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Pooling resources: how HEIs can work together on partnerships

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Foci of presentation

- Why do we need to work in partnership?
- How might we work in partnership?
- Examples of local practice to date
- Local collaboration in the future – post Aim Higher and in the new OFFA environment

Into the abyss?

If we do not invest in outreach between now and 2012, the potential consequences in respect of recruitment to HE could be far more damaging than at any other period of change in the sector.

- Collaboration not just about replacing Aim Higher (and the LNN)
- Nor is it just about access
- Broader issues of WP, Social Justice, cultural and attitudinal change
- Internal and external drives for collaboration

Collaboration and the widening access agenda

- **Social Justice**
- **Outreach**
- **Provision**
- **Research**
- **Post-entry**

Outreach

- **Delivering joint menus/brochures**
- **Collaborative projects**
- **Shared information**
- **Joint IAG Portal/delivery (nb. The fear of the loss of impartial IAG)**

Provision

- Jointly developed
- Joint Access Agreements
- Regional Access Agreements
- Local FE/HE joint activity

Research

- **Wider understanding, leading to improved practice**
- **Broader and deeper coverage of issues**
- **Learning from evaluation of previous practice**
- **‘Plugging the gap’ (Loss of LNN/Aim Higher key data sets)**

Post-entry

- Sharing best practice
- Practitioner networks
  - Careers guidance
  - Access to the Professions
- More stringent financial support

Collaboration is not new

Local, regional, National and International

Local collaboration in North Staffordshire

* Research
* Social, economic and educational regeneration
* Course provision
* STEM/Science Learning Centre
* Aim Higher/LNN
* 'Active Ageing'
* Teacher Education

- Formal and Informal 'partnership'
- The same stakeholders in different fora

What is new?

- The imperative of the new landscape
  - Changed financial and human resource
  - The pressures of collaboration vs. competition
  - The Government agenda of marketisation vs. collaboration
  - A series of challenges and conflicts

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Collaboration has to be to the benefit of all partners

Collaboration –'spreading the reach'

- AccessHE – London
- The challenges much greater in Staffordshire
  - Size
  - Proximity
  - Transport
- If do not pool resources and collaborate, then a resultant 'fight' over the 'easy' schools to reach
- Those who will 'lose out'

Evidence to date of success in 'extending the reach'

- Impact of LNN and Aim Higher
- Student Ambassador programme
  - Overcoming the 'competitive urge'
  - Developing mutual trust
  - Provision of a wider and impartial picture to learners
  - "The learners should be the focus of all we do"

- **Recognition of differences and complementarities**
- **Pooling of resource and reduction in competitive threats**
- **How maintain in a very different climate?**
  - **The budgetary/recruitment agenda elsewhere in the organisation**

The requirements of stakeholders in the broader partnership

- Schools and other partners value impartiality
- Impartiality = meeting learner needs
- Meeting learner needs = school satisfaction and willingness to engage
- “If students end up on the right course because appropriate guidance and support has been given to inform choice, then the successes can be measured in terms of retention rates and attainment”

Changed landscape outside HEIs

- Loss of expertise (Aim Higher and LNN)
- Reduction/removal of role of Local Authorities and designated staff within the organisations
- End of Connexions
- Uncertainties in respect of the all ages careers service
- Changes to the curriculum in schools – end of careers education
- The promotion of competition within the school system, reinforced through changed funding for post-16
- Academies, Trusts, Free Schools and Studio Schools
- **EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAT HEIs COLLABORATE TO ENSURE CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AN COLLEGES**

How Collaborate

- Effective use of the HEFCE WP premium
- Joint IAG
- Student Ambassadors
- Sharing of information
- Joint attendance at events
- Representation on behalf of the ‘partnership’
- Joint web presence
- Raising aspiration through collaborative work in ‘mainstream’ activity – the example of teacher education
- Building on the work between Aim Higher Staffordshire and Aim Higher Cheshire – maintaining the ‘HE Network’

Partnership and learners

- **Access is not just about schools**
- **Working with FE institutions**
- **Working with work-based learners**
- **The learners not in school, the part time learners and the returners to learning may be ever more important**

Why do it?

- Stoke on Trent and progression to Higher Education
- Working class boys and HE
- The impact on NEETS
- The impact on language development and literacy

"The success of building on and developing the nascent ambition in children"