suggested that Birkbeck’s visibility in the sector has been raised as a result of hosting the LLN. Birkbeck has received praise from both the central team and the broader membership base, both in terms of their support to the Network, and their neutrality.

*They’ve been a very, very good host and have demonstrated total probity over finance and clear lines of division between us and them.*

Central team member

*My feeling of other Lifelong Learning Networks is that they are much more centred in the institutions where they are housed, and I think that has been a put-off. But I’ve never felt that at all with Linking London...I think that’s probably a credit to Birkbeck.*

University partner

Overall, Linking London has adapted its governance and management structures to reflect the changing circumstances it has faced. The changes have demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability of the Network, as it seeks to be responsive to the needs of the membership. Partners and the central team acknowledged that, with the benefit of hindsight, the need for changes could have been reduced had the original Business Case document outlined a more streamlined model. However, the centralised operating model is generally regarded as effective and appropriate for the Network.
4 | Progression agreements

In this chapter we examine Linking London’s role in securing and establishing progression agreements between further and higher education institutions, and from the workplace.

Written agreements between further and higher education institutions to support vocational learners to progress have been a core work area for LLNs. Linking London’s original Business Case set targets for the number of progression agreements to facilitate in each of the first three years (see Table 5). Linking London significantly exceeded these targets: by the end of the 2007/08 academic year, partners had signed 21 progression agreements; and by the end of 2008/09, there were 52 signed and implemented progression agreements. This performance led Linking London to continue to set further targets; for instance a target of 18 progression agreements for the 2009/10 academic year, which itself was exceeded by early 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1, 2006/07</th>
<th>Year 2, 2007/08</th>
<th>Year 3, 2008/09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progression agreements</td>
<td>5 – at least one per discipline area</td>
<td>5 – at least one per discipline area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Original progression agreement targets

In total, at the time of writing, Linking London had 77 signed and implemented progression agreements opening up progression routes for vocational learners. The implementation of progression agreements represents a successful output for Linking London, and by the end of 2010, 2,250 learners had the potential to progress from the agreements in place.

Most of the “sending” qualifications were 14-19 Diplomas (31) and Access courses (24), as shown in Table 6 below. In this sense, Linking London’s progression agreements differ from the majority of LLNs, whose sending courses tend to be BTECs and NVQs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending qualification</th>
<th>Receiving Qualification</th>
<th>Foundation Degree</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Signed and implemented</th>
<th>Expected number of learners per year with potential to benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEL</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA/BSc</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTEC L3 and L4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVQ</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-19 Diplomas</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 This analysis only includes the 72 progression agreements that had been signed up to the time of the October 2010 monitoring report. Five progression agreements have been signed since that time.

In the majority of cases, as would be expected, partner further education colleges were the sending institutions and partner universities were the receiving institutions. Linking London was successful in including a broad spread of the membership base in progression agreements: 14 of the Network’s 19 partner colleges (further education and adult colleges) were involved in progression agreements, with City and Islington College and COHNEl being particularly engaged (involved in 9 each), and a long tail of colleges involved in one progression agreement, including a number from outside of the network. Meanwhile, 9 of the network’s 16 universities signed progression agreements, with the University of East London involved in 20 and Birkbeck, University of London involved in 17. The chart at Figure 11 shows the extent of partner involvement.

![Figure 11: Number of progression agreements across Linking London partners](image1)

Linking London’s progression agreements have tended to be bilateral, specific institution-to-institution and programme-to-programme agreements rather than broader matrix agreements spanning more of the members. Despite HEFCE’s initial guidance requesting that, “they are developed on a network-wide basis”, this was something that many LLNs struggled to negotiate.14 While virtually all of Linking London’s progression agreements were institution-to-

14 SQW, Summative evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Network programme, p. 42.
institution, there are many examples of agreements covering several courses, for example in
the case of progression to a range of degree programmes at SOAS, and a progression agreement
from the Access to HE Diploma in Youth and Community Work at Tower Hamlets College to a
choice of thirteen courses at London Metropolitan University.

Linking London has also been particularly innovative in brokering progression agreements in
which the sending organisation was an employer or a local authority – there were eight such
agreements in place, including sending employers such as the Metropolitan Police, NHS,
Newham Council and the Peabody Group.

Finally, a broad spread of subjects were covered by these progression agreements, including
health and the public sector, with subjects including Business and Management, Computing and
Environment/Construction becoming more common from 2009/10.15

Outcomes and impact

The nature and structure of progression agreements varies and has been debated among LLNs.
A Linking London central team member described a continuum, spanning “hard” specific
programme-to-programme agreements guaranteeing places for vocational learners (funding
them using additional student numbers), to “softer” agreements guaranteeing interviews for
learners on particular courses, or giving a commitment to give vocational learners due
consideration. Linking London found the harder model to be particularly effective, (see the
case study later in this chapter), but their approach has included agreements of various types,
as a member of the central team explained:

We started at the hardnosed end because we had ASNs to distribute and so
we needed to know that those ASNs were going to vocational learners who
were being offered progression opportunities. We did soften over the
period of the project...So now, a progression agreement can offer
guaranteed places, guaranteed interviews and what is called ‘due
consideration’. So it's had to evolve but I think it's definitely brought
about a change from the old partnership associate college arrangements
and the old compact agreements.

Central team member

Progression agreements were particularly effective where ASNs were attached, as shown in the
case study example below. Linking London can also point to various other successful
progression agreements supporting identified groups of students, including: 22 FTE learners
progressing onto a range of undergraduate programmes at SOAS in 2008/09, from partners such
as City & Islington College and City Lit; and 19 FTE learners progressing from Lewisham
College to Birkbeck, University of London to study a Foundation Degree in Public Sector and
Local Government Management.

I think some that were linked to the ASNs [were most successful]. We
distributed additional student numbers to those institutions that
bid... successfully for them. Progression Agreements … that aren’t ASN-
related are more of a challenge.

Central team member

We have progression agreements around the funded ASNs...[Learners]
have been coming through the ones with the ASNs.

Over 100 of the 150 ASNs that Linking London distributed in 2007/08 were attached to the progression agreements that had been developed by that point. By the end of the 2008/09 academic year, more than half of Linking London’s 56 progression agreements had ASNs attached to them. The feeling among the interviewees was that agreements without ASNs had been harder to establish and were less likely to be successful, because being offered “due consideration” was not as effective as being offered a funded place on a course.

**Case study: progression agreements and the use of Additional Student Numbers**

The ability of LLNs to fund Additional Student Numbers (ASNs) is widely regarded as a key factor in the success of progression agreements. By using ASN funding, Linking London could guarantee and directly enable learner progression by funding their places on specific higher education courses. The Linking London central team judges that progression agreements with assigned ASNs have proved to be the most successful initially. Conversely, where the “concrete” support of ASN funding is not available, successful progression agreements can be more difficult to create, as illustrated by a Linking London document of 2008:

*Obtaining sign-up without the financial support of ASNs has proved difficult as institutions were not always in a position to make guaranteed places available. Furthermore, without the involvement in ASN work, institutions were sometimes prevented from working on Progression Agreements by financial and time constraints.*

To take one example, in 2007 Middlesex University signed progression agreements with the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (COHNEL) to facilitate progression for students on the NTQ Certificate in Counselling Skills to a Foundation Degree Counselling and a BA (Hons) Counselling. For the last three years Linking London has provided ASN funding to support this progression from COHNEL to Middlesex University, with a high conversion rate between places offered and uptake by learners.

Those involved with the project are clear that without support from Linking London this group of learners would have been unlikely to have progressed to higher education.

*[Linking London] were a very effective driver... I couldn’t see how it could have been done without their involvement... It’s getting additional learners into HE through developing Foundation Degrees. That’s been a big success... There are lots of steps leading on to that, but getting them there, that’s the biggest single impact.*

**Staff member at COHNEL**

*Without those numbers being given to Middlesex, those women at the College of North East London, as it was then, would not have progressed to HE, because at that point they did not have room for them. So we can directly attribute support there to making sure that those people progressed.*

**Central team member**

As well as supporting progression from FE colleges to universities, progression

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16 James Chappell, *Progression Agreements: Two Years On*, p. 4.
agreements with ASN funding also supported work based learners from particular employers to university courses. For example the City of London Police and British Transport Police, saw 50 FTEs registered at City University on the Foundation Degree Police Practice in 2007/08, and 54 FTEs registered in 2008/09, all supported by Linking London’s ASN allocations.

The use of ASN funding to support progression agreements by Linking London will leave a lasting legacy for the individual learners supported, who will have benefited from receiving a higher education place where funding did not previously exist. Although ASN funding is no longer available, Linking London partners seem confident that the progression agreements themselves will continue to be used and that the links between the institutions and courses involved can be maintained.

For many partner institutions, progression agreements have cemented and deepened existing relationships with partners in the area. For example, City University signed five progression agreements with City & Islington College in a range of areas including Public Service Management, Health and Social Care, Young People’s Services and IT.

With Linking London we were able to add, I guess what would be like another tier to those agreements so they, kind of, solidified them even more. We broadened out by two institutions, three institutions, and the number of agreements that we had.

University partner

Linking London was also recognised as having broadened relationships for many of their partner institutions, opening up progression routes that were not previously available, and there is considerable evidence of new formal relationships that did not previously exist. Through progression agreements alone, Linking London can point to 18 new formal relationships that did not previously exist: for example, Birkbeck, University of London signed progression agreements with four Linking London members with whom they previously did not have a formal relationship; similarly SOAS developed progression agreements with City Lit and Tower Hamlets College.

The national evaluation also raised questions around the effectiveness of the implementation of progression agreements, and the importance of them being more than just, “pieces of paper”.
For their part, Linking London’s central team and partners worked to bring progression agreements to life and expressed the importance of implementation plans that lie behind the formal paperwork. For good practice reference, a progression agreement implementation checklist from Linking London is shown in Appendix 1.

I did construct an implementation plan because I thought that nothing would happen. You know, we’d sign the agreement and then nothing. So I did construct a plan...and we’ve done some things like produce leaflets...which we provided to the college.

University partner

It’s easy to sign a piece of paper, but actually working out and working through what the piece of paper means takes a lot of time and resource.

University partner

Overall, partners were positive about the manner in which Linking London progression agreements have improved progression in the capital. In both of our surveys, respondents were broadly positive about the impact that Linking London had on progression agreements. This can be seen in the chart at Figure 12, from the first survey, while in the second survey 29/39 respondents rated Linking London’s impact on developing progression agreements as being a 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale (no impact to high impact).

Figure 12: Overall, how would you rate the impact Linking London’s activities with partners have had on developing progression agreements? Base 83

One of the key challenges that all LLNs have faced with progression agreements has been how to demonstrate that they have led to a discernible increase in progression, especially when data is so hard to obtain. Partners and the central team recognised that data collection has been a challenge here. To its credit, Linking London has looked to tackle this with a number of events, such as The Use of Data for Planning, held in February 2011 and intended to support partners in understanding how data can be used to support the progression of vocational learners. Linking London has also highlighted the issue of gaining accurate data on progression in its most recent monitoring report to HEFCE.
Something that is key to this work is to actually measure the impact. Having attended staff development events and having spoken to other relevant staff, I think it’s been a challenge across the Network. The whole issue of data is really problematic around progression from Level 3 to Level 4. It’s very, very difficult to obtain. We have spent an awful lot of time and energy, and we continue to do so, to work with our sending and receiving institutions.

Central team member

I know that the [university] study pathways in Health and Social Care are being recommended to [college] students, but we’re not really collecting any data on that...We’re not collecting any data on how successful that has been at all. There isn’t any automatic way that we could identify that a student who is registered with us has come via [a progression agreement with the college]. There’s no way, on any database, where we could identify that.

University partner

Progression agreements are intended to be sustainable and may be updated should courses or entry criteria change in future. Linking London is producing guidance materials for partners to help them continue to work together on progression agreements and argues that the groundwork already laid with partners will help to sustain these partnerships. Survey respondents who had worked on progression agreements felt they were either completely or partly embedded within their institutions and several interviewees from partners reinforced this.

I think what it shows is that, let’s say, the approach that Linking London has facilitated has actually now become part of mainstream operations.

FE college partner

They’ll certainly continue to be used...it’s something we’re committed to doing, and that we’ll be committed to doing should Linking London end. I think that’s important.

University partner

To conclude, Linking London greatly exceeded its original targets for developing progression agreements between partner institutions. Many of these progression agreements had funding for Additional Student Numbers attached, directly enabling additional vocational learners to progress. Feedback from partner institutions suggests that they saw Linking London’s work on progression agreements to be effective, and to have encouraged greater partnership working between partner institutions.
5 | Curriculum development and development funding

This chapter looks at Linking London’s role in supporting the development of new qualifications and curriculum, and at the other projects facilitated by the Linking London Development Fund.

Curriculum development

Like other LLNs, Linking London has supported new curriculum developments, working towards its aim of improving progression for learners. This work takes a steer from HEFCE’s priorities for the LLN programme, with their first objective being, “curriculum development to facilitate progression: alignment that removes barriers to progression and bridging provision that forms part of the HE offer; and new HE curriculum development involving employers (foundation degrees, work-based learning, e-learning, collaborative modules).” The Linking London Business Case also identified “curriculum articulation and development” as a key focus for the LLN. Accordingly, a significant proportion of Linking London’s development funding was spent on new curriculum development, led by partner institutions; this accounted for £212,720 of expenditure between 2007/08 and 2009/10.

Each curriculum development is managed by the institution(s) bidding for the funds, utilising their expertise in writing modules or liaising with employers. The Linking London central team approves bids, assessing them against a simple set of criteria, and provides support where needed in the form of a dedicated manager for curriculum development. Linking London’s criteria for funding stipulated that new curriculum developments should support progression from Level 3 to Level 4 courses, as well as show evidence of a need or demand from the industry sector or employers concerned.

At the outset Linking London attempted to base these developments on identified gaps in curriculum; these were identified through a mapping exercise and through the original focus on the public sector. However, this narrow sectoral scope actually presented a barrier to some curriculum development, and thus formed part of the justification for broadening the Network’s sectors of interest. Since doing so in 2008/09, the new arrangements enabled partner institutions to respond to demand by accessing funding for developments they identified themselves. Hence the process of curriculum development went from being a Linking London led process to a partner led one, informed by evidence of industry or employer demand.

Subjects of new curriculum developments include Business Management, Housing, Health and Social Care, Counselling, Hospitality, Art and Design, and many more. A full list of the curriculum development projects is contained in Appendix 2.

Linking London originally set targets for five new vocational higher education programmes for each of its second and third years of operation. Table 7 below shows the extent of new curriculum developments funded by Linking London across different types of qualification, showing that the Network exceeded these targets considerably.

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21 HEFCE, *Lifelong Learning Networks*, [www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/ln/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/ln/)

Employer involvement has been a key characteristic of Linking London’s course developments: employers were involved in the development or delivery of all but one of the 68 courses developed between 2007/08 and 2009/10 (compared to three-quarters across all LLNs). Sector Skills Councils have been involved in 22 new curriculum developments, further demonstrating the level of engagement with external partners.

The central team suggested that with hindsight the new curriculum developments may have contained a high proportion of Foundation Degrees; Linking London indicated that it would like to focus more attention on short courses in the 2009/10 monitoring return to HEFCE. While Table 7 shows that almost half of all curriculum developments have been Foundation Degrees, this is, in fact, in line with the national picture: 44 per cent of new curriculum development across all LLNs has been at this level. Linking London has tried to encourage a greater number of shorter course developments to appeal to new and different types of learners and employers, as explained by a member of the central team:

> The bulk of it’s been Foundation Degrees, and we’ve tried to steer away from that in the last year or so by re-emphasising to the Network that we would like to see shorter course provision…. and to see more innovative modular stuff, which would be a bit more unusual or less within the institution’s comfort zone.

Central team member

Some partner institutions interviewed also believed there could have been greater innovation in new curriculum development:

> I wouldn’t say [the courses] were staggeringly new and they’re probably ones that the market would have led us to develop anyway, but it certainly has helped to have these Additional Student Numbers from Linking London as a trigger for that.

University partner

Other partners pointed towards numerous examples of new developments that created opportunities for vocational learners that would not otherwise have existed, and, in many cases, partners insisted these developments would not have occurred without Linking London’s support. Furthermore, judging innovation depends on the viewpoint and experience of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level / type of provision</th>
<th>Total number of new / modified courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA/BSc Hons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging modules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Degree</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Summary of Linking London curriculum development

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23 The courses in the ‘other’ category mainly refer to short courses or the development of single modules; in many cases these have been intended as continuing professional development and hence often employer- or employee-focused.

24 SQW, Summative evaluation of the Lifelong Learning Network programme, p.34.

particular institution concerned. Given the diversity of experience of vocational learners across universities, some institutions did feel that the new developments were innovative.

*This might not be innovation to other types of institution which are already geared up to vocational education, but for a department like ours, the opportunities that it’s provided to create a curricula, which is very different from the traditional social science curricula. It has been innovative, for us.*

University partner

*It’s been invaluable, the stream of funding for us. The projects have covered a wide range of curricular developments: public health, housing, youth work and information management. Each of them have got their own specific objectives, but in broad terms, they’ve been concerned with securing stronger links with further education colleges, and particularly with employers. Out of those projects, we have developed three new degrees.*

University partner

Evaluating the impact of individual Linking London funded projects is beyond the scope of this evaluation (although we do discuss examples in the case studies throughout this document), however, the large majority of survey respondents indicated that Linking London’s activities had made either a ‘positive’ or ‘very positive’ impact upon curriculum development (see Figure 13 below).

![Figure 13: Overall, how would you rate the impact of Linking London’s activities with partners have had on curriculum development?](image)

Overall, new curriculum developments funded by Linking London have demonstrated tangible benefits to the progression of vocational learners into higher education, as intended in the Business Case. Linking London’s partner institutions consider it to have succeeded in this area. Two college partners in particular identified curriculum development as being their greatest area of impact; an example of curriculum development at Barnet College is highlighted in the case study below.
The area of greatest impact is getting additional learners into HE through developing Foundation Degrees. That's been a big success.

College partner

Case study: The re-writing of a Foundation Degree in Childhood Studies

Through funds obtained from Linking London Lifelong Learning Network, local Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) institutions successfully collaborated to redesign the content and delivery structure of the Early Childhood Foundation Degree accredited by Middlesex University. The funding enabled employers to be consulted and involved in developing the new programme, and set the scene for employer involvement in delivering a new qualification both designed and owned by the sector.

The childcare sector and its workforce have undergone significant change in recent years, following the introduction of new legislation and working practices. New requirements in the Every Child Matters strategy, and the subsequent Childcare Act (2006) transformed the childcare workforce, placing a greater emphasis on common core skills at lower levels, and the development of senior level practitioners holding Early Years Professional Status. These changes created the need for the university and FE colleges to re-write, rather than simply re-validate the Foundation Degree in Childhood Studies.

In the childcare sector at the time, there was an awful lot of legislative changes...Childcare courses needed a re-write, it wasn't just a re-validation of an existing programme, but actually had to be re-written.

FE college partner

Network partners, led by Barnet College, used Linking London funding to support this change, enabling the re-design of the qualification content and structure, and its management and delivery across several institutions.

Re-writing the Foundation Degree began with an event inviting diverse employers and organisations from across the childcare sector, hosted by Linking London. The extent of diversity in terms of delivery in the sector made it especially important to gain the input from a variety of childcare settings, ranging from employees of larger companies, to self-employed carers. The event allowed the identification of the skills, knowledge and competencies employers require for staff working at the Early Years Professional Status level. At the event partners prompted discussion with broad headings and encouraged employers to contribute to the unit structure and requirements for the new programme. The event enabled useful debate about the balance of theory based assessment (e.g. essay assignments) and practical based assessment held in the workplace for the Foundation Degree, concluding that it required an equal balance between the two.

Intelligences from the employer event informed the content of modules, subsequently designed by a writing group of 6-7 representatives (mainly college principals and curriculum managers) from the partner colleges. The writing group members developed units for the programme individually, and worked collaboratively with Middlesex University to ensure that learning outcomes were consistent and within existing guidelines. While time consuming, this process of discussion was necessary to ensure that unit content was standardised and fit for purpose.

The funding provided by Linking London was essential to allow robust and effective planning. The funding also covered staff time costs for attending the event and pay for a suitable venue.

It was really critical...I don't think that we would have been able to give as much time to it, had we not been able to pay for the time of the people attending... we had people coming from settings that had to purchase staff
Case study: The re-writing of a Foundation Degree in Childhood Studies

Without appropriate funding, it would have been difficult to re-write an entirely different framework, because it would not have benefited from such extensive employer input. The funding delivered added value to the design process and gave the programme greater weight and credibility in the sector.

This particular programme is now owned by the sector; there’s a lot of credibility in the programme, because people were part of it. They can’t criticise, because they were part of it. We’ve been very successful in terms of recruitment, we get very good achievement.

One objective for the partners involved was to revamp the management and delivery of the course. Previously, the Foundation Degree was delivered on-site at Middlesex University, with training and assessment provided by staff from partner colleges.

We wanted a validated programme rather than a joint programme, so we could deliver the training in each institution…By devolving it geographically, this would help to raise interest, but enable potential students to study locally as well.

Re-writing and re-validating the course provided an opportunity to move towards full course delivery at all four partner institutions. This has impacted positively upon recruitment, which in turn will positively affect outcomes in childcare workplaces. Devolving the delivery of the Foundation Degree to the colleges has allowed greater choice, and freedom of movement, marked by a significant increase in course participants and improved practice.

Recruitment is up compared to the old course. We’ve gone from 20 to 75. Because I sit on the CWDC [Children’s Workforce Development Council], I can now see the impact of the degree on the [workplace] settings. Overall in Barnet, the settings in the area are getting higher OFSTED inspection grades than before, because they have now got a practitioner with a degree in their settings. There’s been an improvement in the practice on the ground. We have always had high achievements…[however] the success rate for year one is good.

The legacy of the investment made by Linking London is a credible, professional programme for the sector. Working relationships between the partner colleges have improved as a result of the project and employer engagement in both the development and delivery of programmes has increased. Representing a positive step towards achieving the local authority targets set by the Child Care Act (2006) to ensure that by 2016 there is a degree level practitioner employed within each childcare setting. It has also provided a platform for future development work, including higher education taster sessions designed to encourage more sector professionals to enrol on higher level skill qualifications. None of this would have been possible without the funding and support of Linking London.

Development funding

Linking London has provided development funding for which partners can bid to support projects they believe will contribute to vocational progression. Partners could submit a variety of ideas for projects supporting progression for vocational learners. Partners could bid for up to £15,000 for the first two years, which then became limited to £10,000 and, more recently,
£4,000 as the Network’s funding has reduced. Once received, proposals are assessed by a panel comprising members of the Linking London team, including the Director, the Development Fund administrator and other team members with specific expertise. The panel then either accepts or asks for proposals to be re-submitted with suggested changes. In reality, very few bids were rejected outright and, in fact, Linking London has had to work to encourage more partners to submit project bids.

The Linking London team actively encouraged more partners to come forward with ideas and bids for money, based on its philosophy of equity across the partnership. However, there was some acceptance that certain institutions would simply not prioritise such work, despite a number of high profile ‘selective’ universities engaging in the Development Fund and other initiatives. A full list of the development projects can be seen in Appendix 2, while Figure 14 below shows the total amounts of funding received by partner institutions.

![Figure 14: Development project funding by partner institution](image)

At the time of writing, Linking London has funded 74 development projects totalling an investment of £605,980 over the four years from 2007 to March 2011. 20 separate partner institutions have received development funding, representing a good spread of institutions. Middlesex University has been involved with nine projects, London Metropolitan University with eight, and Birkbeck and the University of East London with seven – a reflection of partners’ levels of engagement with the Network.

Partner institutions found the process of bidding for funds straightforward and appreciated support from the Linking London team.

> The process of application is very straightforward, and you can go directly in and apply or, what we’re doing with one at the moment, use the expertise of one of the Linking London staff. So, we’ll... say we’re going to bid and draft a proposal. We’ve already had a discussion and one of the Linking London staff with expertise in that area is going to help to develop it with us... we’ll probably also ask them if they will, when we’re getting it going, come in and support on it, because there’s expertise there.

College partner

The projects have varied in their scope and nature, with much of the curriculum development already discussed funded from this source. Examples of other projects include: a web based APEL toolkit (University of East London, highlighted in the case study below); a peer mentoring scheme for trainee teachers working in community organisations (City Lit and the Institute of Education); the development of a virtual learning environment in a partner college...
A number of innovative projects were enabled by this funding, with each supported by a Linking London staff member. Some of these projects affected real change and new ideas in the participating institutions and enabled institutions to tackle the barriers to progression that they perceived from the ground, rather than it being solely LLN driven.

I had a project, which was an outreach project trying to reach adults. That’s a little bit unusual. LLNs haven’t generally funded that kind of activity, but that enabled me to try out some different ways of doing community outreach work. We’ve settled on a particular model now that we use for our outreach work, which is reaching adults through working with schools and their extended schools agenda. So, that, we felt, was a productive project.

University partner

There was a project around progression from one of our Foundation Degrees, with [a partner college]. It was from fashion on to a top-up year here, and that was really interesting. Something that came out of that was that, if you’re going to come and do a fashion degree, you actually need to be really good at maths because you have to understand your angles, and none of the kids had done maths. So I remember that, and it was useful.

University partner

In another example, at the University of Westminster, the Development Fund enabled a staff member to research student retention issues with students who had reached the university from further education. The work was disseminated widely within the institution and, while the impact is still to be realised, it is clear that the project has raised the issue of vocational learner transition in the university. The individual we interviewed did not believe that this project would have gone ahead without the funding from Linking London.

The Development Fund has had a particular impact when it allowed partners to explore projects that were of interest, but could not previously be accommodated within usual work schedules. Time and workload were the two major barriers to participation in the LLN cited by respondents to our survey, and this is one example of how, through funding, that has been overcome. This has also included funding staff time to work on these projects:

One thing I know is that the staff are increasingly stretched in terms of workloads, and the fact that we were able to leverage in some funding to give staff relief, to develop the courses and external links, that are very time consuming. That we were able to, kind of, buy them out of their teaching time to do that, made an enormous difference. I would be surprised if we had been able to develop those degrees as quickly or as well as we have done.

University partner

It’s something that we needed to do, particularly relating to more traditional qualifications, but something we really never had the time or resource to do...[the development fund paid for] staff time for a designated person to work solely on that project.

University partner
There were some more sceptical comments from some partners about institutions bidding for development funding for projects that they would have undertaken anyway. However, even in these instances Linking London can still claim to have used its funding to support work to improve vocational progression, providing additional funds to help projects even if they might have occurred anyway.

> Well, I look at the poster presentations [summarising development projects] and wonder whether some of those projects weren’t already, you know, in the pipeline, and the money was just a useful, sort of, bonus, in a way. You know, it’s not really for me to say. Certainly our project here…wouldn’t have been done without the money.

*University partner*

Eighteen survey respondents had accessed development funding for a range of LLN priority areas, with developing new curriculum being the most common area. These respondents were almost entirely positive about the impact of this development funding, with no negative responses (see Figure 15).

![Figure 15: How would you rate the impact of development funding? Base 18](image)

Both the central team and the partners realise that the learning from these projects should not be lost, regardless of the future of the LLN. The central team has already taken steps to ensure the legacy of these projects through, for example, a *Funding Change* document and continuing to address these issues.

> I think we're going to have to do some serious work, and I've asked [central team members] to make a start on a typology for our development projects. So we will have these are in curriculum, these are working with employers, these looked at virtual tours for new students, this looked at e-learning, this looked at something else. I think we need to find a way of ensuring that people don't go round these loops yet again.

*Central team member*

The case study below outlines an example of the Development Fund supporting a project within the University of East London.
Case study: APEL development

Linking London recently funded a project at the University of East London to clarify and define processes for the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL, or AEL), then develop a website to support and encourage applications for AEL from prospective students.

Drivers
The University of East London’s mission includes providing higher level opportunities to a wide range of people, overcoming barriers to engagement with hard to reach groups, and ensuring that all who can benefit from higher education have the opportunity to do so. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning offers learners recognition for knowledge, skills and experience gained outside of formal qualifications. This can open up higher education to those who lack formal entry qualifications, thereby supporting the University’s widening participation goals. Within the University the central Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team sets out the underlying process and principles for AEL and associated information, advice and guidance, while AEL management and implementation is devolved to individual schools.

The University had earlier developed an AEL toolkit and an associated website, but owing to resource issues, both were considered out of date and in need of review. The QAE Team recognised that an updated AEL toolkit would add value both for the schools and the applicants through providing a more standardised approach. Providing students with information around prior experiential learning, and their eligibility to obtain credit, was often time consuming and the process could be improved. Staff also recognised that improving the process and information resources for AEL would enable the University to target particular groups of applicants, such as those working in particular sectors, or specific ethnic groups.

Developing AEL – project implementation
The project began with research to gather pedagogic materials and interview previous AEL students for case studies. It became apparent that the existing processes, information and website needed wholesale updating, so the project supported University staff to redesign a new AEL procedure that more closely met the needs of staff and students. This new procedure was consulted on and approved by relevant University committees, ensuring a robust process.

Building on the new AEL procedure, the project then embarked on designing, testing and implementing a new website through which learners could access information, resources and toolkits on AEL. Since there was little evidence on best practice for AEL toolkit development, the forms and mapping processes for the website had to be designed by the project team themselves. This involved mapping in a logical manner the various steps that a prospective learner may take through the website and providing resources to support this journey. The website was created with assistance from the University computing school, taking into account relevant web and accessibility standards. The site is now live and can be seen at www.uel.ac.uk/ael/

There are quite a lot of forms on the website that you can use to map your prior experience against. We had hoped when we started that those sorts of examples [of online AEL systems] were out there, and our job was as much to pull them together… but actually they weren’t out there. We had to design all those things from scratch, and one member of my team, the forms are her design and development really.

Once developed, the new toolkit was disseminated to prospective candidates via a link on the University admission webpage, and via the information, advice and guidance functions in the University. The system was introduced to school staff via a user group, enabling further quality assurance and testing.

Outcomes/Impact
The new website represents a valuable source of information and support for staff and
Case study: APEL development

students, helping to raise awareness of AEL. Alongside the website itself, the University has a new, robust procedure for managing AEL, which has helped to identify the points at which applicants need most support.

The University previously had low numbers of applications for AEL in some academic schools, and is starting to see some increase in the number of applicants applying for credit. A number of schools in the university mentioned at the start that they never received any enquires about APL and that it didn’t apply to them. They are now getting some through; we now see it as a resource to build on for the future. There aren’t huge numbers coming through it, but we see it very much as a resource and as a layer to build on.

The Linking London funding was valuable, as it ensured the timely completion of a project that could otherwise have been neglected in favour of other priorities. While staff time invested in the project probably exceeded the amount of development funding available, the funding was seen as a valuable resource to kick-start the process of re-designing the University’s AEL processes. We might have done it eventually, but we certainly wouldn’t have done it when we did it. If the funding hadn’t been there we probably would not have thought about doing it, if the LLN had not been there pulling things together…they made a difference.

In all, it is clear that Linking London has made a considerable impact on the vocational landscape in their constituency through developing curriculum and through supporting innovative partner led projects via the Development Fund.

Since Linking London broadened its remit to include all sectors, it has supported curriculum developments in response to local needs as determined by partner institutions through the bidding process. This has led to a broad range of curriculum developments both in terms of the institutions involved and the sectors covered. Looking at the courses developed, there was some suggestion that the Network would have liked more short course provision, rather than so many Foundation Degrees, but this trend was in line with the nature of curriculum developments across all LLNs. Encouragingly, the vast majority of Linking London curriculum developments had employer involvement, and many had Sector Skills Council involvement, again reflecting the way in which these development responded to local economic needs.

The Development Fund has also proven to be a considerable success, and demonstrates a considerable value added by Linking London, given that in many cases it has enabled activities that otherwise would not have happened. Again, projects have been partner led, allowing institutions to explore areas of interest to them, to the benefit of vocational learners, and this is reflected in the scope and variety of projects that received funding.
Alongside progression agreements and curriculum development, information, advice and guidance (IAG) activities were central to HEFCE’s original concept of Lifelong Learning Networks. HEFCE felt that a lack of quality IAG acted as a core barrier to vocational learners progressing to higher levels of education. By either providing IAG directly to learners, or, more commonly, by producing IAG resources for partner institutions, Lifelong Learning Networks were asked to improve the quality and relevance of IAG for vocational learners and thus increase progression levels.

Linking London’s work on information, advice and guidance (IAG) has focused on assisting partner institutions to improve the IAG they offer to vocational learners. The activities have included sharing good practice, collaborative work with providers and IAG agencies, support to update institutions’ UCAS entry profiles, developing IAG resources, such as resources for the 14-19 Diploma, and IAG staff development events.

In common with many other LLNs, Linking London has taken the view that its IAG function is not directly learner facing, rather seeing their role as “advising the advisers”. A member of the central team described this approach:

“So, really, it was being a step removed from students and employees, and working with employers through organisations like Sector Skills Councils and working with students indirectly through tutors and advisers. So, by up-skilling staff who are on the frontline of delivering IAG…and providing them with staff development resources that plug gaps around the issues of vocational progression to HE, working with our institutions to make those pathways clear, we felt, was a more effective way of going about it and would…have a longer-term impact.

Central team member

The Network appointed a dedicated staff member with responsibility for IAG, who had previously worked as an adviser. As noted in the section on governance and management, the Network also instituted an IAG Operational Practitioner Group, which has been seen by the central team and other partners as being the most successful OPG. The OPG acted as a strategic steer, setting the Network’s IAG priorities and reviewing progress and publications. IAG also gives a good example of a work area where Linking London has worked outside its network membership to work across the capital.

At some point during the life of that OPG, it became clear that things needed to be done on a pan-London basis, not just around IAG, but IAG was a particular strength for pan-London working. So, there’s a group of [the IAG Manager] and his counterparts who meet pan-London and they share resources, and we share programmes of events now, as well.

One interviewee showed concern over the disbandment of the OPG and hoped the new Steering Group meetings would be as effective.

So, it’s difficult to know whether the person responsible for the IAG work and all the initiatives that have been developed over the three years in that area, will be getting less, sort of, steer, in a way, from the people who are on the OPG. …Whether or not he will still get that degree of feedback, I don’t know, with the new structure. I guess that would depend on the individual members and whether they will feel that it’s important still to continue to make the feedback.

A priority for the Network, highlighted in partner interviews, was developing the “HEI shop window”, addressing the messages about the acceptance of vocational students that universities give to potential applicants. This includes the institutions’ entry profiles described on the UCAS website, as explained by a central team member:

Effectively, what are they saying to potential applicants? That’s something that we saw, as a priority, right at the beginning… ‘What does your own website say?’ Crucially, what does the UCAS website say to full-time applicants who have to use the UCAS website? It gets millions of hits every month. So, if you can get information on that site right, you’re having a long-term major impact on progression.

The case study below explores in more detail Linking London’s work on improving the way universities present their entry requirements to students.

### Case study: Admission information for vocational applicants to full-time undergraduate study

A lack of information on entry requirements can be a particular barrier preventing vocational learners progressing to higher education. Schwartz (2004) identified that vocational learners often find it difficult to relate their qualification to university entry requirements.27

The Linking London team, under their IAG strand of work, set out to improve the information available for vocational learners on university entry profiles at the institutions in their network. Drawing on the findings from a self-initiated research project to assess 550 entry profiles in a sample of 30 UK universities28, they identified that the entry criteria contained in UCAS entry profiles for non-A-level applicants to Level 4 programmes was of variable quality (See Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Complete information</th>
<th>Partial/out of date or no information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Level</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


28Linking London, *Quality of admissions information for applicants to full-time undergraduate study*. The report is available to download at: www.linkinglondon.ac.uk
Table 8: the extent of information available for vocational learners on UCAS entry profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
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<th>BTEC</th>
<th>14-19 Advanced Diploma</th>
<th>Advanced Apprenticeships</th>
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<td>HE Diploma</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>National Diploma</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In order to address this issue, Linking London developed a series of recommendations for key stakeholders including: Linking London to work on behalf of its members to develop a best practice template for use by HEIs when amending entry criteria; HEIs to establish internal committees to consider entry information issues; BIS to allocate responsibility to a national organisation to monitor the quality of admissions information; and HEFCE to make complete and accurate entry information part of the criteria for allocating widening participation grants.

In response, Linking London produced an entry profiles template and associated “health check” for partner institutions to develop and update their entry information. They also awarded £15,244 in development funding to support three institutions to review and update the entry information they provide for applicants with BTEC National Diplomas, Access Diplomas, Advanced Apprenticeships and 14-19 Advanced Diplomas. As a result of this investment, the number of programmes at the three institutions identified as having complete information increased from 30 to 74 and the number of programmes identified as having no information was reduced from 54 to just 16.

Maintaining up-to-date entry information is a key challenge for HEIs and staff time and resources for this type of activity are limited. However, the financial and practical support from Linking London helped institutions overcome these barriers and made it possible to review and update their entry information:

> It's something that we needed to do, but something we really never had the time or resource to do. Obviously we were very clear in our prospectus about ‘this course is two As and a B’, or ‘this course is two Bs and an A’, you know, but saying what [entry requirements] were if you didn’t have [A-levels] was an issue. When you go on to the entry profiles now the information is clear, but it's also full... So now all that information is on there, and students have a very clear idea about what it is they could be studying and what they will need to get in.

University partner

Those involved with the project recognised the positive impact these improvements will have on both providers and future learners. Good quality information for a wider range of learners increases the potential pool of applicants and ensures institutions can select from the most talented learners, irrespective of their educational background. It can also help to reduce the barriers to HE, real or perceived, for learners on non-traditional routes. Finally, high quality information helps vocational learners make informed decisions about the most appropriate progression route and programme for them.

Thanks to the LLN, the infrastructure is now in place to ensure full and consistently clear entry information is available to applicants, irrespective of their educational background. Linking London will continue to work with institutions in order to ensure this process continues and becomes embedded. However, it will require a continued commitment from the institutions to ensure this legacy is sustained in the longer term.
Overall, respondents to the online survey were extremely positive about the impact that Linking London’s activities with partners has had on developing IAG resources (Figure 16). The follow-up survey in February 2011 found the majority of respondents felt that Linking London’s programme of events had had a high or very high impact on information, advice and guidance. 31 out of 34 respondents felt that Linking London’s work had had a moderate to high impact in the six months preceding the survey.

![Figure 16:](image)

**Figure 16: Overall, how would you rate the impact Linking London's activities with partners have had on developing IAG resources? Base 83**

Interviewees were generally impressed with the quality and presentation of the resources produced by Linking London. Importantly, interviewees suggested that resources have successfully reached advisers on the ‘front line’, with progression guides that explain the different routes into and through higher education having been found particularly useful. Other resources have also proved popular; for example, Linking London’s publication, *Supporting Vocational Learners Progress to Higher Education: A Guide for Advisers*, has received nearly 650 downloads from the website alone.\(^{29}\)

> We’ve used their handbook for students on preparation for university, so that booklet, we loved it and we used that. We’ve also used their…progression cards. So we’ve used all of that, and we’ve used specifically certain pathways that they’ve developed. We’ve used the engineering stuff [a leaflet promoting progression agreements] a lot. There is a huge amount of literature, I know, that we’ve been given throughout the year. What happens is that comes in to the college and…it goes to the respective ten heads of schools, and I know that we’ve always gone back to [Linking London] for top-ups. So in terms of that area of work, we have used probably all the materials a lot.

**FE college partner**

In the follow-up survey, 26 out of 54 respondents from partner institutions either strongly or slightly agreed that IAG activities have been embedded in their institution. One interviewee, from the higher education sector, commented that it is difficult to know if practices would be

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\(^{29}\) As at August 2010.
embedded, but Linking London has had considerable success at raising awareness of vocational progression, which itself would have a lasting effect.

I think there will be certainly a legacy from the work of Linking London because, you know, once you’ve raised awareness, you’ve raised awareness, so you’ve actually influenced, for example, admissions teachers in HE to actually look at the non-traditional qualifications.

University partner

The case study below discusses a further example of Linking London helping to raise awareness of information, advice and guidance issues, this time on the development of a central source of information on part-time HE.

Case study: Working with UCAS on developing a Part Time HE Pilot for London

While there are a number of websites advertising part-time HE study opportunities, there is currently no single publicly available authoritative source of part time undergraduate course provision. Universities advertise their part time provision on their own websites and often market only within their own locality. Furthermore, each part time HE provider operates its own admissions process, with no centralised source of information on the part time application process. Feedback from IAG advisers in the Linking London Network and from initial research conducted by UCAS suggests that potential learners and their advisers often find it difficult to find the level of information they need in a timely fashion.

Linking London raised this issue with UCAS and a series of meetings took place with UCAS between December 2007 and March 2008 to explore the potential for collaboration on a part time HE information pilot. Representatives from UCAS attended a joint event delivered by Linking London, Birkbeck, University of London and The Open University entitled Part Time HE: The Forgotten Option?, which aimed to raise awareness of part time HE study and explore some of the key IAG issues and potential solutions. Feedback from IAG delegates highlighted the real issues facing them when advising on part time HE study and the need for a definitive central online resource for part time HE study.

In July 2008 UCAS delivered a presentation to the Pan London LLN Directors meeting at Linking London’s invitation and as a result 12 HEIs and FECs30 with HE provision were invited to attend several meetings hosted by Linking London. These meetings focused on exploring three main options for a potential part time UCAS pilot:

> **Information service** - This would provide potential learners with the opportunity to search for part time and flexible undergraduate learning options, using relevant search criteria.

> **Application system** - This would build on an information service to enable potential applicants to submit a standardised application online.

> **Admissions system** - This would include an information service, and an application system hosted by a third party (i.e., UCAS) that would deal with the whole admissions process on a similar basis to the existing full time undergraduate admissions service provided by UCAS. It would also enable valuable data to be collected and shared on a regional/national level.

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30 The Open University, Barnet College, Birkbeck, University of London, City of Westminster College, Goldsmiths, University of London, Greenwich Community College, London South Bank University, Middlesex University, Open University, Thames Valley University, University of East London University of Greenwich, University of Westminster.
Case study: Working with UCAS on developing a Part Time HE Pilot for London

Joint presentations (UCAS & Linking London) have been delivered at the annual UCAS Admissions conference in Birmingham in 2009, and to National LLN directors to highlight this work. A feasibility study has been conducted by consultants on behalf of UCAS, which investigated the potential for setting up an online information, application or admissions service for part time undergraduate courses and included online surveys with students and interviews with key staff in the 12 institutions.

The results of the feasibility study along with recommendations have been submitted to HEFCE and made available on the HEFCE website from July 2010. Key findings from the report include the opinion shared among the 12 institutions that they were keen to be involved in an information service and that UCAS should take responsibility for this. 82% of the group supported an admissions system, but were clear that this is tempered by the need for a slower, phased approach to this development.

Conclusion

Linking London’s role has been to highlight a need, raise the issue with key stakeholders and explore potential solutions, along with creating an interest in a pilot project resulting in 12 HE and FE partners taking part. Linking London also raised the issue of the need for a centralised part time service with LLN partners regionally and nationally and provided regular updates through the LLN National forum on progress in this area.

Linking London is awaiting a final decision on whether UCAS will proceed with the suggested admissions service. The Government has expressed an interest in UCAS developing a part time undergraduate service on a national basis, so it is likely that a national pilot version will be introduced in the near future. Whether this will initially consist of an information service only or an application or a full blown admissions service remains to be seen. Linking London hopes that its work in highlighting this issue and working with key stakeholders on a possible solution has provided momentum for a potential national part time service to be established in the near future.

Finally, it could be argued that the creation of a one stop service for potential part time applicants will also have a significant impact on widening participation, especially given the likelihood that more potential HE learners will explore the part time option as tuition fees increase.

The sharing of course information and providing a ‘one-stop-shop’ solution to making an application will encourage participation into higher education. It will also aid employers in their quest of ‘up-skilling’ their workforce and contributing to the higher skills agenda and challenging Leitch target of 40% of all adults in England achieving a higher education qualification (level 4) by 2020.

In conclusion, Linking London has been judged by partner institutions to have made positive impacts on their delivery of information, advice and guidance, and of their understanding of key issues in delivering IAG to vocational learners in London. The extent to which this has impacted to learners themselves is very difficult to quantify, especially as the Linking London team...
deliberately took on a non-learner facing role. However, feedback from partners suggests Linking London has met and exceeded their expectations in providing useful resources, events and funding IAG related development projects. Partners informed us that these activities have had a positive impact on their institutions and ultimately on the learners themselves.
Collaboration and partnership

This chapter outlines and evaluates Linking London's role in facilitating networking, partnership and collaboration among its partner institutions, as well as its profile raising and communications activities.

One of the core purposes of Lifelong Learning Networks was to bring together FE and HE institutions within a given geography and encourage communication and networking among them. Although existing relationships between institutions were evident prior to the introduction of LLNs, the extent and quality of these relationships varied considerably, depending on location, institutional mission and perceived competition. Bringing together all the institutions in a given geographical area was, therefore, a key challenge for LLNs.

Linking London is among the largest of the LLNs with up to 35 members. However, because of the proximity of many of its members, a number of institutions had developed effective working links prior to the Network being established. For example, London Metropolitan had links with 10 local FE colleges and several other universities and colleges had “compacts” in place to support student progression. Some institutions were also involved in collaborative activities through Aimhigher and the Association of Colleges. In contrast, other members had few or no links with local institutions. Linking London’s Business Case considered how the LLN could help strengthen these existing partnerships as well as foster new ones. Interviewees from both the FE and HE sectors observed that the focus of much of Linking London’s work in this area was on “cementing” the existing relationships that had naturally built up over time, deepening them and extending them to include more institutions.

However, respondents also acknowledged that there were and still are a number of barriers to partnership working that must be overcome. These include competition between institutions, the complexity of relationships that are tightly concentrated in London, and most fundamentally, partners’ finding time to participate in Network activities. The networking and collaborative projects facilitated by Linking London are outside of the normal remit for many staff and they find it difficult to prioritise them during busy periods. In the follow-up survey, 29 of 78 respondents cited time and workload as the key barriers to engagement with the Network.

[The biggest barrier is] people in institutions having the time to engage and follow through. You know, it’s one thing doing a bid for a development fund or expressing interest in a progression agreement, but it’s quite another thing to actually carry those activities through, review them, and produce some results. People have got to dedicate the time to it. Although there has been project funding for some staff time, it’s not very easy to buy out time. ... People have done it, but it’s not been easy finding the time.

Central team member

In addition, the central team report that geographical location, lack of perceived fit with the Network’s aims, and/or membership of other LLNs have acted as barriers for a minority of members and, as a result, they have engaged in only a limited way.

Despite these barriers, Linking London has successfully facilitated partnership working by creating a mechanism through which members can network and collaborate. Activities such as meetings, events and the opportunity to access development funding have encouraged and supported the development of new partnerships and cemented existing ones. It is also
important to note that Linking London has worked with wider stakeholders beyond its partners, including for example 14-19 co-ordinators within its local boroughs.

The opportunity to formalise both new and existing relationships at an institutional rather than individual level through projects or progression agreements has been particularly valuable. Taking progression agreements as a proxy for partnership engagement and collaboration, Linking London can point to 18 new relationships that have been developed as a direct result of the Network’s activities: for example, Birkbeck, University of London signed progression agreements with four Linking London members with whom they previously did not have a formal relationship; and SOAS did the same, including progression agreements with City Lit and Tower Hamlets College.33

I think what it’s done is it’s really enhanced and developed the relationships with key [partner institutions] that we’ve always taken students from, but probably never spoken to, except on the day before Clearing.

University partner

There were relationships between the university staff...at a programme level, with our staff and also with registry staff at the HEI and our admissions staff. So those new relationships were formed directly as a result of this...It certainly would not have happened so quickly [without Linking London] and they were a very effective driver...I couldn’t see how it could have been done without their involvement.

FE college partner

Outside of the formal work on progression agreements or development projects, the impact Linking London has had on the development of new relationships is more difficult to evidence. One of the Linking London central team observed, “Some of those networking things that we’ve actually brought about, a bit like the dating agency role, those are so hard to evidence because at the end of the day, when people know somebody, they know somebody.”

A partner institution felt a similar way, but felt that despite the difficulty in evidencing these new relationships, they were invaluable.

You can’t put a price on communication and networks and connections. I mean these things are very difficult to quantify, but we know they’re extremely important in every sector. Knowing who to talk to, when to talk to them, you know, knowing what’s happening in the wider context outside of your own sector. That kind of information and communication is quite invaluable.

University partner

Through engaging with events and the Network more generally, several interview respondents felt that they came to know colleagues in other institutions much better than previously, meaning that further collaboration and communication outside of the work of Linking London was more likely.

33 This analysis is based in the relationships shown in Appendix D of the original Business Case. This analysis includes only formal progression agreements between Linking London member institutions, hence there are further formal relationships generated with institutions outside of the Linking London network and also with employers.
I think the Lifelong Learning Network has been a really good forum for cross sector colleagues, for coming together and airing their views... So when ... a colleague from another institution, who I know from the Network, who phones me up and says, ‘Will you be on my steering group? I’ve got some money to do this particular piece of work’, I will know him. So I think it enhances those relationships, value added almost.

University partner

It is important to have those links and be able to phone up [to partners] and say, ‘Look, I’ve got this student. He’s absolutely brilliant,’ and you have the relationship where they say, ‘Oh, send him down and we’ll talk to him.’ We didn’t have that before.

FE college partner

Profile and communications

All Lifelong Learning Networks have made efforts to raise their profiles with partner members and beyond. Linking London sought to achieve this using various methods. The evidence from our research suggests that partners and stakeholders feel that Linking London’s communications activity is strong and has successfully contributed to raising its profile across London. Linking London’s email communications are now distributed to over 2000 individuals working in a range of organisations, including many beyond the core membership. A strong profile and reputation are crucial for maintaining partner engagement and demonstrating the value and impacts that the Networks can achieve. In addition, it will become increasingly important as the Network seeks support from partners for its continued sustainability.

Both online surveys revealed high levels of awareness from partners and stakeholders of Linking London’s main methods of communication, including The Link monthly electronic newsletter, the FE/HE Matters monthly publication, emails, the website and blog, and events. Overall, a large majority of survey respondents thought Linking London’s marketing and communication activities are either effective or very effective. In the follow-up survey we explored in greater detail the effectiveness of Linking London’s marketing and communications activities. It was striking that the majority of respondents felt that the activities were effective or very effective at achieving the stated goals, as shown in Figure 17.

![Figure 17: How would you rate the effectiveness of Linking London’s marketing and communications activity in the last six months at...?](image)
Interviews also suggest that most respondents are satisfied with the communication they receive and found Linking London’s website to be a useful portal for accessing resources and information online:

The website went through a drastic overhaul... and it’s now a very good website, because it has lots of resources. So, obviously it has the information about the Network, but there’s also a lot of resource information on there as well.

University partner

One challenge all Lifelong Learning Networks have faced is disseminating their work and raising their profile beyond a small number of staff within each partner institution. It is difficult to gauge the awareness from these wider individuals, but our interviews suggest that the more active representatives from partner institutions do cascade the relevant information within their own organisations.

Previously it was, you know, just me... as an individual within an institution. What I’ve tried to do is push the Network internally, so colleagues can see the value in the Network – and that’s not just about widening participation.

University partner

This has been facilitated by Linking London through the designation of a named “link” person at each institution, who acts as a dedicated and crucial point of contact with the Linking London team. The central team found that this link person approach had been largely successful, although this did differ from institution to institution.

It was clear from our interviews that Linking London’s publications, as a tangible output, have had a positive impact on partners. Partners spoke highly of the quality of the publications and their usefulness as a resource. As one example, in response to the renewed emphasis of HE policy on student employability, Linking London has recently published an analysis of key drivers influencing activity across the sector, including the Browne Review and new QAA audit methods, which makes suggestions on how partners can audit their own provision through use of a targeted self-assessment tool.

Various publications are actively used by staff in partner institutions, demonstrating genuine ‘front line’ impact.

The publications: again, huge resource. We request them fairly often, because they fly around different parts of the School. I think in some of the other networks I’ve been involved in, you know, the lack of such a publication has been quite a hindrance.

University partner

Linking London appeared to produce more, in terms of guidance for their membership, for a broader range of people, in terms of their documentation [and] guidance.

Stakeholder

Linking London has also established a high profile for the Network and its partners through its advocacy role for vocational progression. On behalf of its members, this has included correspondence with Government, such as a recent letter submitted to the Department for Education to highlight various issues facing vocational learners, and meetings with the Ministers responsible for the 14-19 Diploma, for example. Respondents to the survey reinforced
the finding that one of Linking London’s key impacts has been raising the profile and awareness of the issue of progression of vocational learners to higher education: 63 of 76 respondents to the question said that they had made a very positive or positive impact in this area.

Advanced Diplomas are one of a series of Diploma qualifications available as part of the 14-19 curriculum reforms that offer a combination of general and applied learning. They were designed to support progression to FE, HE, or to employment with training. However, as a new qualification, there was a paucity of understanding of the Advanced Diplomas on the part of both learners and education institutions. The Linking London Diploma Team therefore worked to provide support and information services to increase understanding of the complex curriculum content, and progression routes from the new Advanced Diplomas.

Despite the fact that the Coalition Government is no longer pushing for the expansion of the new Diplomas, the work of the Linking London Diploma Team provides an example of how the Network has reacted proactively and flexibly to sector needs and developed services beyond its original core focus, in order to add value to the wider sector as well as encourage collaborative approaches to the new qualification. Linking London conducted research into the issues around progression from the Diplomas, then facilitated a series of events, publications, online resources, an advice line and mapping studies across the London network. The work of the Linking London Diploma Team has assisted (to date) in the development of five Advanced Diploma progression agreements between FE and HE institutions. The Team has also been integral in raising the qualification’s profile and adjustments to the UCAS Entry Profiles with several London Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to enable learners completing the Advanced Diploma to successfully progress into HE.

The ones that my colleague has been attending on Diploma qualifications, he has found invaluable, because he would have never had the time nor the effort to sit down and focus on unpacking what is...very tricky and complicated to understand.

University partner

Linking London built strong links with borough 14-19 Diploma leads as part of developmental work in relation to the Diploma meaning that, in response to demand, the former Diploma Development Partnership group has now evolved to become a Vocational Progression Group. Curriculum leads are keen to be kept informed about new developments happening across the sector and, again, in response to demand, they have recently been added to the circulation list of FE/HE Matters, an internal briefing paper sent out to partners at the beginning of each month. This relationship is indicative of the extent of capacity building which has been built up over recent years and highlights the way in which network activity has broadened and deepened over time.

In the last year Linking London has focused increasingly on progression from Apprenticeships and is currently working with network members to improve progression to HE from Advanced Apprenticeships. Work in this area includes funding projects with three HE and FE partners aimed at identifying and promoting HE progression pathways for Advanced Apprentices, running a series of events to share good practice and the production of a well received paper, Apprenticeships and Progression to Higher Education. Linking London is also part of a project with London South Bank University and the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, SEMTA, which successfully bid to the National HE STEM programme to fund work to develop and pilot a Higher Apprenticeship model for SME employers and help develop pathways for engineering technicians and incorporated engineers.

Staff development and events

Perhaps the most visible of Linking London’s communication channels has been its programme of staff development activities, events and conferences. The Network held 21 events in the
academic year 2008/09 and 23 in 2009/10, and over its lifetime hundreds of individuals have attended events. These events are usually targeted at staff in partner institutions and cover a wide range of topics relating to the Network’s aims. Respondents to the first online survey had attended events relating to a variety of topics; Figure 16 shows that these events have had a moderate to high positive impact across all work areas.

![Figure 16](image)

**Figure 16: How would you rate the effectiveness of Linking London’s programme of events in the following areas? (Base = 77, excludes Don’t know and N/A responses)**

When consulted through our interviews and surveys, partners and stakeholders saw staff development activities in particular as a key success for Linking London. The Network has offered a range of staff development opportunities aimed at increasing awareness and sharing expertise and best practice. Both the online survey and interviews with Linking London partners demonstrate that these activities have had a positive impact. The events were regarded as useful both for building staff members’ knowledge on complex subjects and as another networking forum for partners and stakeholders. These events have also engaged a broader range of staff members from within partner institutions than those directly involved in development projects or OPGs.

*Some of the events they’ve put on have been very good and I think they’ve really given people an opportunity to really think about, and get their heads around, some of the more difficult things that they have to do.*

University partner

Interviewees did comment that the events and conferences run by Linking London have been a key mechanism through which to meet their peers within other institutions, which may then lead on to other opportunities for collaboration outside of Linking London’s core area of work.

*I think the annual conferences have been very good. Networking events, which have helped bring people together, and as well as being very informative they’ve had a good range of speakers…. Formal events, but there’s a lot of networking goes on behind the scenes, and that’s very helpful.*

University partner
The majority of the respondents, including all higher education institutions, felt that information received from staff development events was being disseminated and embedded within their organisation.

I've sent a couple of emails out today and passing on what I learnt from [the event]. In the same way, we've had people go out to diploma meetings, who I know have come back and they've brought back the information and disseminated in the college. …there has been a lot fed back into the college.

FE college partner

Finally, the feedback from Linking London’s own evaluation of its events was also very positive. Table 9 provides feedback for a sample of recent events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to HE Diploma and BTEC National Update</td>
<td>14 October 2009</td>
<td>82% of attendees rated the event ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Data to Support Progression</td>
<td>21 October 2009</td>
<td>100% of attendees rated the event ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Skills and the Vocational Learner</td>
<td>8 December 2009</td>
<td>83% of respondents said that the event had fully met their needs across all or most aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going for Gold: Vocational Progression in the Sports Sector</td>
<td>20 January 2010</td>
<td>85% of attendees rated the event ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Knowledge Transfer Seminar</td>
<td>3 February 2010</td>
<td>63% of attendees rated the event ‘Excellent’ and 37% rated it ‘Good’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression and the Professions</td>
<td>11 February 2010</td>
<td>50% of attendees rated the event ‘Excellent’ and 40% as ‘Good’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Linking London event feedback

Additionally Linking London has developed new course material themselves where the need has arisen or a gap has appeared in the staff development market. A recent example of this has been the development of two Masters modules for a Professional Practice MA in the area of Admissions and Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (A(P)EL). These modules were launched under the title of ‘Professionalism through Collaboration’ and have been made available for all partners to use. The Network has also commissioned a Level 4 module for learners to support the A(P)EL process, which was a piece of ‘unfinished’ work identified through the Credit OPG when it was still in existence.

Overall, the evidence suggests that Linking London has successfully increased partnership working between FE and HE institutions in the Network by cementing existing relationships and helping to establish new ones. There is general agreement that the extent and quality of the relationships that have been established would not have been achieved without the support of the LLN. The development of these partnerships has been underpinned by effective communication and profile raising activities which have also helped foster a culture of collaboration that should be sustained in the longer term. Ultimately, the fact that 2/3 of Linking London’s partners have paid a subscription to maintain their involvement in the Network during its fifth year of operation is a clear indication of their commitment to the Network’s original aims and the value they gain from its role as a facilitator of collaboration and partnership. Many agree that Linking London should concentrate on this area above any other in the future.
8 | Sustainability

This chapter discusses the Network’s future plans and partners’ attitudes to sustainability.

HEFCE funding for Lifelong Learning Networks was always intended to be short-term and fixed, meaning sustainability beyond this funding has been a key issue for all LLNs. Some LLNs have been content simply to end operations when central funding ceased, so that sustainability has essentially been about ensuring their outputs (progression agreements, resources, new curricula) are adopted, used and maintained by partner institutions. Other networks have had sufficient profile among partners that they have planned to continue operating even after central funding ended. Some have found funding from other public sources; for example Sussex Learning Network is now continuing through employer engagement funding provided through HEFCE. Others still have subsumed or merged the Lifelong Learning Network with other prominent provider networks in their area.

The sustainability of Linking London’s activities was an ongoing theme during the course of our evaluation, as we asked partners and stakeholders about sustainability in both the in-depth interviews and the second of our online surveys (in February 2011). Most importantly, the evaluation concluded with a sustainability workshop in April 2011, facilitated by CFE, which was attended by eight Linking London Board members and one stakeholder. The objectives of the workshop were for Board members to:

> Review the evaluation findings up to that point
> Identify future priorities for the Linking London Network
> Assess potential operating/delivery models for Linking London
> Discuss the potential next steps

Overall, participants in the workshop agreed that Linking London has been a useful resource for higher education institutions and further education colleges in the catchment area over the course of its HEFCE funded period, indicating that the Network has worked best when partners have been actively engaged in determining its activities.

Generally partners agreed that it would continue to be valuable to have a ‘brokerage’ body such as Linking London to facilitate and coordinate collaborative working between higher education institutions and further education colleges in London. There was consensus that the priorities and work of the network must now change to adapt to current partner needs. With HEFCE funding requirements no longer a guide to the network’s action, its future development should be entirely guided by its members, both current and potential.

Future operating models for Linking London

For the 2010/11 academic year Linking London has continued operations through a membership subscription model. This model is similar to that being explored by a number of LLNs, including the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance, Higher York, VETNET, the National Arts Learning Network, and South London LLN, so it is not without precedent and open communication with these other networks, to share experiences, will be important. Encouragingly, 23 of Linking London’s partner institutions signed up for the 2010/11 academic year and paid a subscription fee. In addition to this revenue, Linking London also began to charge non-members for its events and publications, and has submitted a bid for European funding under the European Lifelong Learning Programme.
In our follow-up survey in February 2011, the majority of respondents from partner institutions agreed that Linking London membership offers value for money, as shown in Figure 19 below. This was reinforced during the interviews that we conducted, as partners consistently saw the value and benefits of being involved in the Network. Despite this, when asked whether they anticipate paying for 2011/12 membership, the majority of respondents (38) stated that they did not know, while 10 said that they did anticipate paying and 5 that they did not.

Institutions are staking their own time and their resources into the Linking London now... we have [subscribed]. That’s come directly from [the Pro Director], who said it’s really important that we continue to engage and support these things. You know, it’s a small investment for what we consider will be a really good set of outcomes.

University partner

Going forward with public expenditure cuts – … We did in the end agree to pay a small subscription, so that we will be in there for a bit longer as a result. I can’t really see us paying any subscription beyond that...and I’m not sure that other institutions will.

University partner

![Figure 19: To what extent do you agree that Linking London membership offers value for money? (Base=52, excludes don’t know responses)](image)

Participants in the sustainability workshop were in a position to say more on this matter, and they were positive in their belief that their institutions would continue to pay for membership, providing that Linking London’s focus adapts in the ways discussed elsewhere in this chapter. The group felt that the subscription fee should not rise above its current level. Ultimately Linking London’s partners will have different views on this and it is likely that some partners will not continue contributing to the Network, underlining the importance of broadening membership and other revenue streams.

Broadening the Network’s membership, in order to increase its income through subscription revenues, and its reach and value as a collaboration vehicle, was suggested throughout our evaluation as a means of ensuring sustainability. Three particular areas to explore in terms of broadening the membership base were identified as being:
> Pan-London higher education institutions, i.e. those outside of Linking London’s historical catchment area.

> Pan-London further education colleges, i.e. those outside of Linking London’s historical catchment area.

> Private sector training providers and awarding bodies.

One partner in particular urged Linking London to review a previous decision not to include private providers, and they might be a particular pertinent group of new members given the anticipated expansion in private higher education provision, as well as their existing strength in further education.

*Ironically, the area that is going to be desperate for the kind of input that Linking London can work to will be the private colleges...The new trend is that private colleges are likely to be favoured, and there’ll be new private universities...That group, the private sector, is going to be the sector that has money to spend...The decision was taken at the last Board meeting very clearly not to involve the private sector. Now that may be a decision that, if the Network is to survive, will have to be revised.*

**University partner**

At the sustainability workshop Board members agreed that it was now legitimate for Linking London to broaden membership out to the private sector. There was some suggestion that for-profit members might be charged a higher subscription fee, reflecting the perception that they have greater capacity to pay. It was felt that there must be clear agreement from all partners on the basis upon which private sector members were admitted: partners felt that the purpose of the network is collaboration in the interests of learners, and that this should not be compromised in any way.

With the future of London’s other LLNs also uncertain (South London LLN, West London LLN, South East London LLN, the Creative Way) there may be universities and colleges across London that will now consider joining Linking London. Linking London is also currently consulting on a range of further membership options, including schools with large Sixth Forms, stakeholders (such as Awarding Bodies), employers and individuals.

There are some key considerations in implementing the future subscription model, none more so than Linking London’s ability to demonstrate that it adds real value to partners, both to justify the subscription fee for existing partners and to attract new partners. Our survey suggests that current members do believe membership provides value for money. Participants in the sustainability workshop also felt that the Network must have a sufficiently high profile for institutions to have positive opportunities to promote their widening participation credentials through their membership of the network.

Several workshop participants felt that it was important that the new version of the Network was seen to be a slimmed down, focused model, reflecting the parallel slimming down and cuts in the FE and HE sectors; however, as Figure 4 in Chapter 3 showed, this is something that Linking London has achieved over time.

**Future activities for Linking London**

Our follow-up survey in February 2011 revealed some optimism from Linking London’s partners about the sustainability of the Network’s activities. 30 respondents strongly or slightly agreed (14 and 16 respectively) that Linking London’s activities are sustainable in their current form, while only 12 strongly or slightly disagreed (3 and 9 respectively). However, again, the most cited response, by 27 respondents, was ‘don’t know’, and the open ended survey questions on this area generated few ideas as to how this could be achieved.
In order to remain relevant and valuable to partners, and thereby justify their continued financial support, Linking London should certainly keep its activities under review. When asked which activities Linking London should be concerned with in the future, most partners suggested that developing progression agreements, and partnership and collaboration should be the highest priorities, followed by developing IAG resources. Figure 20 shows the frequency with which survey respondents chose activities as being either first or second priority.

However, at the more in-depth consultation that took place at the sustainability workshop, there was broad consensus that there should no longer be a focus on developing progression agreements, as these can quite simply now be handed over to partner institutions to administer, maintain and develop.

Interestingly, partners had various suggestions for future work areas arising from the significant changes that are permeating both the higher education and further education sectors. We asked respondents to the February 2011 survey what role they thought Linking London can take in the new landscape, with the few responses to this open-ended question shown in Figure 21.

**Figure 20:** Which of the following activities should be continued by Linking London at the end of the HEFCE funded period? (Base=79, multiple response)

![Bar chart showing the frequency of survey respondents' choices for priority activities. Developing progression agreements were chosen by 30 respondents as first priority and 9 as second priority. Partnership and collaboration were chosen by 26 respondents as first priority and 20 as second priority. Developing information, advice and guidance resources were chosen by 20 respondents as first priority and 15 as second priority. Staff development activities were chosen by 12 respondents as first priority and 14 as second priority. Developing new curriculum was chosen by 12 respondents as first priority and 8 as second priority.]

In your opinion, what role can Linking London take in the new FE/HE landscape?

- “Advice and comparisons on various institutions’ approach to the funding issues and the extent of the changes in fees.”
- “As a key reticulist and promoter of collaborative activity - IAG, providing the glue between Access Agreements and colleges/schools, outreach.”
- “Depending on the Wolf review, working more closely with LAs/institutions to engage and support at Level 2 as well as Level 3, develop apprenticeship pathways.”
- “I would hope - as an effective lobbying body, a powerful marketing machine, a dogged discoverer of opportunities and loopholes and above all an insightful, rigorous, supportive and persuasive critical friend?”
- “Identify and promote best practice. Strategic influence.”
- “Linking London can be centre stage in the monitoring process. Access to FE will highlight...”
In your opinion, what role can Linking London take in the new FE/HE landscape?

| numbers of students progressing to HEIs. If done with simple GIS against income for boroughs then will show impact of the new fees structure – may be a negative impact in the first year or two for widening participation, but with loans, potential for more equality.” |
| “More of a campaigning voice/think tank, with a higher media profile commensurate with its status as a de facto research institute?” |
| “Supporting colleges develop well costed HE provision.” |
| “Work with London Higher to debate and address these issues.” |
| “Widening participation will be a requirement for charging higher fees. Linking London has the expertise on how to advise HE on this.” |

Figure 21: Open-ended survey responses

At the sustainability workshop partners identified three key priorities for future action. Firstly was the idea that Linking London can add value in the development of the new university Access Agreements, providing a collaborative method for universities to meet their access obligations. All universities wishing to charge tuition fees over £6,000 will be required to produce an Access Agreement, stating their approach to encouraging wider participation – including a requirement to spend 15% of any fee income over the £6,000 threshold on widening access activities – and membership of the Network could form an integral part of this for partner universities. Partners suggested that Linking London can undertake activities to meet the requirements of the Access Agreements, so that universities can offset their Linking London subscription fee against the financial obligations stipulated by the Office for Fair Access. Meeting the obligations set out above will require significant spending levels, meaning that some level of ‘outsourcing’ to Linking London may well be useful to universities. Practically speaking, by working through a collaborative organisation partner universities could realise economies of scale, meaning that spending achieves more. It was also recognised in the workshop that widening access often necessitates partnership working between higher education institutions and further education colleges, which is, of course, central to Linking London’s operation.

Secondly, participants from the further education sector in the sustainability workshop were keen that Linking London continues its work in supporting collaborative curriculum developments and delivery models. It was felt that cost pressures, particularly during 2011/12, will mean that developing and delivering new curriculum might best be done on a partnership basis, with Linking London an obvious facilitator. Linking London has also identified that it may be able to support further education college partners with developing a Higher Education Strategy.

A third work area discussed during the sustainability workshop was workforce development and employer engagement, which was seen as difficult for institutions to approach in isolation and which could benefit from a collaborative approach. Work with employers and people in work has the advantage that it is more likely to generate income for partners, enabling Linking London to demonstrate added value if it can find its niche in this area. Both universities and colleges are seeking to expand their fee income and full cost provision with employers, which is currently seen as a considerable challenge.

Participants in the sustainability workshop also identified several other areas of work that Linking London could take forward, which resonated with suggestions from other partners in both our interviews and the follow-up survey:

> Acting as a general trouble-shooter and sounding board for partner institutions dealing with difficult progression issues, which are particularly likely to arise with the changes taking place across the education sector in the coming months and years.
Supporting information, advice and guidance for students and learners and even working directly with learners to help prepare them for higher education.

Working to support progression to and from Apprenticeships, including engaging employers with Apprenticeships.

Assisting higher education institutions with their Key Information Sets (KIS) on courses. Part of this requires salary and destinations data on courses to be published.

Identifying funding opportunities and providing guidance on bidding for funding to partners.

In the survey, eight partners selected ‘other’ priorities, of whom three stated that increasing higher education's recognition of Apprenticeships should be an important area of focus. This is something towards which Linking London had already turned its attention during 2010/11, and is at the heart of the Coalition Government’s skills strategy. Despite additional funding for expansion of Apprenticeships, providers are finding it challenging to identify sufficient numbers of employers to employ them, which could suggest a role for Linking London:

If we’re going to effectively get employers to participate as hosts for apprentices, then we will need an organisation like Linking London to work effectively with us to do that.

FE college partner

Whichever activities Linking London adopts, it will be important that the Network remains flexible and agile when responding to the changing environment for its partners. As reflected in earlier sections of this report, some partners pointed to the fact that Linking London’s adaptability, profile and reputation will maintain an appetite among partner institutions to continue its work.

I am optimistic because I think they have been so successful and have got such a good reputation... It's a difficult time for all of us, but I'm confident that they do have the flexibility to be sustainable and to survive.

FE college partner

Overall, there is a high degree of support and enthusiasm for Linking London to continue its work, but considerable ambiguity as to how this can be achieved given the prevailing policy and public spending environment. It is telling, for example, that for many of the survey questions on this matter the most cited response by participants was ‘don’t know’.

Next steps

A key aspect of the sustainability workshop was asking participants what they felt Linking London’s next steps should be. The participants felt that the first is to develop a new proposition to members and potential members, describing what the Network intends to offer, at what cost and why this represents value for money. This proposition will be needed relatively soon, certainly during the summer term of 2011. The proposition should definitely include an explanation of how Linking London can meet higher education institutions’ needs under the terms of their Access Agreements, as well as its offer on supporting collaborative curriculum development, employer engagement and general problem solving. Linking London should then take the proposition both to existing and potential new members, seeking agreement to commit to subscribing, with positive marketing and demonstrable value for money being important. Linking London should approach universities and colleges across London, as well as relevant private sector providers and awarding bodies.
9 | Conclusions and points for consideration

This section ends the report with conclusions from our secondary research and consultations with Linking London’s partners. We also give some points for the Network to consider on its strategy for the future.

Conclusions

This evaluation has shown that Linking London’s members are generally very positive about the success and impact of the Network. There is a shared feeling that Linking London has been successful in raising awareness of the issues surrounding the progression of vocational learners and has provided a good forum for bringing partners together. The central team is highly regarded, particularly in its ability to be flexible and adaptable to what has become a highly changeable environment.

Members also point to a range of tangible outputs, including:

> 77 signed Progression Agreements and over 600 learners supported to progress through the distribution of funds for Additional Student Numbers.
> 74 projects funded through the Development Fund, giving partners funding to instigate their own projects that complement Linking London’s aim of supporting vocational learners to progress.
> 68 new curriculum developments, including 31 Foundation Degrees, and 8 BA/BSc (Hons) degree courses.
> The quality of Linking London’s publications and other outputs, particularly around information, advice and guidance, where there was clear evidence of their publications being used on the “front line” by practitioner staff.
> The value of staff development activities and events hosted by Linking London, and its role in facilitating partnership and collaboration between institutions.
> Overall awareness and engagement with the Network and its activities.

Partners also indicated that much of the activity that has taken place – such as the development projects funded at individual institutions – would simply not have happened without Linking London’s intervention.

The external funding and policy environment

As discussed in the report, HEFCE has indicated that it will not provide additional funds to Lifelong Learning Networks. From the 2011/12 academic year Linking London will no longer receive any funding from HEFCE and will therefore need to operate entirely from other sources, including membership subscriptions, charging for events and publications, and any income from European funding bids. Meanwhile, the Spending Review, the new Skills Strategy, Skills for Sustainable Growth, and the upcoming HE White Paper have already and will continue to dramatically affect the funding and policy environment for Linking London’s members. Many stakeholders that participated in the evaluation were clear that the focus and funding model of Linking London will have to adapt to face these challenges. Our research suggests that Linking London is well equipped to do this, particularly as they have a strong and committed membership base and a highly effective central team.
Relationships with partners

The commitment to the Network of many partner institutions has been clearly shown by their agreement to pay membership subscriptions in 2010/11, but the transition from a HEFCE funded network to a membership organisation is likely to be challenging. It will be important for Linking London to review the success of its new operating model at regular intervals, and to address any emerging concerns as they arise. Fundamentally, the Network must be able to demonstrate that partner institutions’ subscriptions are a worthwhile investment, particularly as FE and HE budgets become increasingly constrained. Capturing and disseminating evidence of added value to partners will be an important part of retaining existing members and recruiting new ones. As identified in the sustainability workshop with the Network Board and stakeholders, Linking London can continue to add value for both universities and FE colleges, and should consider expanding membership to additional institutions across London, as well as private sector providers and awarding bodies.

The focus of activities

Participants at the sustainability workshop were clear that Linking London’s activities must continue to adapt in order to remain relevant and valuable to partners and thus justify a subscription fee, particularly as it is no longer accountable to HEFCE. As discussed in the previous chapter on sustainability, the potential of universities to “offset” their Linking London subscription fee against their new obligations on access expenditure is potentially a valuable incentive for their continued membership. This incentive if less strong for colleges, who could find value in Linking London’s role as a facilitator of collaborative curriculum development and delivery, and in developing Higher Education Strategies. Partners also felt that they would like to see Linking London’s focus include employer engagement and progression for work based learners. This is an area that institutions see as a potential source of future growth, but one that is challenging to approach and may benefit from a collaborative approach.

Linking London’s partners were pleased that the Network has increased its focus on progression from and through Apprenticeships. This is one area of recognised growth that the Government continues to support (and may potentially fund), and Linking London should seek to benefit from this. With the growth in funding for Apprenticeships places, the biggest challenge for many providers is finding employers willing to employ the apprentices, which could be an area in which Linking London could add value. Linking London’s work on CPD and staff development has been consistently valued and is seen by many members as worth investing in.

As further and higher education institutions face ever increasing pressures to find operational efficiencies, a Network of partners could be a way to generate economies of scale that ultimately save them money. Linking London should draw up a proposal for current and future members outlining how they will add value to partners for 2011/12 and beyond.

The team and governance structure required in the future

Through effectively merging the Operational Practitioner Groups into the Steering Group, Linking London created a simplified network meeting group structure, but as with all aspects of the Network, these arrangements should be reviewed and amended if appropriate. The size of the central team has reduced over time, which is in line with the reduced funding available to maintain staff members. How the team continues to change over the coming year should be in response to the new and continuing activities that the Network pursues.

Concluding remarks

Linking London members are understandably concerned over the future of the Network and, indeed, widening participation policy in general, given the current reductions in further and higher education budgets. It is clear that many partners would like the Network and its activities to continue, but, given the uncertainties over the coming year, perhaps the best advice is that Linking London remains flexible and responsive to new circumstances as they develop, while providing a core set of services valued by partners.
Appendix 1 | Sample Progression Agreement Implementation Checklist

The Institutions agree the following:

The Receiving Institution(s) will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required items for LINKING LONDON Agreement recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ensure that a named member of staff (the Receiving Tutor), will work with the Sending Tutor to implement, monitor and evaluate the Progression Agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended items (please tick the recommended items that you can satisfy prior to signing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ensure clear and transparent information on entry requirements for applicants studying vocational qualifications is made available on the institution website, prospectus and the UCAS Entry Profile for the course(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. provide a range of information, advice and guidance services including programme team liaison, interview workshops, advice for learners and tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. provide a number of opportunities for learners to visit the relevant department/s, attend Open Days and to participate in other jointly planned activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. facilitate communication between existing undergraduate learners and prospective learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. provide feedback to the Sending Tutor/s on learner applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. provide a positive and constructive interview and post-interview feedback to individual learners and, where appropriate, agree an action plan to meet individual learner needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. identify any relevant bursaries and scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. offer an AP(E)L process for students to apply for the accreditation of their previous certificated/experiential learning (delete if necessary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. provide feedback to the Sending Tutor/s on the progression of learners whilst they are on the Receiving programme/s and on their subsequent first or future employment placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. share curriculum developments and, where appropriate, collaborate with specific reference to programme specific developments to enhance progression opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. encourage and support staff exchanges and staff shadowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. provide further opportunities for staff networking, the exchange of ideas, information and best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. share or provide regular reports on the quality of the sending/receiving programme – either through ‘external’ reports or by sharing the annual monitoring reports etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. publish the admission and progression arrangements as appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Sending Institution(s) will:

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended items (please tick the recommended items that you can satisfy prior to signing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. encourage learners to attend College, HE Institution, Department and Programme specific HE advice and guidance workshop events and Open Days relating to the Receiving Programme/s □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. recommend those learners that are likely to meet the Receiving Programme/s entry requirements and benefit from the programme of study □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. provide student centred references for learners that are detailed and comprehensive, ensuring updated references at the point of interview as appropriate □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. alert the Receiving Tutor to the particular needs of individual learners, if appropriate □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. provide feedback on the application process and interview experience from the perspective of the Sending Institution/s and its learners □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. keep the relevant Receiving Tutor informed of relevant changes to the Sending Programme with respect to progression □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. share curriculum developments and, where appropriate, collaborate with specific reference to programme specific developments to enhance progression opportunities □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. encourage and support staff exchanges and staff shadowing □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. provide further opportunities for staff networking, the exchange of ideas, information and best practice □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. share or provide regular reports on the quality of the sending/receiving programme – either through ‘external’ reports or by sharing the annual monitoring reports etc □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. publish the admission and progression arrangements as appropriate □</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2 | Linking London Development Fund Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref No.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Funds (£)</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>Finish date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>9,893</td>
<td>May-07</td>
<td>Apr-08</td>
<td>This project aims to develop the capacity of the OU in London as a flexible and work based learning provider to reach potential new HE learners from vocational backgrounds to study in areas of education, health and public voluntary sectors services. It will also develop partnerships with community based stakeholders, develop strategies and materials for delivering IAG in community setting and identify gaps in the OU curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C&amp;I College</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Jun-07</td>
<td>Apr-08</td>
<td>Development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) &quot;Blackboard&quot; for HE students and partners, and to embed VLE across all HE provision beginning with Foundation Degrees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>London Met</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sep-07</td>
<td>Apr-09</td>
<td>The development of a multidisciplinary drop-in clinic to serve the health and lifestyle needs of the local community, providing work based learning, work experience, peer mentoring, problem based and inter-professional learning opportunities for student at London Met and FE colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>C&amp;I College</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Jun-07</td>
<td>Apr-08</td>
<td>The development of online tours for HE and Foundation degrees at City and Islington College, to illustrate provision, resources for courses, and the nature of the learning experience through students already studying at the college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>9,442</td>
<td>Aug-07</td>
<td>Nov-08</td>
<td>This project addresses the range of challenges that learners face in progressing from level three vocational qualifications to level four in the Early Years sector. It aims to provide specialist progression and career planning, develop learner support packages, provide work placements and work with employers to help them to support progression into HE qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>City Lit</td>
<td>9,920</td>
<td>Oct-07</td>
<td>Aug-08</td>
<td>Setting up a peer mentoring system using experienced adult education teachers to mentor teachers on City Lit training courses working in the community, voluntary and work-based organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Linking London</td>
<td>34,750</td>
<td>Jul-07</td>
<td>Mar-10</td>
<td>Setting up a demonstration site for the development of modular provision of vocational training for health related occupations. In conjunction with Skills for Health, NHS and three other LLNs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lewisham College</td>
<td>5,738</td>
<td>Oct-07</td>
<td>Feb-10</td>
<td>The development of a Foundation Degree in Public Sector Administration in conjunction with Birkbeck, University of London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Start</td>
<td>End</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>London Met</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Nov-07</td>
<td>Jun-08</td>
<td>The development of a Foundation Degree in Housing in conjunction with Hackney Community College. There are considerable skills shortages within this sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mary ward Centre</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>Nov-08</td>
<td>Third-Sector Workforce Development Education and Training Project: This project aims to offer education/training, accreditation and progression opportunities to those working in the voluntary and community sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>London Met</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>Jun-09</td>
<td>Developing a customised 3rd year degree programme for Business Managers in schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>5,998</td>
<td>Dec-07</td>
<td>Mar-09</td>
<td>Development of Foundation Degree and Foundation Year and Bridging Course for Health subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Dec-07</td>
<td>Feb-09</td>
<td>Development of Foundation Degree(s) in Working with Young People/Youth work in the field of youth and Community work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>London Met</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Feb-08</td>
<td>Jun-09</td>
<td>The Employers Engagement Model: a collaborative approach to lifelong learning. This project seeks to develop an innovative model of engaging employers in order to enhance progression for their students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Birkbeck</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Jan-08</td>
<td>July-09</td>
<td>Linking Higher Education and Voluntary Sector Education and Training Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>12,553</td>
<td>Mar-08</td>
<td>July-09</td>
<td>Developing Middlesex University’s End-of-Life (EoL) care provision, determining local need and identifying and delivering a mode of vocational training for EoL care workforce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>UEL</td>
<td>11,380</td>
<td>Feb-08</td>
<td>Sep-09</td>
<td>Developing an AEL website and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>OU</td>
<td>11,850</td>
<td>Feb-08</td>
<td>July-09</td>
<td>This project aims to enable learners with level three qualifications working with young people in the statutory or voluntary sector to progress into HE as well as establishing the needs of this sector and to work with employers to help them with their support of these learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>London Met</td>
<td>14,300</td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>Dec-2010</td>
<td>This project aims to support the development of a youth work degree with professional accreditation at London Metropolitan University through the setting up a forum designed to engage employers and youth sector professionals in this process. It will also identify key partners in FE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Birkbeck</td>
<td>13,030</td>
<td>Jun-08</td>
<td>July-09</td>
<td>This project aims to undertake research to map the demands/needs of employers and employees working in care for older people. From this research it aims to develop free standing modules or short courses providing provision at certificate level. It will also establish links with FE providers to develop progression routes from NVQ level qualifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Start</td>
<td>End</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Westminster University</td>
<td>14,240</td>
<td>Jun-08</td>
<td>July-10</td>
<td>This project aims to bring new understanding to the experience of vocational learners progressing from FE to HE through surveying the educational experiences, expectations and aspirations amongst vocational learners in HE. It will also research the experience of vocational learners since graduating university and entering the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Institute of Education</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>Sept-08</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>This project aims to hold an event to disseminate the products of the Institute of Education fresh thinking on the pedagogical challenges of developing Foundation Degrees and Level four qualifications that bridge college and workplace contexts and promote learner progression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Open University</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>July-08</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>This is a continuation of Development Project Ref 5. This project will not be continued until the previous project is finished and all requirements are met from that project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Westminster University</td>
<td>3,210</td>
<td>June-08</td>
<td>Feb-10</td>
<td>This project aims to undertake scoping work which will enable the development of a Foundation Degree in the Justice sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a</td>
<td>Hackney Community College</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>July-08</td>
<td>Feb-11</td>
<td>This project enables module writing within the overall development of Foundation Degree in Housing between London Metropolitan University and Hackney Community College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>London Metropolitan University</td>
<td>13,909</td>
<td>Sept 08</td>
<td>Mar-10</td>
<td>Skills for a globalised world: relevant skills for local authority staff though flexible learning. This project enables a new approach to develop skills and provide work-based learning experience to staff in public libraries and youth services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Middlesex University/Barnet College</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>Sept 08</td>
<td>Aug-10</td>
<td>This project is a pilot scheme that aims to improve support for students on Access to Health and Social Care using E mentoring and thereby increase transition from FE to HE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>City University</td>
<td>4,509</td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>Oct-10</td>
<td>This is a scoping project to map existing PDP opportunities and practices in FE to support student progression from Access to nursing courses to the diploma in nursing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Birkbeck</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Dec-08</td>
<td>Aug-10</td>
<td>This project aims to increase awareness of Community Development Work qualifications by providing IAG for practitioners in this area, which is currently underserved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Barnet College</td>
<td>6,450</td>
<td>Jan 09</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>Foundation Degree Creative Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>End Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Birkbeck</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Dec-08</td>
<td>Aug-10</td>
<td>Accreditation through learning from experience of CDW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>UEL</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>Mar 09</td>
<td>Nov-09</td>
<td>This project will develop and then run a blended learning programme titled ‘Pathway to Commissioning’ which will have an emphasis on developing the skills needed to run third sector or Small and Medium Enterprise organisations effectively, as well as playing a significant part in the health &amp; social care commissioning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Barnet</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>Dec 08</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>Foundation Degree in Childhood studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>IoE</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Dec 08</td>
<td>Oct-09</td>
<td>Progression in to level 4: training for HEI staff in interpreting Diploma profiles and transcripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>IoE</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>Feb 09</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>New learning strategies: developing expertise for practitioners working in the lifelong learning sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>IoE</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Feb 09</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>Managing the Digital Image: support for tutors of the blog generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Linking London</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Dec 08</td>
<td>Mar 09</td>
<td>Pan London LLN Coaching Education Project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Westminster Kingsway College</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Dec-08</td>
<td>Jun-09</td>
<td>Project deadline extended This project will develop an Access to Pharmacy course validated by the OCN-LR that will open up Pharmacy to adult Londoners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>15,244</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>10,000</td>
<td>Feb-09</td>
<td>Feb-10</td>
<td>Certificate of Higher Education: Regulatory Practice and Foundation Degree in Regulatory Practice Leadership</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Feb-09</td>
<td>Feb-10</td>
<td>Certificate of Middlesex University: Access to HE from Local Government practice</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>HCC/UEL</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>Jul-09</td>
<td>Hackney Community College, in collaboration with the University of East London will develop Foundation Degree in Counselling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Start Year</td>
<td>End Year</td>
<td>Expected Deadline</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>London Metropolitan University</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>Jan-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>City of Westminster College</td>
<td>4,896</td>
<td>Jan-09</td>
<td>June-09</td>
<td>Project not completed</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Working Men's College</td>
<td>15,000</td>
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<td>Mar-10</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Westminster Kingsway College</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>Jun-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Open University</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Sept-09</td>
<td>Aug-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>City of Westminster College</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>Oct-09</td>
<td>Apr-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Birkbeck, University of London</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>May-10</td>
<td>Apr-10</td>
<td>Project deadline extended</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>UEL</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>June-10</td>
<td>Dec-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Number</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
<td>End Date</td>
<td>Description of Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
<td>£9,750</td>
<td>Aug-2010</td>
<td>Oct-2010</td>
<td>A stock-take of E-resources in Linking London partner institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Developing short course provision for professional coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Developing online short course provision for a safeguarding old people</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>A project to explore the “data conversations” which exists between and an HEI and three of its feeder Colleges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Developing short course provision - Professional Development Qualifications for the Chambers of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Middlesex University</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Advanced Apprenticeships – Work Based Learning Higher Education Programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>University of Westminster</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Development of short course - career development award</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Development of short course provision - health wellbeing and health promotion</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>Newham Sixth Form College</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Effective data sharing between colleges and universities</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>Barnet College</td>
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<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>HELP ME - Higher Education Launch Pad - Mobile Enhanced</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>University of Westminster</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Embedding APEL</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>COHNEL</td>
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<td>Sept-2010</td>
<td>April-2011</td>
<td>Progression Agreements from Advanced Apprenticeships to Higher Education provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Start</td>
<td>End</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>City and Islington College</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Sept-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Developing short course provision for photography</td>
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<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Birkbeck, University of London</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Oct-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Progression Agreements from Advanced Apprenticeships to Higher Education provision</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Birkbeck, University of London</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Oct-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Developing Short Course Provision &quot;Pathway to learning&quot; project</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Morley College</td>
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<td>Nov-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Embedding Progression Agreements</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>City and Islington College</td>
<td>£6,500</td>
<td>Nov-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Improving the quality of teaching &amp; learning of Academic Skills on Foundation Degrees.</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Westminster Kingsway College</td>
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<td>Dec-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Higher Education Diploma in Hospitality Management</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>London Metropolitan University</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>Dec-10</td>
<td>April-11</td>
<td>Developing Reusable Learning Objects to develop core skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>