

Evaluation of the Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO) January 2017

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Forward by the two lead institutions

The Cumbria and Lancashire Collaborative Outreach Network (CLNCO) has been unique in bringing together partners from two regions under shared governance to raise awareness of the outreach available to support young people's progression to higher education.

An impartial central team has provided all schools and colleges across Cumbria and Lancashire with information about the activities and interventions offered by our partners to ensure all young people have the opportunity to access information, advice and guidance about their future options. Discussing requests from individual schools has been an important part of this process. CLNCO partners have further collaborated in delivering innovative new activity to address identified gaps in engagement.

CLNCO has also been unique in its approach to evaluating the network's impact. The evaluation has focused on the relationships between partners and the effectiveness of collaboration. Our thanks go to Dr Ann-Marie Houghton and her team from REAP (Researching Equity, Access and Participation) at Lancaster University for their methodical and thorough approach to working within the challenging timeframes of the project. This resulting report will be shared amongst CLNCO partners to support the continuation of strong provider relationships across Lancashire and Cumbria and sustain the legacy of CLNCO in effectively co-ordinating outreach provision.

As CLNCO draws to a close, HEFCE has launched a new initiative, the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) which will target specific areas in both counties and, like its predecessor, emphasise the value of inclusivity and collaboration. Its aim is to close the gap between expected and actual progression to meet the Government's target of doubling the number of young people from widening participation backgrounds who enter higher education by 2020. We will use learning gained from CLNCO and this evaluation report to support our work under the new programme.

Finally, we hope the findings presented here will provide useful insights for colleagues at a national level and support the country-wide sharing of best practice.

Cumbria Network for Collaborative Outreach

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (**CLNCO**) is part of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (**HEFCE**) National Network for Collaborative Outreach (**NNCO**) initiative to ensure universities and Further Education colleges are working together to enhance young people's access to higher learning outreach activities. It aims to reach teachers, advisers and other influencers to raise their awareness and engagement with the widening access agenda. The project officially began in January 2015 and ended in December 2016. The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO) worked together whilst reporting separately to HEFCE. CLNCO was distinctive in having one rather than two management groups (**MG**) and operational groups (**OG**). It included 23 collaborative projects, involved external organisations and provided over 5,000 engagements with young people (see appendix 1 for Celebration event infographic).

Section 1: CLNCO evaluation

This section provides an outline of the framework within which the overall evaluation was conducted. It includes details about the key aims for evaluation, the external evaluation planning process, the nature of evaluative evidence, ethical considerations and terminology used within the report. The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO) identified five aims to frame the evaluation:

1. Improved efforts amongst FE and HE partners to collaborate and communicate effectively to provide an extensive offer of WP activities for targeted groups across Cumbria and Lancashire – *see section 3: Collaborative projects*;
2. Increased awareness and engagement of teachers and influencers to encourage learners from a WP* background to consider higher learning as a future option – *see section 2: School perspective*;
3. Better understanding of the HE outreach provision of partners across the Network and the activities they offer to support the progression of learners from a WP* background – *see section 2: School perspective and section 4 in particular context and resources*;
4. Improved mechanism for teachers / influencers to access WP* outreach activities delivered by HE/FE Outreach teams across Cumbria and Lancashire – *see section 4 exchange*;
5. Shared knowledge for all stakeholders on the best approaches for engaging and inspiring learners from a WP* background, particularly those hardest to reach – *see section 5: lessons for future collaboration*.

Section 2: School perspective

This report contains evidence from a total of **108** respondents from a variety of positions in **45** (29%) schools and colleges across Cumbria and Lancashire. When asked to indicate all that apply, the five most popular ways in which respondents find information about HE outreach activities are: University website (38) **50%**, specific invitation to participate in an event (38) **50%**, teachers/colleges (31) **41%**, general publicity from university (28) **36%** and events such as UCAS / Careers Fayres (25) **34%**.

There appeared to be a lack of awareness about the range of HE activities with only **24%** agreeing with the statement: 'I am fully aware of the range of HE outreach available'; **40%** reporting that: 'I know who to contact to find out about HE outreach'; and **26%** stating that: 'It is easy for me to organise HE outreach activities'. Over half of the respondents felt they were not fully aware of the outreach opportunities on offer and around **40%** stated that they did not know who to contact to find out about HE outreach. The top

three perceived barriers for young people in accessing higher learning were financial **85%**, confidence **79%** and lack of family support **71%**.

Section 3: Collaborative Projects

The report explores seven collaborative projects that are typical of the 23 projects delivered by CLNCO. A summary of each project includes a brief description together with some of the key emerging Enabling, Process and Outcome indicators.

- **Adult Learners and Community:** Education and community collaboration – Developing ways to offer informal IAG in neutral or community venues
- **Looked After Children:** Collaborative residential and CPD events for target group
- **Disability Conference :** Collaborative IAG Conference for target group
- **Health Journeys:** Education and Health collaboration to raise profile of specific careers
- **PRU Network:** Cross sector collaborative Network to extend outreach
- **STAR (Skills, Treasures, Ambitions and Roles):** Professional development and capacity building
- **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths):** Education and STEM collaboration to raise profile of target subject

Section 4: Emergent cross cutting themes

Aims

The evaluation identified several factors necessary for effective collaboration within a network that related to the aims. The key factors were: clarity and commitment regarding the overall purpose; the tensions associated with institutional WP versus recruitment priorities; and the importance and challenges related to impartial IAG.

Context

The context for the network includes the history, geography, and working practices; these factors are important influences upon the effectiveness of collaborative networks.

Exchange

Collaboration requires effective communication of information and ideas; arguably it is the most crucial element in achieving success or at least moving forward. Exchange is discussed under three headings: structure, channels and means of communication, including a discussion of the CLNCO website.

Resources

Resources are crucial to the success of any project. Here they are discussed in relation to finance, time, and staffing. CLNCO was perhaps unusual given that the funding was considered generous relative to the time within which it had to be spent; the short timeframe, in turn, had implications for the staffing of CLNCO.

Sustainability

Sustainability is inevitably an important consideration for any project; the relatively short lifetime of the NCCO initiative placed challenges on creating an enduring legacy. In the HEFCE monitoring returns Cumbria and Lancashire identify materials and actions designed to leave a CLNCO legacy. These relate to:

- Activities and resources
- Future collaboration, networking and outreach
- Website
- Professional development

Section 5: Lessons for collaboration

The experience of CLNCO provides a rich source of ideas and lessons learned that may be used to inform future collaborative activity. The issues are interconnected and can be viewed as the building blocks upon which strong networks can be developed and as pointers for priorities in future collaborative partnerships, most notably the forthcoming National Collaborative Outreach Programme.

Lessons from and for Higher Education Providers (HEP)

It is important to note that issues relating to history, geography, organisational size, structure and culture will influence the extent to which a HEP might respond. The lessons represent an ideal and, as the experience of CLNCO suggests, flexibility and adaptability are often necessary. Key issues relate to valuing transparency between partners to increase a sense of trust and provide a basis for establishing clear aims, documentation, roles and responsibilities. There is also encouragement to continue collaborative CLNCO projects, make use of CLNCO resources and consider how to raise teacher awareness about higher learning opportunities and make better use of websites to publicise outreach opportunities.

Lessons from and for Schools

It is important to note that feedback from schools has varied enormously and is clearly influenced by the school context, particularly the existing links schools and their staff had with one or more HEP before CLNCO. Schools expressed an interest in having timetabled activities and an incremental programme of outreach that included work with schools not providing education beyond 16 years. To support collaboration and aid communication there was interest in having named HEP contacts and a central location for schools to access IAG information. Based on the CLNCO experience, notably the SPoC, the need for strong senior leadership support and a dedicated member of staff with time to co-ordinate outreach within school was noted. HEP were also open to suggestions about which aspects of the curriculum would be suitable for subject focused outreach and to receiving invitations to contribute to staff development programmes.

Lessons from and for external stakeholders

CLNCO engaged with a diverse range of external stakeholders, often the relationship was targeted at a specific activity and the lessons from and for stakeholders are very localised. Perhaps the most important lesson was the need to recognise the skills required of a 'blended professional' and the time, complexity and need for compromise when working in 'a third space'.

Priorities for forthcoming NCOP

CLNCO will be replaced with two collaborative networks funded under the NCOP. Key lessons relate to clarity of aims and objectives at both strategic and operational level, a clear leadership structure and staffing appropriate to roles and responsibilities. It also seems important to have clear processes that recognise the contribution of all as well as an annual conference to share good practice across the wider region and build on the work of CLNCO. Cumbria and Lancashire NCOP, together with individual HEIs, might collaborate in monitoring using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) and evaluating specific activities or initiatives targeted at named groups of learners. This tracking might involve ongoing evaluation of activities initiated by CLNCO and taken forward as part of their programme of sustainability. Although the lessons learned capture the core priorities, it is the lived experience of seeking to work collaboratively that will inform the way these priorities are enacted in the future.

Introduction

The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (**CLNCO**) is part of the Higher Education Funding Council for England' (**HEFCE**) National Network for Collaborative Outreach (**NNCO**) initiative to ensure universities and Further Education colleges are working together to enhance targeted young people's access to higher learning outreach activities. It aims to reach teachers, advisers and other influencers to raise their awareness and engagement with the widening access agenda. The project began in January 2015 and ended in December 2016.

This introduction provides a background to the national initiative, outlines the CLNCO membership and context, and concludes with a summary of the overall structure of the report.

National Network for Collaborative Outreach - NNCO

The NNCO was two year HEFCE funded initiative (2015-16) designed to encourage regional collaboration between Universities and FE Colleges offering higher learning to extend the range of opportunities to raise awareness and promote higher education. The expectation was that NNCO activity would complement and extend the institutional outreach programmes funded by individual institutions through their Access Agreements to OFFA. Many of the activities developed by CLNCO build on existing good practice; the primary difference is that they do so collaboratively. In their topic briefings for carers and disabled students, OFFA (2015a, b) note a collaborative approach is currently not widespread but is something institutions should consider, which the NNCO emphasis on collaboration supports.

Each regional network included: a Single Point of Contact (**SPoC**), a website and funding to *'enable institutions to enhance existing outreach networks, and to develop new networks where these do not exist'* (HEFCE, 2014: para 4). Three additional networks were funded to work with students wishing to progress to Oxford or Cambridge, adult learners returning to study and care leavers. CLNCO also targeted the latter two groups within its collaborative activities (see Adult and Community Learners and Care Leavers).

Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach – CLNCO

The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO) worked together whilst reporting separately to HEFCE. It included 23 collaborative projects, involving external organisations and provided over 5,000 engagements with young people (see appendix 1 for Celebration event infographic).

CLNCO Membership and governance structure

CLNCO covered two regions Cumbria and Lancashire that contain four local authorities, Cumbria, Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. It involved all four universities (Central Lancashire (UCLAN) Cumbria (UofC), Edge Hill (EHU) and Lancaster (LU) plus thirteen Further Education Colleges offering higher learning. Five located in Cumbria – Carlisle, Furness, Kendal, Lakes and Newton Rigg; and eight within Lancashire - Accrington and Rossendale, Blackburn, Blackpool and Fylde, Burnley, Lancaster and Morecambe, Myerscough, Preston and Runshaw.

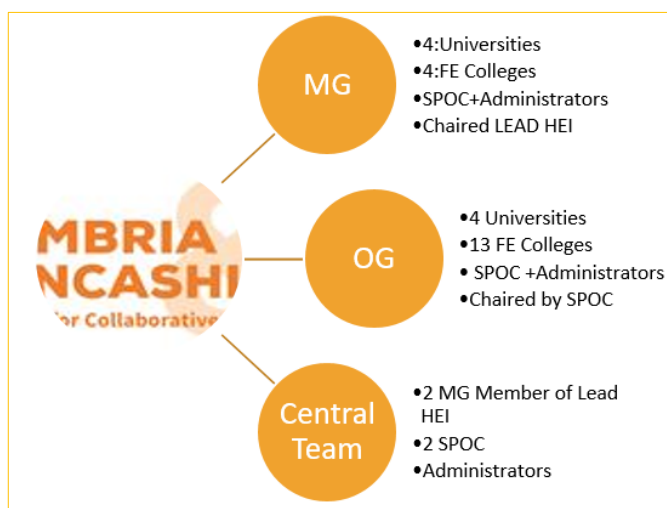


Figure 1: CLNCO Management and Operational Groups

CLNCO was distinctive in having one rather than two management groups (**MG**) and operational groups (**OG**) **across the two regions**. Unlike some other regions, the previous Aimhigher Cumbria and Lancashire partnerships were not sustained, which meant CLNCO was in effect a new network. As well as reviving previous university connections, the partnership was extended to include thirteen FE colleges offering higher learning.

Management group

The CLNCO Management Group (MG) included representatives from the 4 partner universities, an FE College representative and a land-based college from each of the two counties Cumbria and Lancashire. MG members of the Lead Institutions chaired the MG that was designed to provide the strategic steer for the network. The members were typically managers of recruitment, widening participation and outreach sections within their own institutions; many had recent operational experience on which to draw, with access to senior leaders within their own institution dependent on their role and responsibility. Several members of the MG also attended the OG (See Section 4: Exchange-Structure).

Operational group

All 17 partners were represented on the Operational Group whose remit was to develop new activities to complement existing institutional outreach activity. The OG provided an

opportunity to exchange ideas which FE College staff and new members of university staff found extremely useful for their ‘day job’. *“I’ve learned so much about working with young people from [name of colleague] its really made a difference and shows you what can be achieved”* (OG). The roles, responsibilities and levels of experience varied enormously, with some OG members funded by formulaic funding to contribute to collaborative activities, whereas others involved additional members of staff in contributing to activities. Opportunities for FE colleges to access additional funding for staff, albeit short term appointments, enabled them to extend their capacity and participate in activities. As table 1 below shows some of the FE colleges received formulaic funding, others did not. As a commitment to collaboration and to enable FE colleges without formulaic funding to attend meetings funding was allocated from the central flat rate budget. This was welcome and assisted attendance though finding additional resources to engage beyond meetings was often difficult.

Higher Education Provider (HEP)	University - FE College	Location	Access to Funding ¹	
			Flat rate	Formulaic
Central Lancashire (Lead)	University	Lancashire	120,000	210,56
Cumbria (Lead)	University	Both	120,000	50,364
Edge Hill	University	Lancashire		88,880 ²
Lancaster	University	Lancashire		66,670
Accrington & Rossendale	FE College	Lancashire		5,990
Blackburn	FE College	Lancashire		46,394
Blackpool & the Fylde	FE College	Lancashire		49,330
Burnley	FE College	Lancashire		0
Carlisle	FE College	Cumbria		0
Furness	FE College	Cumbria		2,522
Kendal	FE College	Cumbria		0
Lakes	FE College	Cumbria		5,528
Lancaster & Morecambe	FE College	Lancashire		0
Myerscough	FE College	Lancashire		0
Newton Rigg	FE College	Cumbria		0
Preston	FE College	Lancashire		8
Runshaw	FE College	Lancashire		3,792

Table 1: CLNCO Financial Allocation

Central team

The central team consisted of the MG members of the two Lead Institutions, the two Single Point of Contact (SPoC) located at the Lead Institutions (UCLAN and UoC) and their

¹ Figures taken from original allocation

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/2014/CL_202014/CL2014_20b.pdf

² Edge Hill figure does not include their allocation for Merseyside Collaborative Outreach

respective administrators. They met between MG and OG meetings and played an important role in the analysis of the HEFCE data regarding hot and cold spots, development of the website, provided a link and support for all project leads and ongoing project management relating to funding, monitoring and reporting. Their link and support role for individual projects varied with considerable involvement and a leadership role in some projects (notably Health, PRU, STAR and STEM) and less involvement in others.

Conceptualising collaboration

There are many ways of conceptualising the complex and multiple forms of collaboration present within CLNCO. The following section outlines some relevant approaches based on research concerning Aimhigher (Booth, 2007; Pacey and Morris, 2010; Whitchurch, 2008) and Wiggins, (2010) whose synthesis offers a useful overview of comparable partnership work. Although many of the institutions involved in CLNCO had played an active role in Aimhigher partnerships the evidence collected for this report illustrates how collaboration is influenced by the wider policy and project remit, as well as the experience, role and responsibility of individual staff working in institutional contexts that also shaped collaboration.

Federalism, co-opetition, sharing platforms and networked organisations

Booth (2007) identifies four models of working in partnership: federalism, co-opetition, sharing platforms and networked organisations. Each model places a different emphasis on the contribution of individual partners and the role / expectations of the central team. Interviews, observations, and a review of some of the documentary evidence suggests that the complexity of CLNCO and perhaps some of its challenges is that CLNCO did not neatly fall into a single approach to partnership work. Rather there was evidence of multiple approaches in operation, for instance a shared platform provided by the CLNCO website and multiple networks operating within the wider CLNCO formed because of collaboration on specific projects. The ongoing tension associated with co-opetition influenced the extent to which HEP staff viewed colleagues as competitors or possible collaborators (see Section 4: Aims – WP and Recruitment).

The absence of a clear and transparent account of the relationship between the different ways of working heightened the complexity of working relationships and may help explain the challenges experienced at certain points during the project by some stakeholders. At the same time, the flexibility and shifting character of collaboration may account for the number of new and unexpected opportunities that arose, and which may have not arisen in a more static and predetermined model of working. The short timescale and the time required to develop effective working relationships should not be underestimated.

Booth's (2007) work on the Nottinghamshire Aimhigher partnership offers practical suggestions which remain relevant. She identifies four ways of working in partnership:

Federalism: allows independent partners to collaborate without losing their own identity and allows some central functions to be carried out by others within the partnership (Booth, 2007 p 12). Within CLNCO features of federalism included: the SPoC role SPoC which provided valuable central support; the formulaic funding [for those who received it] that allowed a degree of independence not always possible in a collaborative project, and the open invitation for HEP to participate in projects relevant to their context. However, the rhetoric for CLNCO activities was perhaps counter to a purer form of federalism whereby there was a commitment to delivering activities under the banner of CLNCO rather than as individual institutions.

Co-opetition: includes an organisational structure that retains institutional autonomy and permits different levels of contribution thereby enabling partners to pursue both institutional and shared goals. Overall, the team approach ‘delivers more and higher quality outputs by using complementary resources’ (Booth, 2007). Many aspects of CLNCO are consistent with the co-opetition model of partnership; especially the complementarity of the resources each HEP brought to different projects. This aspect was particularly evident in the Health project which would not have been possible without the individual contributions being brought together in a collaborative event (see Section 3: Health).

Sharing platforms: retain institutional identity but agree as a partnership to combine elements of their own activities. An example within CLNCO is the website which served as a base from which there were links to institutional websites and which retained each institution’s identity (e.g. institutional logos) within the overarching CLNCO framework.

Networked organisations: where individual organisations share ideas, discuss approaches and, depending on the activity, work together. The CLNCO operational group was typical of this approach and a feature individual practitioners acknowledged as a key benefit of belonging to CLNCO.

‘Third Space’ working and ‘Blended Professionals’

The concepts of a third space and blended professionals, discussed by Wiggans (2010) who drew on the work of Whitchurch (2008), are also useful in understanding collaborative outreach activity. A ‘third space’ may refer to physical (people and place) or/and virtual exchanges; the ‘blended professional’ (such as the SPoC) refers to roles requiring the experience and skills to work in different contexts which often act as a bridge between different sectors or professions.

Recognition and support for widening participation practitioners to develop and sustain the “blended professional” skills developed through working in partnership is likely to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of work to widen access in higher education. (Wiggans, 2010: 4)

In CLNCO, two HEP lead institutions formed an ‘administrative base’ drawing on the working practices across different organisations which enabled them to avoid duplication of effort

and share common resources. For example, the introduction of an interim monitoring and financial return which allowed the central team to refine requirements in response to feedback from individual HEP. Working in the 'third space' requires individual experience and flexibility as well as willingness from institutions to loosen the boundaries of their rules and regulations and consider compromise in the context of collaborative activities. The notion of a 'third space' was perhaps most notable when the events were held outside a specific HEP (see, Section 3: Looked After Children). The opportunity to develop skills as well as demonstrate their capacity to operate as a 'blended professional' was also evidenced in the actions of project leads. CLNCO undoubtedly raised awareness among those staff not usually involved in organisation and delivery of the practical logistical aspects associated with holding events and working with a specific target group. It also provided some operational staff with an opportunity to develop project management skills.

An unintended outcome of CLNCO was therefore the development of blended professionals more confident at 'third space' working.

Structure of the report

This introduction has provided an outline of the NCCO initiative and key features of the Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO). The remaining content is divided into five sections, starting in **section 1** with a discussion of the approach to evaluation and outlining the focus of the external evaluation on the overarching collaboration which, in turn, served to complement the activity evaluation undertaken by individual projects as part of the CLNCO programme. **Section 2** offers the school perspective drawing upon an online survey completed by 108 teachers together with feedback from teachers involved in a range of project activities. The external evaluation team was asked to explore seven exemplar projects which are discussed in **section 3**, where the features and key lessons of each project are described. Analysis of the evidence collected within this evaluation suggested a series of cross cutting themes (aims, context, exchange, resources and sustainability) which are discussed in **section 4**. **Section 5** then brings together lessons for and from key stakeholders within CLNCO, notably: policy makers, higher education providers, schools, and external stakeholders with whom CLNCO have collaborated. The final section of the report offers ideas for consideration by the forthcoming Cumbria and Lancashire National Collaborative Outreach Projects.

Section 1: CLNCO Evaluation

This section provides an outline of the framework within which the overall evaluation was conducted. It includes details about the key aims for evaluation, the external evaluation planning process, the nature of evaluative evidence, ethical considerations and terminology used within the report.

Aims to frame the evaluation

The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO) identified five aims to frame the evaluation.

6. Improved efforts amongst FE and HE partners to collaborate and communicate effectively to provide an extensive offer of WP activities for targeted groups across Cumbria and Lancashire – *see section 3: Collaborative projects*;
7. Increased awareness and engagement of teachers and influencers to encourage learners from a WP* background to consider higher learning as a future option – *see section 2: School perspective*.
8. Better understanding of the HE outreach provision of partners across the Network and what activities they offer to support the progression of learners from a WP* background – *see section 2: School perspective and section 4 in particular context and resources*;
9. Improved mechanism for teachers / influencers to access WP* outreach activities delivered by HE/FE Outreach teams across Cumbria and Lancashire – *see section 4 exchange*;
10. Shared knowledge for all stakeholders on the best approaches for engaging and inspiring learners from a WP* background, particularly those hardest to reach. – *see section 5: lessons for future collaboration*.

Learners from a Widening Participation background

Within the context of CLNCO the learners from a WP background consisted of: learners in years 7-11 (aged 11-16) WP target groups with the ability to succeed in HE, including:

- first generation HE;
- low socio-economic background;
- young people with a disability/learning difficulty;
- minority ethnic groups; and

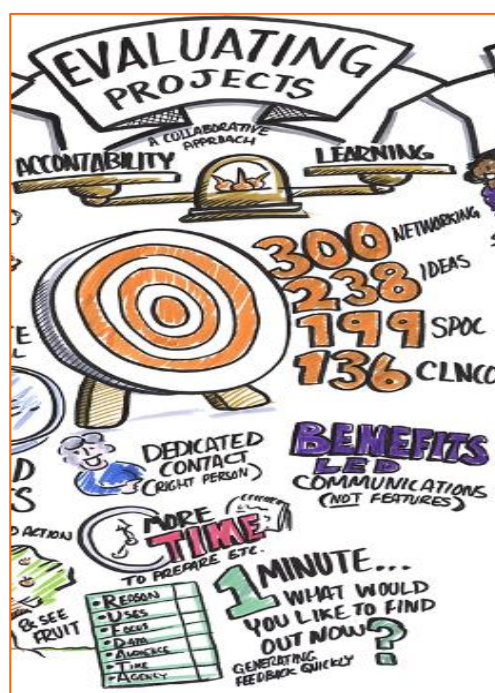


Figure 2: Evaluation Projects
© @ice_creates

- Looked After Children (LAC).

Approaches to evaluation

There are two broad approaches to evaluation, accountability and developmental. The current report provides an external record for the purposes of accountability, it also focuses on lessons learned which might inform future practice. Taylor's report on *'Transforming disadvantaged places: effective strategies for places and people'* noted that "Evaluations tend to be carried out over very short time periods, sometimes too short for interventions to have proved their impact." (Taylor, 2008: 5). While acknowledging that the timescale for CLNCO was relatively short, the external evaluators were commissioned at the end of the first year with a remit to focus on usability and formative feedback which could be drawn upon during the lifetime of the project. To that end as external evaluators we have already worked with individuals and project teams to support the development of activities. Attendance by the evaluation team at MG and OG meetings was felt to have increased understanding, perceptions, communications and overall collaboration as one MG member noted, they were able to:

cast an independent eye over proceedings and has been able to offer advice and guidance to the team to improve the overall working of these groups as we have been moving through the lifecycle of the network, rather than just at the end.

Since the introduction of OFFA Access Agreements there has been growing interest in commissioning, synthesising and learning from research findings to identify and improve the effectiveness of activities and thus promote fairer access. OFFA's draft strategic plan 2015-20 refers to contributing, using and promoting evidence based activity to enable them to fulfil their ability to understand, challenge and champion (OFFA, 2014: para 21). The report will also offer insights for future collaborative activity, with the individual projects having additional evidence to contribute to discussions regarding specific issues, such as work with carers, disabled students, pupils attending PRU and Muslim boys and girls.

Internal and external evaluation

The CLNCO project evaluation combined internal evaluation of individual activities that captured participant feedback on the quality of the project activities that was undertaken at a project level, with an external evaluation that focused on collaboration across the network.

Lancaster University's Researching Equity, Access and Participation (REAP) group based in the Department of Educational Research was commissioned to undertake the external evaluation during the final year of the project. While providing an external perspective and producing an external report for the purpose of external accountability REAP adopted a predominantly developmental approach by offering feedback to the MG, OG, SPoC and some project leads throughout the project.

As requested, the report focuses on findings from the external evaluation with an emphasis on the practical lessons for the main stakeholders involved in the network. Given its primary concern is about the collaborative nature of CLNCO it will emphasise the enabling, process and outcome indicators (Helsby and Saunders, 1993) that offer a more holistic approach to identifying issues that have emerged during the project. Although some of the indicators may have greater relevance to the Cumbria and Lancashire context, it is envisaged that many points will apply to other collaborative partnership activity including the forthcoming National Collaborative Outreach Partnerships (HEFCE, 2016).

Evaluation planning: RUFDATA

RUFDATA³ (Saunders, 2000) is an evaluation planning tool that asks 7 questions to help inform the evaluation. Following initial discussion with SPoCSPOC and project leads, RUFDATA plans were prepared for the overall evaluation and for each of the seven collaborative projects. Evaluation plans were discussed with project leads and amendments made as required, plans were either approved by CLNCO Management Group or their nominated member of the central team. These proved a useful point of reference and supported discussion about necessary revisions later in the project. For an example of a RUFDATA plan see appendix 2.

RUFDATA Headings
Reasons
Uses
Focus
Data
Audience
Timing
Agency

Figure 3: RUFDATA Headings

Evaluation evidence

There was a mixed method approach to data collection for the external evaluation.

Quantitative data

Evidence included two project wide surveys: one for teachers and influencers completed between January and November 2016 (n=108) and the second for MG, OG and HEP in November 2016 (n=25). REAP also supported individual projects notably Looked After Children (LAC), disability and health with advice regarding project evaluation questionnaires. This would permit subsequent comparison of feedback should activities be delivered in the future. Data was collected using QUALTRICS an online tool with graphical and table outputs for use by project leads, plus exports to excel for further analysis, the data collected was used to present numerical descriptive evidence.

Qualitative data

Evidence included face to face and telephone interviews with members of the MG and OG as well as teachers and key stakeholders. Attendance at project meetings provided opportunity to gather evidence from group discussion as well as observe collaboration in action. A range of documentary materials including:

³ For further information www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/capacitybuilding/toolkit/planning.htm

- **process data**: minutes, post project feedback that captured monitoring data and encouraged self-evaluation including lessons learned see appendix 3;
- **evaluation data**: formal and informal feedback primarily relating to activities were another important source of evidence;
- **dissemination data**: generated during specific activities and as part of the legacy information for instance Made in Lancashire and Made in Cumbria films.

Documentary evidence provided valuable contextual information and an additional source of data triangulation. Data analysis was supported by the use of ATLAS Ti for identifying themes and identifying illustrative quotes or exemplars.

Ethical considerations and terminology

The external evaluation was undertaken in accordance with Lancaster University's ethical considerations. This included an information sheet that emphasised the collaborative focus of the external evaluation and an informed consent form that was provided for interviewees who were given an opportunity to ask questions.

To attribute comments and provide anonymity for research participants the following standard descriptors are used:

- Management staff -covers comments made by members of the management group (**MG**);
- Operational staff covers comments made by members of the operational group (**OG**);
- **HEP staff** covers staff working in a university or FE College who contributed to an institutional or CLNCO project
- For HEP staff attending both management and operational group comments are attributed to either management or operational staff depending on the context and content of the comment;
- School and college **staff are described based on their role** – senior leaders (Headteacher, Deputy or Assistant Heads), subject leaders, heads of year, Careers, teachers and teaching assistants that include learning mentors;
- Other **stakeholders are described based on their sector** – community, health, private, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths).

Throughout the report universities and FE Colleges offering higher learning are referred to as Higher Education Providers (**HEP**).

Section 2: School perspective

At the start of the NCCO project HEFCE’s initial mapping exercise included 82 ‘cold spot’ schools. Further analysis based on information provided by HEP provided a more detailed picture that reflected the nature of the outreach and interaction between HEP and schools within the CLNCO area and revealed a further 41 schools (see Table 2). This section presents findings from an online questionnaire distributed to schools to ascertain their levels of awareness regarding HE outreach opportunities offered by HEP and gather feedback about the barriers and obstacles facing schools across Cumbria and Lancashire.

‘Cold Spot’ Schools	Cumbria	Lancashire
Identified by HEFCE	17	65
Identified by CLNCO partners	13	29
Total	30	94

Table 2: Number of ‘cold spot’ schools

Teacher and influencer questionnaire

Following feedback on a pilot questionnaire circulated to the Management and the Operational Group plus several teachers in December 2015, an online questionnaire was launched on 8th January 2016. The questionnaire was designed to give teachers and influencers from a variety of positions an opportunity to share their views on the higher learning outreach activities being delivered to young people.

The questionnaire included 9 closed and 3 open questions and was distributed by the CLNCO central team via email to a list of school contacts. Additional actions taken to encourage completion of the questionnaire included: a direct invitation to respond at the Blackpool Careers event, a request for HEP partners to ask schools they usually work with to complete the questionnaire and an incentive of entry into a prize draw for £100 school resources.

Initial findings from the questionnaire were shared with the MG and OG in February using evidence from 48 respondents. This report contains evidence from a total of 108 respondents from a variety of positions in 45 (29%) schools and colleges across Cumbria and Lancashire.

Key findings

The teacher and influencer survey conducted at the beginning of the year (2016) indicated both diversity in knowledge and awareness of HE as well as some common themes. These issues were reflected in the conversations

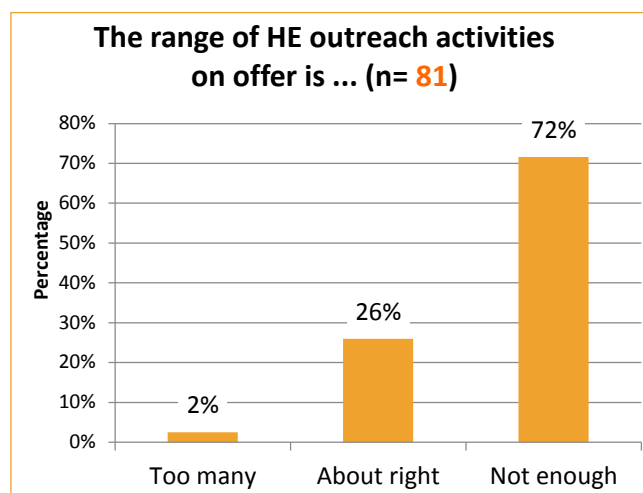


Figure 4: Range of HE outreach activities on offer

with teachers. The key points emerging are presented below:

- The range of HE outreach provision
- Factors influencing organisation
- Awareness of the range of opportunities
- Challenges facing schools
- Barriers facing young people

Number and range of HE outreach activities

72% felt that the range of HE outreach activities currently on offer to their school was not enough whilst **26%** felt that it was about right, with only 2% indicating that there were too many activities.

When asked to indicate all that apply, the five most popular ways in which respondents find information about HE outreach activities are: University website (38) **50%**, specific invitation to participate in an event (38) **50%**, teachers/colleges (31) **41%**, general publicity from university (28) **36%** and events such as UCAS / Careers Fayres (25) **34%**.

Interestingly, and perhaps indicative of awareness about HE outreach offered by FE Colleges, only (18) **25%** reported they would look at the general publicity of FE Colleges offering HE and (12) **16%** at FE College websites for information about outreach.

Organising HE outreach activities

There appeared to be a lack of awareness about the range of HE activities with only:

- **24%** agreeing with the statement: 'I am fully aware of the range of HE outreach available';
- **40%** reporting that: 'I know who to contact to find out about HE outreach';
- **26%** stating that 'It is easy for me to organise HE outreach activities'.

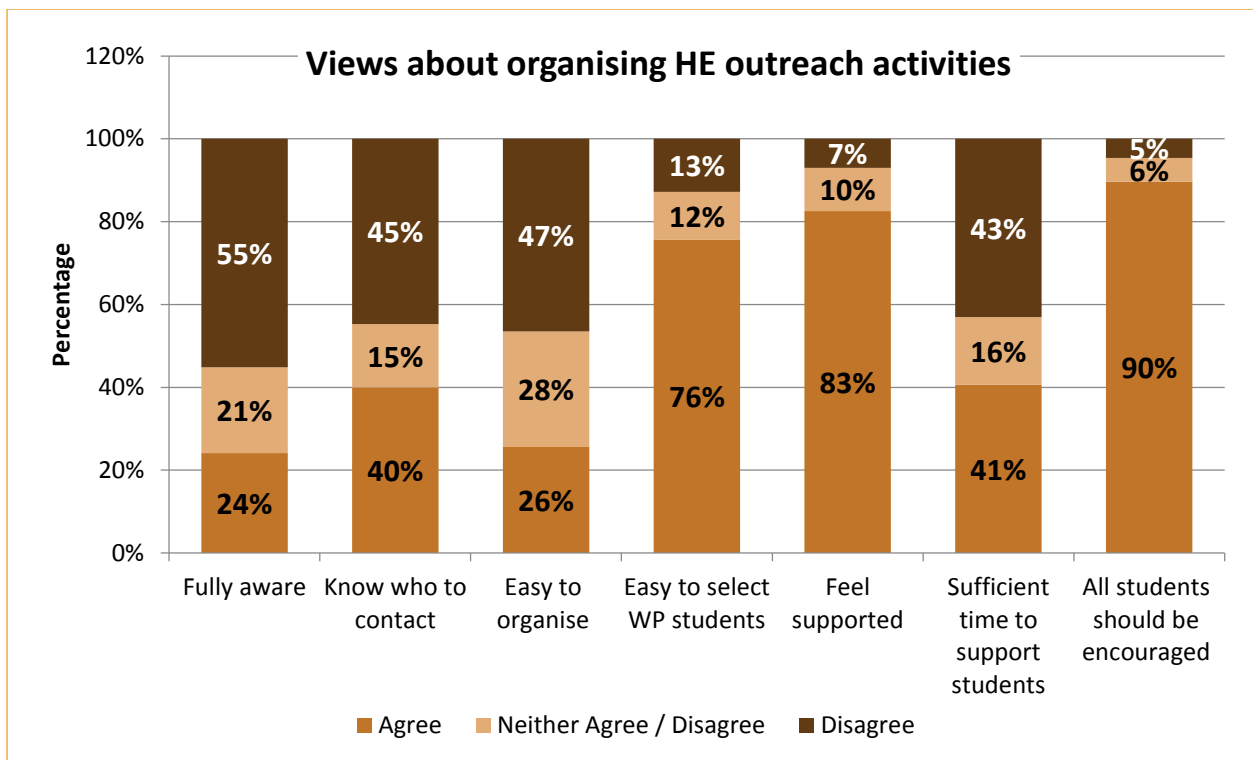


Figure 5: School views about organising HE outreach activities

There was greater confidence amongst respondents in terms of selecting students to take part in activities. For example, **76%** agreed with the statement: ‘It is easy for me to select students from under-represented groups for targeted outreach activities’ and **83%** reported that: ‘I feel supported by my school/organisation in my work to encourage young people’s progression’. Encouragingly, **90%** of respondents agreed with the statement ‘I think all students should be encouraged to participate in higher learning’. This positive open-minded attitude is clearly important as teachers and influencers play an important role as gatekeepers. However, as discussed in the next section, levels of awareness about HE outreach opportunities were surprisingly low, which may act as a limiting factor preventing pupils from accessing activities that may inform future educational pathways.

The responses to an open-ended question regarding challenges included comments relating to the organisation of activities. Some of the points raised may be useful to consider in readiness for planning activities for the next academic year:

Because we plan our programmes a year in advance people often do not get in touch in time to build them in to programmes. We make huge efforts not to disrupt A level teaching time - external agencies find it difficult to understand why we are reluctant to take part in things like careers fairs. (Teacher)

Although the example here relates to post-16 activities there is no reason to suppose the principle is not applicable to planning activities for pupils in key stages 3 and 4.

Awareness of the type of HE outreach activities

Over half of the respondents felt they were not fully aware of the outreach opportunities on offer and around 40% stated that they did not know who to contact to find out about HE outreach.

Levels of awareness were low. Only two of the six activities, were known by more than fifty percent of respondents; these were subject specific taster days (54%) and campus visits (51%).

As might be expected due to the more limited and specific nature of certain activities, 52% of respondents were unaware of targeted activities for specific groups of students and 47% were not aware of student mentoring schemes. As we will discuss in the following section, financial concerns were mentioned by teachers as a barrier to participation in HE outreach activities. It is therefore regrettable that 41% said they were unaware of sessions about funding or subjects that were delivered in school.

Awareness of teacher inset activities was particularly low; only 24% of respondents were aware of inset relating to the application process and 28% regarding opportunities to liaise with academic staff.

For one respondent, the challenge was not gaining access to information; rather it was finding the time to process it. As they explained: *“We receive so much information in school, it can be a challenge to sift through it all. A more co-ordinated approach from a small number of institutions would be more manageable”*. (Also, see below regarding Aimhigher’s collaborative approach).

Gaps, difficulties, and barriers associated with organising HE outreach

There were considerably different views regarding the level of information about outreach received by teachers and influencers; some respondents felt they had received too much information while others felt they had not received enough. Popular sources of information were HE provider websites, general publicity received from HE and specific invitations.

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the challenges faced within their own institution when trying to work with universities or the HE section of a Further Education College, see figure 7.

Types of outreach activity

- Generic hands-on session about higher education delivered in school
- Specific information session about funding or a subject delivered in school
- Campus visit
- Subject specific taster day
- Student mentoring
- Targeted event to challenge gender stereotypes (e.g. 'Girls into ... Boys into ...')
- Targeted activity for a specific group of students e.g. students with a disability, care leavers
- Parents / Carers information session
- Teachers’ inset about applying to HE
- Teachers’ inset or opportunity to liaise with academic staff in higher education

Figure 6: Types of outreach activity

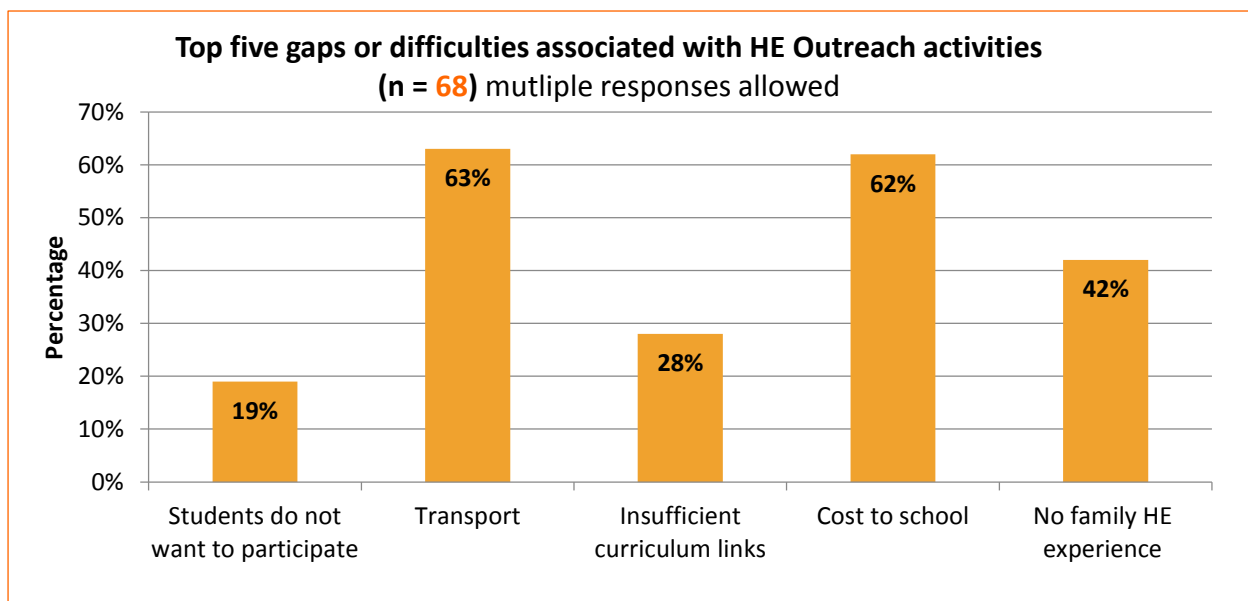


Figure 7: Top five gaps or challenges associated with HE Outreach

The most common challenges raised by respondents related to financial and time constraints. For instance, a common response was: *“Not enough time in the working day to think about these extra activities on top of regular teacher workload”*. This corroborated the findings from a closed question asking participants to identify gaps they felt were relevant with **63%** of participants rating transport as a difficulty and **62%** the cost to the school.

A further challenge from the school perspective related to the travel time required to visit a HEP given the distances involved across Cumbria and Lancashire, particularly for those on the West coast of Cumbria (which, in turn, links to the extent to which timetabled lessons are disrupted).

Other barriers from the school perspective included the lack of work with younger children (year 7 and 8 pupils) and a lack of opportunities for schools only delivering provision up to the age of 16. As one respondent explained:

We do not have a sixth form so have very limited time and provision of generic Careers Information, Advice and Guidance without the focus on HE. We used to have a budget that funded Raising Aspirations of disadvantaged students but this is no longer addressed separately in our school

In addition, some comments related to the limited provision for certain age groups including *“KS3”, “years 7 and 8”* and the way in which *“universities seem to only offer post-16 events”*. Other comments focused on the limited contact with universities: *“we don’t have any relationship/contact with universities”* and another said *“more information or visits from universities are needed”* and availability of subject specific information whereby comments included: *“I would like more information for them for their chosen courses”*; *“More subject specific sessions to be delivered in school”* and *“awareness of universities courses and what type of courses they offer”*.

Barriers facing young people accessing higher learning

The top three perceived barriers for young people in accessing higher learning were financial **85%**, confidence **79%** and lack of family support **71%**.

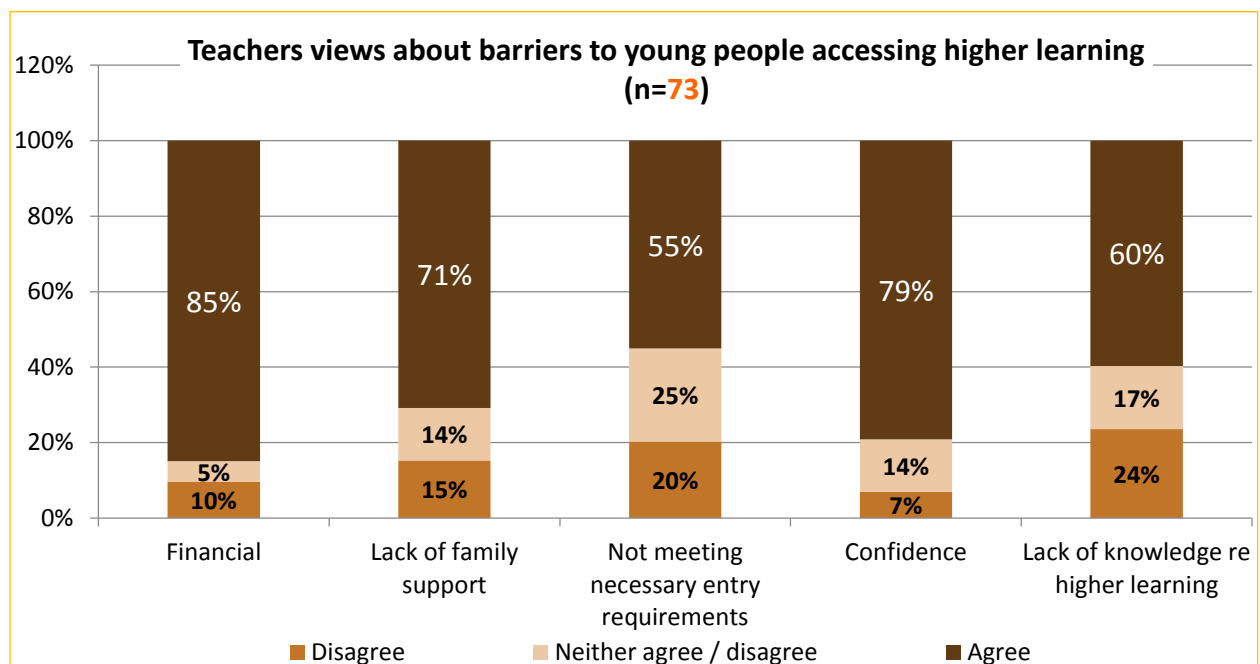


Figure 9: Barriers to young people accessing higher learning

Teachers and influencers felt that the key barriers were that students without family experience of HE needed additional encouragement to consider higher learning and that accessing activities was restricted. Qualitative data from the survey implied time was one barrier; teachers indicated that they did not have sufficient time to organise and plan the activities and/or experienced problems in taking students out of classes to attend the outreach events. For example, one teacher said, *“It’s hard trying to find the time to run and organise. Not being able to miss other classes in school to attend”* and another explained how there was, *“Not enough time in the working day to think about these extra activities on top of regular teacher work load. Difficulties getting time off timetable to accompany students to events”*.

Drawing from the projects and interviews conducted later in the evaluation, parallels and comparisons were drawn between CLNCO and Aimhigher, albeit with the implicit acknowledgement that the collaboration was taking place in a very different (and more difficult) context of increased competition. One MG member felt that from the school perspective, CLNCO was, *“simplifying things, [in that there was] one place to go to, avoiding duplication”*. Although the SPoC was a welcome feature of CLNCO, the timeframe for the overall initiative meant that there was not time to put in place a more coherent planned programme, *“With Aim Higher we could put together a programme of activities through the year groups. It is now much more piecemeal”* (Senior Leader).

Working collaboratively with schools

Involvement of schools in the development of materials or activities varied by the type of project. CLNCO provided opportunities for schools to collaborate with each other as well as with HEP, and the activities afforded staff to gain access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) regarding higher learning, labour market information (LMI) and career pathways.

Access to school staff was achieved through a multi-pronged approach that included:

- Direct communication at the start and end of the project from SPoC on behalf of CLNCO;
- Additional follow up with face-to-face and telephone meetings with cold spot schools to raise their awareness of HE outreach opportunities and obtain the school perspective;
- Email invitations to CLNCO project activities which were also publicised via the Website;
- Ad hoc interaction with individual staff attending specific CLNCO project activities;
- Opportunities for informal and formal continuing professional development (CPD) for staff attending specific CLNCO projects;
- Indirect interaction with school staff as a result of their membership or involvement with other networks, operational or strategic groups with whom CLNCO worked.

Several CLNCO projects involved greater interaction, notably the PRU and STEM projects which are discussed further in Section 3. For staff involved in these projects, CLNCO provided a valuable opportunity for them to come together as a network and gain CPD respectively. It appears that it was the additional resource including time of the SPoC from an organisation representing multiple HEP which brought success in a way that individual HEP had not been able to achieve in the past.

Maintaining momentum

One of the closing comments in the Aimhigher Lancashire evaluation suggested that:

One of the benefits of Aimhigher and I think at some level this will be a continued legacy, will be the way in which **teachers' awareness of Higher Education: the range of courses, the possibilities** – their awareness, I think that has grown and that has changed. (HEI) (Houghton, et al 2011: 175)

The results of the CLNCO survey suggest that enabling schools to become aware of the multiple opportunities open to them and their students is an ongoing task. The comment about Aimhigher was from an individual perspective but nevertheless appeared to reflect a general impression. The CLNCO survey offers an alternative snapshot and baseline for investigation in the future. Analysis of the results alongside the feedback to SPoC and evidence collected regarding specific activities highlight the challenges schools face in accessing outreach. Having the 'right people' in place in school, with access to the 'right people' in HEP is essential. What is evident from school feedback is the partial information

they have about what HEP offer. From the perspective of HEP there also appears to be limited awareness of the policies influencing curriculum including careers and IAG that influence school life. For those teachers who have actively participated in CLNCO activities there is increased awareness and engagement which is expected to continue. As will be discussed later, the four pillars of concern influencing sustainability - purpose, people, priorities and policy – require long-term investment by individual HEPs and, where appropriate, working collaboratively and in tandem with other networks to maintain the momentum renewed by CLNCO.

Section 3: Collaborative Projects

This section provides a summary of seven individual collaborative projects that are typical of the 23 projects delivered by CLNCO (see appendix 4). Each summary includes a brief description of the project and some of the key emerging Enabling, Process and Outcome indicators⁴. Lessons learned for future collaboration will be further discussed in section 4 and will draw upon the findings from the projects discussed here.

The projects are typical of the collaborative activity of CLNCO and represent different ways of working.

Project Name	Project Feature	Ways of working
Adult Learners and Community	Education and community collaboration – Developing ways to offer informal IAG in neutral or community venues	Lead developing model / approach requiring support from partners
Looked After Children	Collaborative residential and CPD events for target group	HEP Partnership involving external partner with specialist expertise
Disability Conference	Collaborative IAG Conference for target group	HEP collaborative event planning
Health Journeys	Education and Health collaboration to raise profile of specific careers	Multi-sector collaborative event planning
PRU Network	Cross sector collaborative Network to extend outreach	Project stimulated cross sector network
STAR	Professional development and capacity building	Project HEP staff capacity building
STEM	Education and STEM collaboration to raise profile of target subject	Multi-sector collaborative events / activities planning and delivery reliant on project funding

Table 3: Focus and features of seven CLNCO exemplar projects

⁴ For further information and resources from the HEFCE Evaluation Capacity Building Toolkit see <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/capacitybuilding/toolkit/index.htm#toolkit>

Adult Learners and Community events

Overview and aims

This project was led by the University of Cumbria. The plan was to hold a series of information, advice and guidance (IAG) events in community settings to encourage HE participation amongst adult learners. The project highlights how location and having a clear framework for action are important enabling indicators and confirms the need to understand localised working practices that represent influential process indicators especially when trying to develop a transferable approach.

The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a) **To establish the level of engagement in, and influence of, Adult Learners (AL) community events, in raising awareness of the range of HE opportunities and possible routes into HE.** This aim was not directly achieved due to changes in how the project evolved, however, where community events were organised local contacts were established and feedback gained from AL will assist with future local events. Due to staff changes and timing it was not possible to bring together the lessons and identify any commonalities.
- b) **To learn more about the barriers to HE from AL themselves as well as their views on actions or support which would help overcome these obstacles.** Staff involved in events gained useful feedback from AL including insights into barriers as well as the benefits of being able to access IAG at more informal events. Although participating staff informally shared ideas these have not been gathered or analysed more formally as part of this evaluation.
- c) **To learn more about the Information, Advice and Guidance needs of individuals (e.g. particular misconceptions regarding HE; the information which individuals find difficult to access).** Although a record of misconceptions regarding HE was not gathered, the process of planning the collaborative events revealed that among the different HEP themselves there is a range of views about the IAG needs of AL. This variation is likely to reflect the HEP context, and the experience as well as the role or primary responsibility of the staff involved.
- d) **To provide evidence for HEFCE and network partners of the influence of project activities overall with view to conducting similar activities in future.** Participation at community events was an effective strategy of taking IAG into the community, and extended the CLNCO reach. Interactive activities which encouraged hands-on or more active involvement were particularly effective as a stimulus to discussion, whereas access to information from multiple HEP helped increase impartiality, especially where it

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: University of Cumbria

Contributors:

Blackburn College, Carlisle College, Furness College, Lancaster University, Newton Rigg College, UCLAN, CLNCO central team

Various HEP publicity material

External: Various Community Groups

was displayed on a single stand. Involvement of Student Ambassadors from the locality helped provide a further point of connection.

Activity

Events were anticipated to be held in HEFCE cold spots and/or rural or coastal areas within Lancashire and Cumbria with the initial suggested locations of Carlisle, Workington, Barrow, Blackpool, Preston and East Lancashire. It was proposed that while there would be central co-ordination, marketing and evaluation, the events would be organised by local HEP providers since they are best placed to understand the local community.

The project thus intended to raise awareness amongst adult learners of HE routes and opportunities through providing engaging practical activities for adult learners and their families and impartial IAG. Activities used the CLNCO banner and involved staff from different institutions which helped to demonstrate the collaborative approach.

Location, location, location

A key feature emphasised as central to the project was the importance of holding the events in 'public spaces' such as a railway station, a local county show and community venues. The rationale for locating outside of more formal learning spaces was to engage with so-called 'hard-to-reach' groups; in other words, to enter the community as opposed to expecting potential learners to enter educational institutions (reaching out rather than expecting people to reach in). The more informal context further promoted higher education as something accessible to all and its providers as approachable.

One of the key strengths associated with this project was its use of 'neutral' spaces where the event was not directly wedded to any institutional affiliation. This neutrality and spirit of working together was appreciated by those engaging with the stand at the Westmorland show. Indeed, the purpose of CLNCO would lend itself to a dedicated space in a central location or a mobile form (e.g. like a form of mobile library) which was clearly independent from institutional interests; however, this would depend on the resources available.

It was often a challenge to find and agree upon appropriate locations. While the events were relatively low cost, especially when held in public spaces, the question of where was the ideal location could be vexed. The type of institution or space that was considered appropriate varied, some wanted to reach out by holding event in more informal context, while others felt it should be more formal. Nevertheless, through discussion and



Figure 10: Families and Communities
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negotiation, as well as the practical availability of venues, agreement was reached upon a range of locations.

The events comprised: a stand at Carlisle Railway Station; a stall at Westmorland show in the 'Learning for Life' marquee; a stand in the Asda supermarket at Barrow and 'UCLAN in the city' held in Preston.

The exchange of ideas during OG meetings led other partners to plan additional projects with many of the same aims and target audience, for example, the Science Festival held at UCLAN, and the Learn, Earn and Grow project.

The post event feedback provided some useful information to guide HEP planning similar activities in the future. For example, to consider the specific audience that may be found at the chosen venue. In the case of CLNCO, while having a stand at a railway station was good in terms of its visibility and raising the profile of the network, the people passing through were usually in a hurry and didn't have time to engage. Likewise, the stand in the ASDA supermarket, ideal in terms of the size of the potential audience, suffered the same problem in that people were in a rush and focused on the task at hand. In contrast, the event at Westmorland show, where people were wandering from stall to stall, there was more engagement. Furthermore, because this stand was positioned alongside various school displays there was more likelihood of families engaging since they would visit the marquee to see their children's work and, in turn, be attracted by the activities CLNCO were offering. Another member noted that interactive displays were popular and were better at engaging people; likewise, offering 'freebies' seemed to be a good means of engaging people.

KEY LESSON

LOCATION: Collaborative spirit is enhanced by holding outreach events in neutral spaces (not affiliated with a particular institution).

A framework for action

A general challenge associated with the overall CLNCO network regarded clarity in its specific purpose and direction. This difficulty seemed to be present in the organisation of the AL events. One of the OG members commented that it was hard to communicate the nature of the activity and its purpose to the venue's management/owner. This finding suggests members found it difficult to summarise the precise aims of this project.

Further, there was some vagueness regarding the target audience and, in hindsight, the project's initial title was perhaps a little misleading since the activities seemed more about raising aspirations in general (e.g. so that influencers could support young people and encourage their progression) rather than directed at adults as learners themselves.

Activities which are interactive and directly relevant to an academic course help engage participants, e.g. ultrasound for radiography... the 'cap and gown' [activity] stimulated discussion about people who graduate and provides a great photo opportunity.

There were some principles which evolved during the delivery of individual events which contributed to the original plan to develop and deliver an Adult and Community event in locations across the locale covered by CLNCO. For example, display of CLNCO materials and availability of more than one HEP's publicity materials. To attract and engage participants it helps to have, "Activities which are directly relevant to an academic area/course are good – the ultrasound activity from UoC has been very successful. Mini caps and gowns went down particularly well and prompted lots of discussion within families if someone had graduated. [It] also provides a good photo opportunity and a memory to take away". Through the involvement of the SPoC and the growing awareness of HEP staff regarding other HEP's provision, a result of the informal interaction at meetings and collaboration, there was a more overt commitment to impartiality.

Localised working practices

The Learn, Earn and Grow community event shared many of the features of the general adult and community learner events. It further illustrates how knowledge of local context and working practices of existing networks need to inform the design, development and delivery of activities.

Integrating this project from the beginning could also have enabled a learning opportunity for all CLNCO staff involved in the planning and organisation of events; it may have allowed identification of common issues and a more joined up approach to the overall project (e.g. the specific groups targeted).

The Learn, Earn and Grow, was led by Preston College following recognition of the need to work with young people from deprived wards who are disengaged from education. It harnessed the support of community leaders and involved them from the start. The event pointed towards the importance of who is planning and delivering activities; messages to disaffected and disengaged learners may not be effective if communicated by those perceived as 'outsiders'. 'Insiders' who have knowledge and understanding of local contexts may be better placed to engage these young people and can tap into existing networks and opportunities to allow appropriate signposting.

'Insiders' who have knowledge and understanding of local contexts may be better placed to engage these young people and can tap into existing networks and opportunities to allow appropriate signposting.

Being your own Superhero was another community based IAG event this time designed to tackle lack of awareness about educational pathways including apprenticeships. Based on existing working relationships within the Preston area, the deployment of a single member of the project team to take a lead with organisation was identified as an important enabling indicator. On behalf of the project, they:

- organised and resolved unexpected logistical issues in a timely manner;
- acted as useful gatekeepers to access learners who might not have attended.

A challenge identified by both Preston based projects was the pressure schools are under and their reluctance to support activities even when these are free. This is an issue that was confirmed with the teacher survey and during interviews with individual teachers, OG and HEP. **A possible solution** would be for school clusters to agree a common calendar for such events and a programme of Inset; a model that has had some success in an RCUK- School University Partnership Initiative⁵.

⁵ For further information about the RCUK School University Partnership Initiative see www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/current-projects/school-university-partnerships-initiative

Overview and aims

The aim of the project was to provide this group with a learning and social experience which they would otherwise not have the opportunity to join. The collaborative approach was consistent with OFFA's guidance in their Care Leavers Topic Briefing (2015) where they encourage HE providers to collaborate with each other as well as with schools and Local Authorities. The project illustrated the significance of the enabling indicators in terms of people, space and resources being pivotal to success as well as the importance of the 'ways of doing things' process indicator in coordinating a collaborative event.

The achievement of Looked after children and care-leavers has been on the agenda of many organisations over recent years.⁶ LAC performance in schools however has remained relatively low which is unsurprising given the emotional, social and practical difficulties this group experiences. As the 'Become' charity for children in care and care leavers state:

Outcomes for looked after children in education are poorer than their peers, and the gap gets wider as children get older. Unfortunately, sometimes being in care can have a negative impact on children's education. Frequent placement and school moves, or being taken out of school regularly for meetings will all impact on a child's confidence and ability to learn. Traumatic experiences before entry into care can also cause difficulties, which may affect a child's behaviour, self-esteem or trust in authority figures.⁷

The project provided insights into the need to understand localised working practices which operate as an influential process indicator and powerful source of individual professional development and institutional learning. It also highlighted the challenges associated with split-site administrative systems and the need to explore how technology might act as an enabling indicator. Finally, it emphasised the importance of a shared commitment to addressing factors effecting Care Leavers. The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a. **To establish the level of engagement and effect on Care Leavers (CL) (aspirations and knowledge) as well as key influencers.** Feedback from the residential including observations from HEP and Brathay staff confirmed the overwhelmingly positive effect of this type of activity on CL levels of confidence and raised aspirations.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: University of Cumbria

Contributors:
University of Central Lancashire

External: Brathay Trust

⁶ For example, see the work of 'Rees: The Care Leavers' Foundation'
http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/About_Us

⁷ Become Charity for Children in Care and Care Leavers <http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/care-the-facts/the-big-issues/education/>

b. To learn more about experiences of CL and key influencers to inform future events.

The project generated a lot of valuable learning with both HEP able to access new ideas and practical strategies for working with CL, the learning was often at the time of need and thus the process of reflection and debriefing was particularly useful, this was a sign of the growing collaborative approach.

c. To provide evidence for HEFCE and network partners of the effect of project activities overall with a view to conducting similar programmes in future.

The project contributed to the wider understanding of the benefits and challenges of collaborative working between HEP as well as partnership working with external stakeholders.

Activity

The aims of the summer school were both personal and educational in recognition of the intertwined and inseparable nature of these factors. A balance was sought between providing the young people with opportunities to experience fun and challenging experiences to build their confidence and self-esteem alongside providing information on the range of opportunities for progression.

The event attracted considerable attention. As one of the organisers commented: *The summer school's attracting a lot of interest since it's quite an ambitious project: a residential 3-day event at Brathay for 40 young people across year 10, 11 and 12 (OG).*

Application for the residential was through existing contacts, primarily social workers and via them to others. The maximum number of 40 young people attended. The event was held the Brathay Trust⁸ centre in the Lake District and the programme developed in partnership with UoC and UCLAN.

The staff at Brathay already had a wealth of experience in running activities for young people, including care leavers, and delivered a mix of activities aimed at raising self-esteem and progression. In addition, the group visited the Ambleside campus of the UoC to gain further information about higher education pathways.

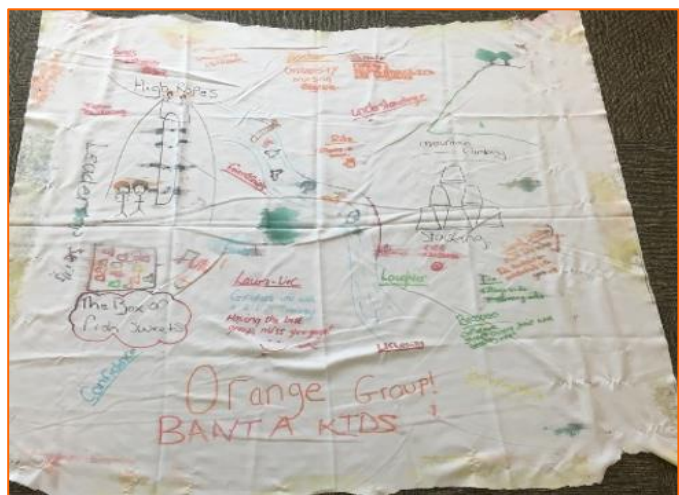


Figure 11: Poster created during residential

Evaluation suggested the young people's experience of the residential was overwhelmingly positive. Pre- and post-event questionnaires found self-reported increased confidence and comments from the young people regarding their achievements included: *'Loads! Overcame*

⁸ Brathay Trust <https://www.brathay.org.uk/>

physical and mental challenges' and in relation to the most useful part: *'when you talked about university'*.

Working practices and policies

The LAC project highlighted both policy and practice issues in implementing activities. Organising the residential, an ambitious event from the offset, required complex designation of responsibility. UCLAN took responsibility for the applications but the system they used meant that the partner HEP, UoC, did not have immediate access to monitor this process. Individuals working on the event pointed to differences in the way they usually did things: *I think our processes were quite different, when we do residential we had to have a lot more background (HEP).*

Thus, in any further work, this interviewee believed one lesson was beginning with an appreciation of difference and taking time to: *"Understand that everyone works differently"*.

While not posing any detriment to the overall event, the difference in policies resulted in occasional difficulties. One issue was the capacity of staff to handle safeguarding related problems. It became apparent that the extent of one young person's difficulties had been underestimated in their application and during the first night of the residential concern was expressed regarding their well-being and the impact on other young people. One staff member believed it would have been more appropriate to arrange for the individual to leave and return to their carer/s; another felt that they had the capacity to handle the situation. It transpired that the differing beliefs were due to training; the staff at one HEP had more advanced training than the other.

A positive outcome of this incident was that the HEP perceived to lack adequate training initiated change to their staff development policy. This example highlighted the learning that can take place from sharing practice.

Recognising and developing expertise

While the initial portrayal of the summer school may appear to involve disagreement and tensions these were worked through successfully by continued communication and



Figure 12: Looked After Children
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KEY LESSON

PRACTICES AND POLICIES: successful collaboration benefits from recognising time is needed to gain an appreciation of different ways of working and an openness and time to learn from others

negotiation. In fact, the project was identified for inclusion in the final monitoring reports to HEFCE as one MG noted, *“a truly collaborative project where we learned so much by working together”*. Particularly important in this process was the efforts on the part of the project lead to share the results of the achievements and for those involved to meet post-event to discuss the benefits and disadvantages as well as identifying how best to address these, for example, by providing more training for staff and considering future possibilities.

The debriefing also appeared to result in revised expectations, or rather, realistic expectations regarding such residential events. Given the target group there are numerous factors to consider, some of which may be additional to those usually emerging during residential events. For example, in the event of a young person needing to leave early then complex permissions may be involved requiring communication with different parties (e.g. social workers), a process which may be lengthy and demanding of particular expertise.

The potential vulnerability of these young people also has implications for the recording and external publicising of the events via, for example, photographs and filming. The learning opportunity this event provided for staff was clear; one of the key leads, already experienced in working with LAC, said that she had observed the way in which Brathay staff at the centre were particularly effective in linking ‘fun’ or challenging physical tasks such as climbing to raise what could be sensitive emotional issues (e.g. in team work involving holding a rope for another person, asking who holds their rope in everyday life). Brathay’s staff expertise and repertoire of strategies for working with the LAC also modelled good practice for the HEP staff and student ambassadors working on the project.

Recognising and not underestimating the demands of the task allows for expectations to be managed from the beginning; to some extent this did happen. For example, it was originally anticipated that the residential event would involve more young people. However, in discussion with the external partner who had expertise in running activities for LAC, it became clear that a larger group was not viable given their staffing capacity and intensity / demands of the group.

Recognising and not underestimating the time and demands of the task of collaboration allows for expectations to be managed from the beginning.

Disability

Overview and aims

The Disability Conference was a collaborative information, advice and guidance (IAG) conference for disabled students.

The group was co-ordinated by Lancaster University with involvement by all four universities and in the final phase two FE Colleges. The project illustrates the importance of the enabling indicators related to staffing, roles and responsibilities, and process indicators associated with communication.

The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a) **To establish if there is interest from disabled students and those personal and professional ‘helpers’ who guide them in attending a targeted IAG event.** There was interest from professional ‘helpers’ and positive feedback about the vision for this event, and positive feedback from the actual participants. However, logistical challenges raised by schools regarding the release of school staff to support individuals or small groups of students.
- b) **To provide evidence for HEFCE and network partners of factors influencing collaboration around IAG for disabled students and those personal and professional ‘helpers’ who guide them.** As evidenced in the discussion below, from the school perspective the barrier is staffing capacity and from the HEP perspective it is achieving the balance of staffing expertise – namely, the need for both HE awareness and Disability specialisms.

Activity

The activity was a one day conference targeted at disabled students in Key Stages 3 and 4. Timing of the event was a major consideration, with the advantages and disadvantages of different options reviewed by the project group. Views were based on institutional and personal experience and as members changed during the project so did the views about when best to hold the event.

The decision to hold the conference during the school day was chosen to enable school staff accompanying the young people to also gain an insight into the nature of support as well as ideas they might follow up with other students in their school. The number of workshops was based on practicalities regarding travel arrangements, and the actual content shaped by the project group reviewing the range of options offered by HEP involved in the project. Within the group there was a mixed awareness of the support provided to disabled students

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: Lancaster University

Contributors:

Edge Hill, UofC, UCLAN, Blackpool & Fylde, Blackburn

Various HEP publicity material

External: Health, The Dukes



in their own and other institutions. Adopting a collaborative planning approach allowed members of the working group to learn more about what, and how other HEP supported their disabled students. The actual event which involved disability advisers and disability IAG offered a further opportunity to learn more about the topic and individual HEP response.

Unfortunately, despite careful planning and a positive response to the invitation, the conference was not well attended. Schools pulled out at short notice and three did so on the day of the conference itself due to adverse weather and staffing issues. Nevertheless, staff involved in organising the event spoke positively about the format and benefits of working collaboratively to organise this type of targeted event. The MEP Julie Ward endorsed this event with a recorded welcome message highlighting the need to address barriers to participation of disabled students. The project team recognised that the overall potential pool of participants is small and that from the student perspective there is greater value in accessing multiple institutions at the same time. By coincidence, Lancaster University was hosting Russian researchers wanting to learn more about inclusive approaches on the day of the conference. This group were keen to attend the sessions and took ideas and materials back to their own institutions thereby enabling international dissemination of good practice.

An unintended outcome of the event was the opportunity for HEP staff to exchange disability guidance material and discuss their institutional approach to disability support. Feedback suggests that there is a willingness to collaborate to organise similar targeted events.

Staffing, roles and responsibility

Staffing issues illustrated by this project included the influence of staff turnover, as well as the importance of identifying and involving staff with the relevant expertise.

Staff changes

The turnover of staff is outside the control of any project but may be greater in projects reliant upon short term funding; there was a change in the staff representing each institution (except for one HEP) at the meetings throughout the disability project. The extent of these staff changes meant earlier decisions were revisited and revised to reflect the new staffs' experience and views. For instance, deciding to change from a weekend event open to families to a mid-week event reliant on school support. Details of decisions made by the group were recorded but the handover and briefing of new staff was predominantly undertaken at an

KEY LESSON

Recognising and sharing expertise of different staff: explore ways of enabling recruitment and outreach staff from different institutions to meet and discuss support services for disabled students especially with changes associated with Disabled Students' Allowance and the expected diversity of HEP responses.

institutional level. This aspect perhaps explains the diversity of interpretations and lack of consistency about the purpose of the event. Nevertheless, the commitment of HEP remained and the staff who assumed responsibility showed a willingness and concerted effort in working together to deliver the conference.

In pursuing the original goal the staff gained valuable experience at organising a collaborative event and increased their knowledge of the support offered for disabled students which several reported was useful for their substantive post. A benefit of working collaboratively was the opportunity it provided for the project team to share personal as well as professional experience of working with disabled students. This informal learning was effective but overall the project lacked a strategic approach which, with hindsight, could have been achieved by greater involvement of disability and learning support staff.

Recognising different types of staff expertise

Except in the case of one partner, the staff involved came primarily from a marketing, recruitment and outreach background. Their experience and expertise lay in organising general awareness raising events, providing balanced programmes and in liaising with schools. Disability service or learning support staff were consulted and ultimately delivered the workshops but they were not directly involved in planning the event. Observation of workshops suggests that most were suitable and offered valuable opportunities for the young people attending; nevertheless, greater involvement in planning by specialist staff would have been helpful. Collaboration with workshop leaders would have enabled them to make connections with other sessions in the programme, and allowed greater clarification about the focus and approach of each workshop.

An additional benefit of involving staff with different areas of expertise was the opportunity it afforded staff to extend their knowledge and awareness of working with disabled students. Several reported the personal and professional benefits of their involvement. This project thereby enabled specialist knowledge to become 'mainstreamed' or embedded at the more general institutional level which will potentially benefit future students.



Figure 13: Being you at university
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Communication

Collaboratively organising the disability conference highlighted several aspects of communication that need to be considered. Some of these aspects related to accessing the target group while others related to the general organisation of events.

The group recognised the challenge of targeting disabled students and tried to access Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO) within schools. Accessing the right teachers with the necessary leverage within school to negotiate release from timetabled lessons for eligible students to attend events is a longstanding issue.

Differences in terminology and support structures within school, FE and HE do not help communication between educational practitioners; an issue explored previously by a member of the evaluation team (Houghton and Piggott, 2008). Securing school support would also be important for weekend family events in terms of both encouraging attendance and in explaining to parents and carers the range of support and the alternative mechanism for that support.

Differences in terminology and support structures within school, FE and HE do not help communication between educational practitioners working with disabled students.

Exploring Health Careers

Overview and aims

This project perhaps best demonstrates the spirit of collaboration that can be achieved once relationships and ways of working are more established. The event was organised by the Central team and brought together 4 HEP with external partners.

The two-day event highlighted a combination of enabling indicators involving the 'right' people with access to suitable spaces and able to work within a tight timescale and adapt to the process indicators arising from multi-agency ways of working to reach a shared goal.

The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a) **To gain a greater understanding of the potential benefits of working collaboratively with NHS colleagues also involved in outreach to health and allied professions, with a focus on learning about what HEP and NHS can contribute to joint outreach activities.**

The project was extremely successful in bringing together different groups of staff from all four HEP to work with NHS colleagues. Both the patient and student journey generated materials and a format which has considerable potential for future delivery with the possibility of expanding the numbers for the student journey.

- b) **To provide evidence for HEFCE and CLNCO partners of the distinctive features associated with collaborative health related outreach.** The event highlighted the essential combination of staff including, outreach staff, academics, health professionals and trainee students underpinned the quality of the event. Other HEP and groups within the NHS network are now interested in exploring how they might get involved in future delivery.

Activity

This project responded to a need for health-related careers and IAG identified by the four universities and the NHS. Agreed by all the partners the project aimed to raise awareness of health-related careers within the NHS for learners (and their families) from a WP background to consider this as a future option.

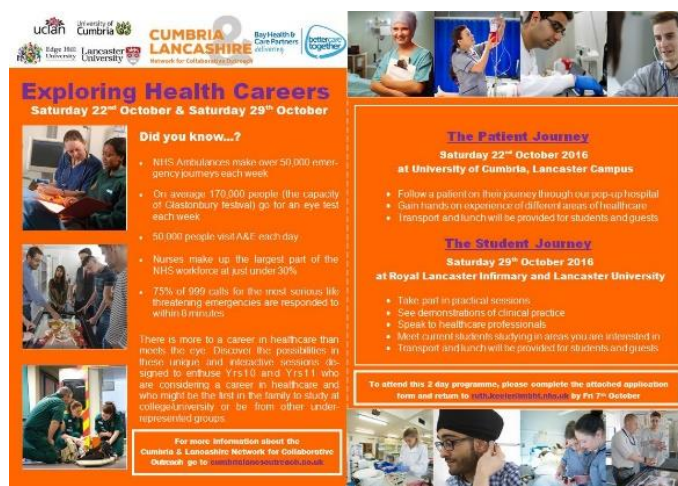
PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: CLNCO Central Team

Contributors:

Edge Hill, LU, UofC, UCLAN,

External: University Hospitals for Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust



The flyer is titled "Exploring Health Careers" and is dated Saturday 22nd October & Saturday 29th October. It features logos for UCLAN, University of Cumbria, Lancaster University, Edge Hill University, CUMBRIA LANCASHIRE, and the Emergency Care Patient Partnership. The flyer is divided into several sections:

- Did you know...?** A list of statistics: NHS Ambulances make over 50,000 emergency journeys each week; On average, 170,000 people (the capacity of Cleatorbury Festival) go for an eye test each week; 50,000 people visit A&E each day; Nurses make up the largest part of the NHS workforce at just under 30%; 75% of 999 calls for the most serious life-threatening emergencies are responded to within 8 minutes.
- The Patient Journey** (Saturday 22nd October 2016 at University of Cumbria, Lancaster Campus): Follow a patient on their journey through our pop-up hospital; Gain hands on experience of different areas of healthcare; Transport and lunch will be provided for students and guests.
- The Student Journey** (Saturday 29th October 2016 at Royal Lancaster Infirmary and Lancaster University): Take part in practical sessions; See demonstrations of clinical practice; Speak to healthcare professionals; Meet current students studying to areas you are interested in; Transport and lunch will be provided for students and guests.
- Call to Action:** To attend this 2 day programme, please complete the attached application form and return to nhs@lancaster.ac.uk by Fri 7th October.
- Footer:** For more information about the Cumbria & Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach go to: www.clnco.org.uk

Figure 14: Flyer for Collaborative Health Events

This project entailed two linked but separate days where the patient journey and student journey were depicted in an interactive way. The benefits of interaction confirmed by one HEP staff who said, *“The health initiative reaffirmed my beliefs that interactive activities have a great deal more IMPACT”*. The patient journey involved young people interacting with health professionals who the patient would encounter on their journey through outpatients. During the student journey, young people and their parents met students studying a course leading to a health profession. There was positive feedback from young people, their parents and teachers who attended that illustrated the benefits of having multiple professions covered in the same event.

I got the chance to experience new careers I wouldn't have much knowledge on and some I didn't even know existed until today (Pupil)

Seeing each dept and meeting students was a helpful experience. It was good to do interactive tasks such as watching paramedics and seeing equipment for operations. Speaking to the students was the best part for me as a mum. (Parent)

Being able to see the Journey from start to finish in a logical order, this increased my understanding of the wide range of different professions required. The passion and enthusiasm of staff and students made the whole day engaging and inspiring
Increasing understanding of qualifications needed, job roles and patient needs
Networking with health care professionals to further support students at school
(Teacher)

The project was complex and developed and delivered in a relatively short time span. The partners involved, both internal and external stakeholders, meant coordination was challenging particularly in the given timeframe.

Involving the ‘right’ people

This project was a multi-sector collaborative event that brought together health and education professionals with a shared commitment to widening access to the health professions. Individual HEP and the NHS staff had experience of organising health focused outreach activities which either focused on a specific profession or aspect of the process. This project was initially driven by the Cumbria SPoC and the NHS Careers and Engagement Hub for Cumbria and North Lancashire, *“who hatched a plan, ... initially it was more elaborate but due to time and practicalities it was scaled down into something which was more manageable and I think sustainable for the future”* (HEP). Through their networks they brought together interested colleagues to plan and develop the two day event.



Figure 15: Collaborative Health Project
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The initial team involved combination of recruitment and outreach staff, academics teaching on health professional courses and representatives from the NHS. Each brought their own area of expertise, but when reflecting on reasons for the success of the event it was clear that none of them could have developed and delivered the event alone. The event was a success precisely because of the combination of organisations involved which ‘brings everyone together in a way that wouldn’t normally be possible’. The logistics of involving the right people was not straightforward, in part due to the timing, but also because the distinctive contribution of each group of staff was not necessarily immediately recognised.

Several academics referred to the detailed medical focus of the patient journey and suggested that the fact each area contributed specific details was vital. There was some concern that because outreach teams have a general understanding and considerable experience at organising events that *“they sometimes think they don’t need to involve or see the value of involving academics”* (HEP). The patient journey was a script and resource involving the contribution of multiple academics. The time and challenge of accessing the right people, and briefing them appropriately to obtain enough information to produce the patient journey should not be underestimated. As another HEP noted *“it’s been a difficult birth, but now we have the patient journey and we can build on that in the future”*.

Time

Some of the difficulties related to timing and the challenge of trying to communicate with so many different groups of staff all with different working agenda. The timescale was relatively short and detailed conversations did not begin until July at which point many of the staff had limited availability due to holidays. Finding a suitable time in the academic year is never easy especially as many of the health-related courses involve extended teaching periods that do not necessarily coincide. There was a general feeling that more time was required.

Close to the event there were multiple messages sent by different people. It was evident that some contributors who played an important role but who did not belong to the core organising team found things confusing and at times overwhelming. It was suggested that for this type of event there needs to be a clearer communication strategy including named individuals for specific tasks. One individual suggested that although, *“it’s helpful to be copied into everything... it can be very confusing as you don’t know if or what you are supposed to do with the information”* (HEP).

The amount of time required was also linked to the complexity of the activity, which involved two separate events and multiple players. The challenge of scripting the patient journey has already been noted but an additional factor was the logistics of communicating with schools and getting students and their families

KEY LESSON

CONTRIBUTIONS: Identifying distinctive inputs from each institution can result in ‘win-win’ situations for all partners.

registered for two events which happened within a couple of weeks. This activity necessitated close collaboration between the two HEP hosting the event and the project lead for the NHS Careers and Engagement Hub. All three organisations, having successfully organised similar events in the past, inevitably had established ways of working which they needed to bring into alignment. The experience was valuable for identifying the benefits of taking time to talk through processes beforehand rather than making assumptions.

Impartiality and progression

A key feature of this event and many other CLNCO events was the willingness of all stakeholders to collaborate and offer young people and their families access to an impartial IAG event which was designed to meet a need that the young people themselves may not have recognised existed. As several involved in this project noted, young people do not know the full range of health professions and possibilities and may inadvertently rule out potential options through a lack of information. Several staff also reported learning more about certain professions as well as the courses offered by HEP in these areas.

The event was deemed a success by different stakeholder groups; for example, one parent accompanying a young person said:

I think it's important, lots of universities, it's not just promoting one university, it was showing what other people did and how they approached their training and working together (parent).

The student ambassadors also described what they believed were the benefits of the student journey including the chance to learn about different health professions and to talk to people studying the course to learn more about the reality of what it means to be a trainee doctor, midwife, nurse, occupational therapist, paramedic, physiotherapist, and radiographer.

Sometimes tutors can be intimidating and students are afraid to ask questions ... here you let them to learn about what they want to find out about, I also think it provokes them to think about other options, I didn't get that chance ... they get a chance to ask, when I was at school there was nothing like this, I don't think they do enough in schools to promote healthcare. (Student Ambassador)

Part of the Better Care Together strategy is the system-wide approach to Careers Engagement; realising the importance of developing the future workforce for the entire health economy and in inspiring future generations to be the best they can be.

Creating opportunities for individuals who may otherwise be prevented due to existing barriers is key, and to do it in collaboration with our educational partners makes us stronger in our shared goal; sharing knowledge and good practice and developing understanding of different parts of the system. (NHS partner)

This event, despite the challenges, was successful in achieving its goal; the undercurrents behind the scenes (present in any project though rarely made explicit) are discussed here to enable others to learn from the experience.

PRU (Pupil Referral Units)

Overview and aims

The project was designed to address a gap in provision that was identified by the initial mapping exercise. The aim was to work with PRU to increase outreach opportunities for PRU pupils who have the ability to benefit from HE. Its planning drew on the expertise of the providers and their local connections (e.g. Community Mental Health service). The project benefited from the commitment of staff, especially members of the PRU and local photographer. It also raised awareness of HEP learning opportunities and enabled PRU to develop new ways of working together and with local HEP. The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a) **To gain a greater understanding of the potential benefits of working collaboratively with PRU colleagues whose pupils have the capacity to progress to HE with a focus on learning about what HEP can contribute to joint outreach activities.** The project revealed not only the benefits of PRU working with HEP but brought together staff working in PRUs to learn from one another. The project has inspired the creation of a PRU network with a programme of meetings involving an exchange of CPD opportunities and the formation of a Community Interest Group to extend the work of the local photographer.
- b) **To provide evidence for HEFCE and CLNCO partners of the distinctive features associated with outreach needs for PRU pupils including the potential for collaborative activities post CLNCO.** The creative activities involving a local photographer inspired the learners as well as their teachers who have discussed reviewing their curriculum, exploring ways of embedding and extending the use of photography as a stimulus for building the confidence of their pupils.

Activity

The aim of the PRU project was to work with a group of schools who do not normally access HE outreach activities. The longer-term goal was to engage with young people and their families to raise awareness of the wider options open to them, to give them time to talk to a range of organisations who provide support and information, advice and guidance. In response to feedback from PRU time was spent supporting the formation of a network which will continue in the future.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: CLNCO Central Team

Contributors:
Blackburn and Blackpool & Fylde College

External: Pupil Referral Units
Steve Ashton (Ashton Photography)

KEY LESSON

REACHING OUT BY REACHING IN:

Dispelling the notion of 'hard-to-reach' groups by tapping into local expertise and community leadership.

PRU Character Building Programme

It is important to note that within a PRU there is a clear distinction between the educational trajectory of students with 'medical' conditions and those with behavioural issues. Some PRU students with challenging behaviour, and many of the PRU students with medical conditions who have severe anxiety, are capable of achieving A*. In contrast, many of the young people with behavioural issues may pursue a different path for example, become an entrepreneur. The PRU Character Building programme was designed to build PRU students' confidence, see their environment differently and widen access. This programme included several strands:

- Digital photography, editing and exhibition skills
- Bespoke drama-based workshops
- Teacher's CPD

Digital photography

Students worked with a local photographer to learn digital photography skills which they used to take photographs at Blackpool Zoo, Lytham Music Festival and in their own environment. The resulting photographs were exhibited at another network event called 'Next Steps In the City' which is a UCLan pop-up shop in the centre of Preston. Blackpool Zoo has since provided an exhibition space for photographs within its premises.

The holistic approach engaged young people and prepared them for future learning and progression opportunities offered by CLNCO network partners. For instance, Blackpool and Fylde College invited the PRU photographers and their peers to take part in an accredited photography course. Meanwhile UCLan is providing a bespoke tour of its campus to these young people to dispel any myths they may have about attending university. Because of CLNCO's collaboration with the Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP), PRU staff also learned how their students' learning mapped onto an area need, with Creative and Digital jobs identified as a key themed area for future employment and skills by the LEP Skills Hub.

Bespoke PRU drama-based workshops

The script for these performances was developed jointly between a professional theatre company and PRU teachers with drama experience. These workshops have taken place in PRUs across Lancashire with the aim of building confidence, raising aspirations and to provide targeted guidance about progression pathways to this group of young people.

CPD for teachers

Through this collaboration and ensuing discussion, PRU staff identified common concerns and areas of expertise within the group which they are willing to share. For example, a



Figure 16: PRU Character Building
© @ice_creates

Master of Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) has offered training in NLP to other PRUs in the partnership. The PRU partners have recognised the value of their collaboration and have already begun to arrange to visit each other's institutions and plan a programme of meetings for 2017.

Establishing a network

Although the initial aim of the PRU project was to increase access to HE outreach it became clear that it would be beneficial to invest time and effort in supporting the development of a network; an infrastructure that would last beyond the lifetime of the project. Already the network is providing mutual support for the PRU and making it easier for HEP partners to discuss and plan activities. When CLNCO initially contacted PRU, one of the challenges was explaining and exploring the relevance of their work. As one PRU member explained, it was through a colleague that they realised the benefits, indicating also that the network will aid communication more generally. Similarly, because of the PRU character building programme, a local HEP was able to identify suitable progression opportunities. *“Although we had connections with the local college before, what the network was able to do was to put us in touch with specific people who we’re developing a new project”* which will enable young people to learn more about the subject and gain a better insight into college life. The network is both an outcome of the project and an enabling mechanism that will last beyond the wider CLNCO.

STAR: Skills, Treasures, Ambitions and Roles

Overview and aims

This project provided CPD to HEP staff and supplied them with tried and tested resources produced by an external organisation (Windmills Ltd.

<http://www.windmillsonline.co.uk/>). The project highlights the value of the enabling indicator resources in that it utilised existing material rather than attempting to develop new materials (see below for future developments). STAR also showed the process indicator 'ways of working/behaviour' was particularly valuable. Whereas ownership and adoption at a local level requires some level of flexibility, meaningful exchange across institutions benefits from standardised approaches - whether for young people or those delivering activity. The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a. **To establish the benefits of multiple HEP 'accessing training from an external agency' and training at the same time.** The project has provided access to 24 members of staff in four institutions, additional training, mentoring and resources have been purchased based on initial feedback. The model has proved to be cost and time effective with training delivered in different HEP thus reducing the difficulties around finding a suitable slot convenient with all relevant staff. Localised delivery has also supported institutionally specific discussion about how resources could be integrated into existing programmes.
- b. **To gather evidence of the development of materials for use by the funded HEP and other members of the CLNCO partnership.** The project confirmed the importance of a 'champion' to support engagement of the right staff to access CPD and enable them to explore how best to position existing resources into their provision as well as generate new materials. The timing of delivery means that individual HEP are only just beginning to integrate materials into existing provision, the initial training and discussion suggests that each HEP will adopt and adapt materials depending on the local context. Based on successful collaboration and exchange of ideas during OG meetings, there is a plan for staff from different HEP to meet and share their response in a few months.

Activity

This collaborative project was unlike others in that the initial collaboration was between the external provider and several staff working within each HEP. Rather than collaboration between one or two staff in different HEP, the project provided an ideal mechanism for bringing staff working in

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: CLNCO Central Team

Participants:

Blackburn, Blackpool & Fylde,
Burnley, UCLAN

External: Windmills Ltd.



Figure 17: STAR resources

the same HEP, often in different sections, to attend the CPD. The planned activity aimed to:

- Build the capacity of key champions within UCLAN, Blackburn, Blackpool and Burnley Colleges, to deliver STAR (Skills, Treasures, Ambitions, and Roles) activities - Positive feedback from HEP staff outlined the benefits of working alongside colleagues and having the chance to think more about their working practices and provision;
- Equip champions with a flexible toolkit of STAR resources, activities and exercises which can be tailored to raise aspirations, boost confidence and enhance the employability of young people – The resources were described as high quality and appropriate for the age group although, as discussed below, there were several logistical challenges associated with implementation. Provider evaluation also confirms the positive feedback and outcomes for young people;
- Support each HEP to ensure maximum value and sustainability is achieved through senior leadership 'buy in' and coaching and mentoring support which will continue for a further year - Initial support from trainers has been welcomed, however, the timeframe means it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this aim.
- Facilitate cross institutional collaboration through review and celebration events- To date, individual HEP have shared how they plan to integrate materials and activities into their programme at OG meetings and at a CLNCO celebration event; future evaluation would confirm whether this happened and its outcome.
- Develop a long-term partnership plan to grow and embed STAR and related activities within future strategic agendas and funding opportunities- CLNCO have provided access to individual HEP and, through them, to the future NCOP.

Benefits and role of CPD

Each HEP identified a group of staff to attend the CPD 'train the trainer' session. Typically, staff worked in different services and had not necessarily worked together. Reasons for attending also varied: some decided based on information they received; others were told to attend and either had no expectations or as one explained:

It's critical to have the right 'champions' on board and to actively engage them in the process as early as possible.

To be honest I was quite negative when I just heard about it ... it's just hard to imagine what it is, and how it's different to what we do, but now I've experienced it I'm really impressed.

The trainer managed the diversity of staff effectively and the activities provided a base for the mixed groups of staff to share comments based on their own experience and working context. The training therefore helped them to appreciate their different working practices and learn more about the nature of their colleagues work as well as find out about the STAR resources. Views about specific activities varied, this variation seemed to depend on participants' professional background and working context. For example, one HEP

practitioner felt that the, *“full programme with one school would be a challenge”*. However, the open-ended nature of the resources was welcomed because it meant they were *“not necessarily [for] high achievers, [there] could be mix of both”*. Some staff commented that: *“the ideas are really useful and something we can use... [also] learning about ourselves [in] using this exercise”*.

The potential value of the materials for specific groups of students was also noted, one HEP member of staff felt they were useful for, *“students whose family have no HE experience...with them we have to really delve into and pull it out of them so having these cards makes it easier”*. Another felt that given sufficient time they:

Could do this in a classroom with WP students [and] could get some really interesting responses... through the diversity of the students it could foster better relationships between the students and greater awareness of each other’s background.

During the final CPD exercise participants identified the range of contexts and situations they could use the activities. Staff began to explore the practicalities of incorporating materials and activities into their current provision and working practices. Whilst there was an impressive list of suggestions there is the ongoing challenge for all the HEP to block out time to consolidate ideas and embed them into their provision. From our experience as evaluators the extent to which HEP identify a member of staff to lead on integrating activities and allocate time for staff to embed approaches into current practice will determine the level of sustainability of this project. The ongoing support from Windmills Ltd. is important; it will however require individual HEP champions to ensure they access the support available. One HEP colleague reflecting on the CPD session said that it was:

Great that we’ve had all these ideas but very conscious that it’s easy to get carried away, I think we will have to start small and then build up and get the buy in from the rest of the staff ... and the schools.

Use of existing and externally produced resources

Using existing materials saved on development time which, in the timeframe of the NCCO initiative for a newly formed partnership, was a core consideration. The appeal of the STAR programme was that it provided resources but from the perspective of sustainability the CPD was perhaps more important. The impartial generic capacity building activities designed for the target age group increased their appeal. Although the project team saw the potential transferability and adaptability of activities for use alongside existing materials, each new group of staff accessing CPD needed time to make these connections for themselves to gain a sense of ownership and



Figure 18: Champion Iceberg for effective change (Hawkins, 2016)

consolidate their learning. As Pete Hawkins of Windmills Ltd. explained, their experience of working with the CLNCO project was like an iceberg and was dependent upon:

... 'champions' who are leading the activity within institutions but unless three underpinning elements are in place then long term systemic change will not take place. These are around culture and values, staff behaviours and supporting systems and processes. The ability, energy and enthusiasm of the champion to 'connect' strategically enough to influence these is crucial to success.

Although the materials and training already existed the flexibility of the resources was vital for successful integration into existing provision. Prior to each training session there was an initial meeting where the institutional vision was identified. This was key because it ensured the training was contextualised so that all partner staff accessing the CPD learnt about the bigger picture of how the materials complemented their existing provision, as well as the intended outcomes and benefits for the young people. It enabled the trainers to, *"create tailored solutions to meet institutional priorities, balancing short term operational impact with longer term strategic influencing and systemic change"*.

Whilst materials were generic and suitable for embedding into existing provision there were some concerns expressed about the cost of the resources. The high quality, colourful and careful design of materials is part of their appeal, however several HEP were concerned about how they would fund future resources. Commissioning the work collaboratively had brought about economies of scale and may be something HEP consider in the future.

One of the Windmill case study students highlighted another consideration:

I think it'd be useful to do STAR again. You have different decisions to make each year e.g. options in Year 8 and 9, work experience in Year 10, further education in Year 11, and STAR could help with that⁹.

The STAR programme is one among several resources for providing progression and further development.

Benefits to external partners

The benefits of collaboration were two way and feedback from Windmills Ltd. indicates short term and longer term benefits including:

- Ongoing partnership development- at an institutional and individual level, *"we've found people in the long grass! Our simple goal is to work with nice people on exciting projects that make a difference. A number of inspiring people have jumped out of the long grass"*;
- Cascading resources and training to staff seeking to widen participation as well as those working in careers, employability, volunteering and enterprise agenda (thereby

KEY LESSON

RESOURCES: Identify and share established ('tried and tested') resources rather than reinventing the wheel.

⁹ Windmills Ltd Case studies: <http://www.windmillsonline.co.uk/who-we-work-with/case-studies/>

widening the benefits of the programme and mainstreaming capacity through institutions);

- Heightened awareness and understanding of widening access considerations, which provides a useful foundation for future resource development and possible collaboration within the next phase of NCOP.

Due to timing, it is not possible to confirm the effective roll out and integration within HEP provision, however, based on observation and feedback it would seem appropriate and useful for the Cumbria and Lancashire NCOP to consider evaluating the effectiveness of the activity over the coming months to inform any future decisions about use of STAR or its progression programmes.

Future developments

Possible areas for development offered by Windmills Ltd. and HEP staff attending the sessions include:

- HEP staff cascade their learning and ideas for using the materials within a widening access context to other staff in their own and other HEP;
- Creating a tailored 'Future U' Toolkit and Programme – supporting partners to co-create a bespoke portfolio of resources related to progression to HE as a cross-cutting theme;
- Developing an interactive, on-line Future U platform with a range of blended learning activities enabling pupils to discover their unique strengths, values, passions, motivations and aspirations;
- Supporting senior leadership teams to develop an integrated strategy drawing on materials and approaches (recruitment, retention, development, growth, transition).

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

Overview and aims

The STEM project involved multi-sector collaborative activities designed to raise the profile of the broad umbrella of STEM related subjects including those relevant to the two land-based FE Colleges. The project highlighted the benefit of working with established organisations (Cumbria STEM and STEMFirst) with existing access to STEM

Ambassadors and ways of working with schools.

STEM activities included formal CPD and the collaborative nature of some activities supported informal professional development leading to planned changes in teaching and learning. The specific aims for the evaluation of this project were:

- a. **To identify the benefits and barriers to Lancashire and Cumbria HEP and their external partners through working together with a focus on [collaborative] project management.** Within the broad umbrella of STEM activities (see below) there were several models of project management adopted involving CLNCO funded staff acting as a co-ordinator, facilitator or commissioner on CLNCO funded activities and CPD undertaken by existing external stakeholders (Cumbria STEM and STEM First).
- b. **To provide evidence for HEFCE and network partners of features of good practice arising from working with partners to deliver STEM activity in Lancashire and Cumbria.** Individual STEM activities generated a range of feedback for the HEP involved; presentations at the celebration event and filmed interviews provided colleagues working on Cumbria and Lancashire specific activities to learn from one another. There was also evidence of school staff gaining ideas for future use in school. Unfortunately, the timing of activities restricted opportunities for wider discussion and identification of good practice.

Activity

A variety of activities and events were held within this project, involving Lancashire's 'STEM Scholars' Programme' (STEM First); Cumbria's 'robotics workshops' (Cumbria STEM) and 'STEM Career Paths' facilitated by a STEM expert on the central team. All activities involve trained STEM Ambassadors working in local industry and referred to Local Management Information (LMI) obtained from the Lancashire and Cumbria Enterprise Partnerships.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead: CLNCO Central Team

Contributors:

HEP Partners with resources and activities

External: Cumbria STEM and STEMFirst - Lancashire

KEY LESSON

JOINED UP ACTION: Collaborative work with existing networks to build capacity of all partners.

For practical reasons relating to geography and the involvement of the external organisations STEM First and Cumbria STEM whose remit was to work in a specific locale, the activities were developed in either Lancashire or Cumbria. Time was another factor that influenced several CLNCO activities including the STEM events; in part this was because many of the same OG or HEP staff were involved in more than one activity, but it was also because of the multiple partners involved. Aligning school, HEP, external stakeholder and employers to enable joint working requires a much longer timescale, something which was not wholly practical within the NCCO timetable. Nevertheless, the activities were successful and the experience gained from working on these events is likely to help with future activities.

STEM Scholars programme / Work@IT

The longer-term goals for the STEM Scholars programme included: stronger relationships with and between schools, a more unified approach and upskilled HEP staff delivering activities informed by Local Management Information (LMI), teachers with greater awareness of the next steps for their pupils, and inspired young people able to consider choices they had not previously considered.

Working collaboratively with STEM First enabled CLNCO to access their existing resources (see <http://www.stemfirst.com>) and established working relationship with schools. The STEM Scholars Programme brought together members of the CLNCO network, UCLAN and Further Education Colleges who worked with 'cold spot' schools in their area and STEM employers. The idea was to, *"create inspirational awareness sessions for young people and their teachers, for what STEM professions would be like"* (Helen Heggie, STEM First). The activity involved STEM First co-creating sessions with HEP staff to highlight the individual college offer and use LMI data assembled by the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Robotics Workshops for years 7 / 8

Drawing on the expertise of Cumbria STEM (see <http://www.cumbriastemcentre.co.uk/>) this activity benefited from their existing relationships with schools and access to a group of trained STEM Ambassadors working in local STEM industry. From the CLNCO perspective the partnership provided easy access to nine of their cold spot target schools, these were chosen from the list of schools with whom Cumbria STEM already had a working relationship. The workshops were tailored to include additional information about progression pathways and designed to act as a precursor for the STEM Career Path days developed by partners within the CLNCO membership.

The robotics activity was designed to increase motivation and support longer term engagement with the skills and resources as it would enable pupils to enter the First / Furness Lego League in the future.

STEM Career Paths

Five schools and 110 pupils attended the two days of collaborative STEM activities which built on the previous robotics workshops by expanding on the range of Career Paths

available and emphasising the importance of Maths and Science. The days offered continuity and progression for pupils, and opportunities for teachers to gain new ideas for the curriculum. HEP staff and student ambassadors offered STEM taster sessions and there was an opportunity to meet additional STEM Ambassadors.

The days involved STEM activities such as ‘Genes in a Bottle’, an opportunity to visit different parts of the Lakes College and explanations of how Mathematics and Science featured in different careers and other subjects. This involved, *“briefing college staff who did not necessarily have STEM expertise, that we wanted to highlight how Maths and Science were important in their subjects, so beforehand talking to them so that they were on message”*. For example, explaining the Chemistry of dyeing hair for hairdressing, or the Maths involved in Art and Design.

Working collaboratively and with a wider group of partners including STEM Ambassadors with an enthusiasm and expertise in the subject appeared to allow HEP partners to:

share ideas between staff, it felt like [in] this event, in particular, recruitment wasn’t an issue... it was very much a group of people who wanted to encourage young people to study STEM, that was the main thing.

As discussed below working collaboratively also appeared to support informal CPD.

Teacher feedback on a comparable STEM Career event delivered by Cumbria STEM highlighted the importance of the interaction and value of integrating into everyday life, *“Children have loved having a go! They have recognised the importance of Science in ALL walks of life”*. As Figure 18 shows, feedback indicates there was a positive shift in young peoples’ views about whether they would consider a STEM career in the future.

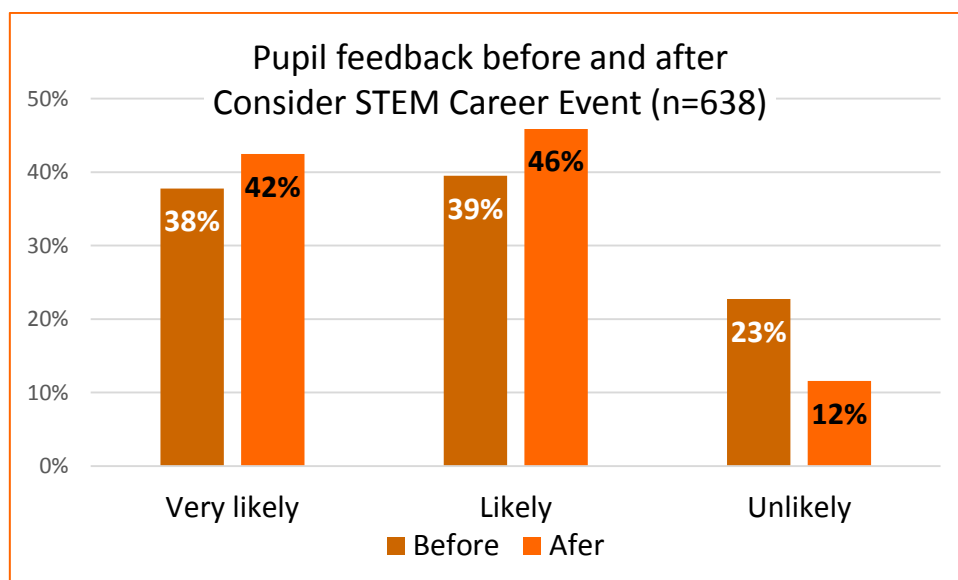


Figure 19: Pupil feedback before and after ‘Consider STEM’ Career Event

Staff involved in the CLNCO STEM Path reported receiving similar positive feedback during the two-day event, and where the STEM Ambassadors had supported the previous Robotics workshops they were able to follow up earlier discussions.

Access to trained STEM Ambassadors

By working with Cumbria STEM, CLNCO could access STEM Ambassadors who had already been trained and had experience of working with the relevant age group. As noted in previous research undertaken for the Royal Academy of Engineering, timely interventions by STEM ambassadors can influence subject choice and future career paths:

Personal testimonies by STEM Ambassadors highlight the variety of routes into Engineering careers and the range of activities especially visits, illustrate the different roles and jobs available. There is evidence that these experiences are influencing decisions (Houghton and Marsden, 2013: 17).

In addition to training about safeguarding and working in schools, STEM Ambassadors were encouraged to think about how to make their subject and area of expertise more accessible to young people. One STEM Ambassador whose expertise was Marine Science, explained:

It's about thinking about more accessible applications of the techniques we might use and relate to things they might know about, so in the robotics workshops I discussed remotely controlled vehicles and their use in deep sea environments, how to get to places where you can't normally reach. I used visual examples to explain deep sea pressure, how [a] coffee cup goes down to the size of a thimble.

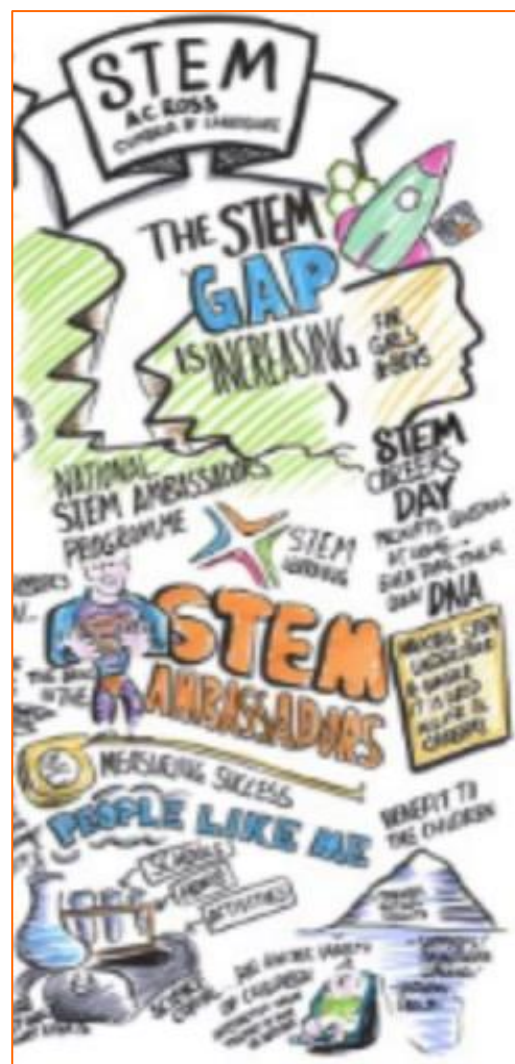


Figure 20: STEM across Cumbria & Lancashire
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These tangible real life examples supported all three CLNCO STEM activities. Access was via existing organisations who are dependent on external funding and partners such as CLNCO who fund activities that require STEM ambassadors.

Formal and informal CPD

CPD of college staff was a distinctive strand of the STEM Scholars programme. Here we focus on the informal and unplanned CPD opportunities arising from planning and delivering the STEM Career paths events. Staff reported increased awareness of STEM pathways, access to relevant information from people working in industry as well as educational providers, and growth in personal confidence through working alongside more experienced CLNCO colleagues.

Taking part in the CLNCO project has opened my eyes as to how much young people are at the centre of everything, and how important it is for them to be provided with the right information to make these decisions. I have also improved my own skills

and abilities as I have learnt to lead projects and practical sessions through taking part in the STEM careers days and also doing the CREST awards. I have proved to myself that I can work in these kinds of situations with many different students and I have increased my own confidence.

Other HEP staff shared feedback from teachers who planned to use ideas from the day, such as a peg activity that was used to explain Darwin's Finches and natural selection. One suggestion for improvement of events like the Career Paths was to work with teachers in advance of the event, to ask teachers, "*which parts of the curriculum do you find hard, or difficult to teach and then ask STEM Ambassadors to come up with ideas [based on their] in-depth knowledge*". This model of co-creation is one that has already been piloted by Lancaster University as part of their RCUK-Schools and University Partnership Initiative¹⁰.

¹⁰ See <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/schools/rcuk-schools-university-partnerships-initiative/research-in-a-box/> for further information.

Summary: Outcomes

The above description and discussion of exemplar projects points to the range and creativity of activities within CLNCO. Notable in the current policy context where outreach by HEP is increasingly directed to achievement rather than aspiration (even while there is recognition of need to work with younger year groups) is the focus on neglected groups such as those young people in PRU. Also notable is the way in which funding enabled new or innovative practices which would otherwise have been difficult to deliver using institutional funds alone (e.g. buying in the expertise of external partners). This raises the challenge of finding ways of integrating this expertise in conditions where funding is not as generous.

The goals of each project, and the contribution to the overall CLNCO goal, did not always appear to be finely tuned; rather, they were emergent as collaborating partners 'found their feet'. The impression from evaluating the above projects is that the 'in hindsight' observations of members implied that towards the end of the project the initial difficulties were being ironed out, relationships of trust were being built and the potential of collaborative partnerships between partners and external stakeholders realised as the following illustrative comments shared at the celebration event suggest:

Collaboration does not have to be limited to educational establishments. External providers have a lot to offer and bring different perspectives.

The willingness of partners to collaborate and work together on shared objectives for the benefit of young people (and for this to continue)

Collaboration works best when young people are central to its purpose rather than that of institutional interests

In terms of changes and impact, two other outcome indicators, the evaluations of projects found clear evidence of **staff development** through sharing good practice resulting from collaboration and, from the young people's feedback, **raised awareness, aspiration, and self-esteem/confidence**.

It also appeared from the evaluations that the projects organised later in the timeframe of CLNCO were more dynamic, brought together more partners and were relatively quickly carried out. These projects were all led by the central team. It is possible that both these factors (timing – being carried out when CLNCO was more established; and leadership from the centre) were influential. Although difficult to assess, it is possible that leading from the centre enabled clearer goals and meant greater knowledge could be drawn upon (e.g. how funds could be used from the CLNCO budget) in organising collaborative events between HEP and external organisations. At the beginning such cooperation was more time-consuming since there was little foundation upon which to build relationships. These were only built through the process of collaborating on smaller scale activities and then coming together. It is also likely that the time pressures acted as a motivating factor leading to a preparedness to act more quickly and perhaps risk more innovative and creative activities.

Section 4: Emergent cross-cutting themes

This section draws on evidence from across the evaluation to identify the components that appear important for future collaboration networks. It considers these under five broad headings –Aims, Context, Exchange, Resources, and Sustainability.

Aims

The evaluation identified several factors necessary for effective collaboration within a network that related to the aims. The key factors were: clarity and commitment regarding the overall purpose; the tensions associated with institutional WP versus recruitment priorities; and the importance and challenges related to impartial IAG.

Clarity

The need for **clarity** in aims was evident from members' responses across different institutions and projects and is a common challenge facing partnerships. As Foskett (2005: 358) notes and others point out, there is a need for the: '...clear articulation of the aims of each of the stakeholders taking part in the project and convergence of those aims towards a common purpose'.

Individuals referred to the vagueness from the beginning of the network. Some members located this as lying within the initial HEFCE guidance which appeared at times to the group lacking a sense of direction. Projects need to be clearly defined in terms of their aims, timeline, remit, criteria, and objectives. Without these elements in place then inertia and disagreement appears more likely.

HEFCE have been woolly and so people are interpreting things in their own way, and so partners are coming with their own interpretations (MG).

Strategic and operational participants noted the delay in the start of projects; somewhat unavoidable since in comparison with other regions that already had existing networks Cumbria and Lancaster were effectively starting anew. In some respects, the delay was also due to a lack of clarity in terms of the overall objectives which meant institutional partners were hesitant in putting their ideas on the table.

you ask for people's opinions and no one responds and so you think crikey and just get it started, there can be apathy or people don't have enough time, so someone has to take the reins (OG).

there isn't enough buy-in for the network. I think that has been a serious flaw (OG).

I think for me, people came up [with] the idea and don't know what they want, it feels a bit disjointed (OG).

However, what some might perceive as vagueness was also positive since it encouraged open-mindedness and creativity in projects rather than following existing programmes. According to one OG member, *"it got us to think about how we were going to spend that*

money". It was further acknowledged by one MG member that the guidance from HEFCE was clearer for the NCOP than the existing programme suggesting this issue was more widely experienced and that HEFCE have both recognised and tried to respond to the problem. A more tightly focused NCOP scheme however raises different concerns regarding the potential restrictions it may experience. See lessons for future collaborative networks (Section 5).

WP and Recruitment: The 'elephant in the room'

The aims of CLNCO and institutional priorities were sometimes seen as conflicting. For some this related to the, *"Balance between pre and post 16, [the] HEFCE guidelines were quite vague..."* (MG). The spirit of CLNCO, collaboration in the interests of individuals' educational progression, did not always sit comfortably with the pressure upon institutions to recruit in competition with one another. One interviewee said:

... there is always an elephant in the room, although we say WP isn't about recruitment it is, we know HE has become competitive, it's difficult to have true collaboration when we are all after the same thing (OG).

Recruitment was referred to as the elephant in the room by a management group member while another member similarly expressed: *... the crux of the matter is asking institutions to cooperate when they are in competition (OG).*

As (Wiggans, 2012: 4) states:

Working collaboratively with others may benefit the national objectives to widen access for under-represented groups, but individual institutions will wish to weigh carefully the resources required and the advantage to be gained before entering into substantial partnership commitments.

However, while many staff recognised the issue, how far this was perceived as problematic depended on practitioners' location in an institution and which partners were in collaboration. For example, if a practitioner worked in a WP team then a more impartial approach to outreach was consistent with their everyday role. However, for others with a dual outreach and recruitment role, there was often a concern and awareness that they were holding events which would not necessarily be looked upon favourably by, say, a colleague in the recruitment / marketing department. Generally, collaboration appeared easier when institutions were not targeting the same 'market'; for example, when HEP were offering different courses, having different entry requirements or located in a different geographical catchment area.

My concerns have always been about how altruistic people can be, the project just being let's just use it as recruitment for our university (OG).

...their stuff isn't collaborative, it is about recruitment to the institution (OG).

It does help having same institutional goals as [partner HEI] but, in another way, it would actually be easier to work with [another HEP] since their target for recruitment is [a] different group (OG).

Some partners are more fully on board than others, with some happier taking rather than giving and Lancashire maybe benefiting more than Cumbria (OG).

Nevertheless, some events were perceived as a 'win-win' for the various institutions. For example, the Collaborative Health project was effective in part because the different partners were not directly competing; rather they were bringing different yet complementary opportunities. This element should perhaps be noted for future activities given that, in the view of one HEP member: "after 2017 it will be a more competitive market and so that will be different" (HEP).

Impartiality

When the staff were clearly 'impartial' in their position, for example, the SPoC role, then collaboration appeared easier and more achievable. Being visibly or explicitly funded by an external project tended to reduce the potential for conflict with institution goals relating to recruitment and decreased tensions with other institutions.

For the target audience, the partner institutions clearly coming together to deliver an activity seemed to be welcomed. As noted in the above discussion of the health project, the fact that the different partners were putting their efforts into offering the best opportunity for the young person did not go unnoticed by parents. Other partners also welcomed the collaborative approach that typified a commitment to impartiality.

The 'branding' of CLNCO, in much the same way as the logo of 'Aimhigher', was designed to help SPoC and others present a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. However, unlike Aimhigher, the relatively short lifespan of CLNCO perhaps meant that recognition was only beginning to be achieved towards the end of the project.

Putting the interest of the young person first, their progression and a pathway that is right for them, needs to be highlighted as the priority for all those involved. One member commented to their colleague, that it wasn't about "getting 'bums on seats' at their home institution, [but] can you imagine if our marketing manager heard me say that!" (laughing). It was a learning curve; this member of staff noted that sometimes it wasn't appropriate just to bring one institution's prospectus to a CLNCO event, which had on one occasion happened, and that this needed to be acknowledged.

The crucial place of impartiality suggests that realising the full potential of a collaborative undertaking may benefit from establishing a base or centre that is independent from any organisation. The Adult and Community events, Learn, earn and grow, and disability conference illustrated the influence of place on the engagement of participants but also highlighted the logistical challenges. Some OG members talked about rotating the location for a specific event which seems a helpful suggestion for activities delivered in the future.

Context

The context for the network includes the history, geography, and working practices; these factors are important influences upon the effectiveness of collaborative networks.

History

Acknowledging that any 'new' partnerships are largely based upon previous connections is crucial, as is the recognition of the history and resulting context of each institution. One MG member said: ... *[there] was already some history (MG)* which they felt influenced the initial phase of the project. New members, as part of previous or current alliances, each brought expectations which were shaped by their institutional role and responsibility as well as the requirements demanded by the new project. Whilst previous collaboration offers the possibility to 'fast track' some discussions and decisions, the changes in context – for individuals, institutions and the national policy agenda - means that this process is not straightforward. At the time REAP began its evaluation it was evident that there were some historical tensions that had not been resolved. However, as so often happens, with time and opportunity for staff to reconnect new solutions based on compromise and shaped by current rather than historical relationships began to emerge. The celebration event provided an ideal opportunity to recognise the progress that had resulted from CLNCO collaborative projects.

CLNCO was not unique but is a timely reminder for any future collaboration that past collaboration is a key influence. The time required to reform a network and establish effective collaborative partnerships should not be underestimated. The history of institutional performance and awareness of the working context is another factor for members of a partnership to acknowledge. For example, HEP reputations based on past facts, figures or working practices may have changed in important ways with implications for collaboration. For schools in special measures, which require a degree of sensitivity in terms of any engagement, CLNCO seemed to represent a new opportunity to gain access and re-connect with a school which individual HEP may have not been able to access because of the context. As a member of the central team explained, *“Once a senior level meeting within a school has been secured, everyone has been keen to engage”*.

Geography

Many individuals referred to the area covered by CLNCO. The main advantage of having a partnership covering such a wide geographical area, and particularly for FE Colleges, was the opportunity to network with colleagues they would not normally meet. The wider partnership brought economies of scale and resulted in colleagues from different locales working together and sharing ideas without fear of local competition. However, at the same time, many MG, and particularly OG, members felt that logistically the area covered was too large and the distinctive local needs too diverse.

A report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation '*Transforming disadvantaged places: effective strategies for places and people*' (Taylor, 2008) highlights the influence of 'place attachment' and concluded, "*how necessary it is to understand how place attachment issues play out differently in different local areas...*" (Taylor, 2008: 6) The implications of diversity and distinctive features of different locales in Cumbria and Lancashire were also noted in Cumbria and Lancashire Aimhigher partnership evaluations (Houghton and Moser, 2006; Houghton et al, 2011).

Various challenges have been identified in working within Cumbria; in partnership with another large and diverse county there are more potential barriers and practical challenges regarding the coordination of timetabling and travel. Some of the OG members' comments highlighting this challenge were:

The area covered by the network, the two counties and the size / rurality of Cumbria in particular (OG).

Network is too big, lesson learned, when they decided to amalgamate the two, it's too big, the range of activities and the location across the regions is not sustainable (OG).

Some CLNCO members believed that the size of the network slowed its progress:

I think the size of the partnership can slow it down (OG).

Doubled up partnership, its slowed things down, from the Cumbria side, the Cumbria lead has to align things with Lancashire has slowed things down (MG).

The challenges not only influence collaboration between partners and the outreach individual HEP can offer, they can affect the concerns and challenges of the young people. Though a very different context, parallels can be drawn between the young people's experience of rurality with those discussed in Australia. For example, Fleming and Grace (2015: 11) argue that:

Rural students face a range of barriers to higher education over and above those faced by, for example, low SES [socio-economic status] students residing in urban areas. In addition to the financial and locational concerns, rural students are generally less confident about their ability to succeed at university given their self-perceptions as being different to urban/metropolitan young people (Young 2004).

In working together CLNCO members began to recognise common barriers such as a lack of confidence among pupils and gained an increased appreciation of the challenges facing colleagues working in different locales, with collaborative CLNCO projects facilitating the exchange of new ways of working.

Working practice

Foskett (2005) points out that the different practices and annual rhythms of individual institutions, or 'cultural disparities', can present a barrier to collaborative working. Acknowledging such differences from the start may be helpful to the success of any collaborative enterprise.

- via the website which was developed as a communication MEANS with external providers.

Structure

The structure of the overall network is important in terms of promoting good communication; its absence means there is confusion over 'who needs to know what' with the result of either receiving too much or too little information. The structure of a network can also influence communication with schools and external stakeholders such as Local Education Partnerships (LEP).

Governance

Governance and its structure is particularly complex in a network such as CLNCO. The questions such as who should be represented on any management committee or steering group and the place of those delivering activities as well as external partners are difficult to answer in such a diffuse network. In the event, as noted in the introduction, the structure consisted of a management and operational group with overlap in membership between the two groups. Whether this was the best structure for effective governance is not possible to address though it seemed to result in some advantages and disadvantages.

Feedback from 15 members of the MG and OG survey conducted at the end of the project suggests that there was still some uncertainty about the remit of the two governance structures, with two thirds agreeing that developing a shared understanding of definitions was important (see Figure 22 and discussion around collaboration in Context: working practice). At times the decision for the MG representatives from the two LEAD universities to chair the meeting led to their institutional perspective not being articulated, or a concern that their views were dominating the agenda. A similar diversity of opinion regarding the management of SPoC and what decisions needed to be made by the MG rather than the central team was evident at certain points in the lifespan of the project.

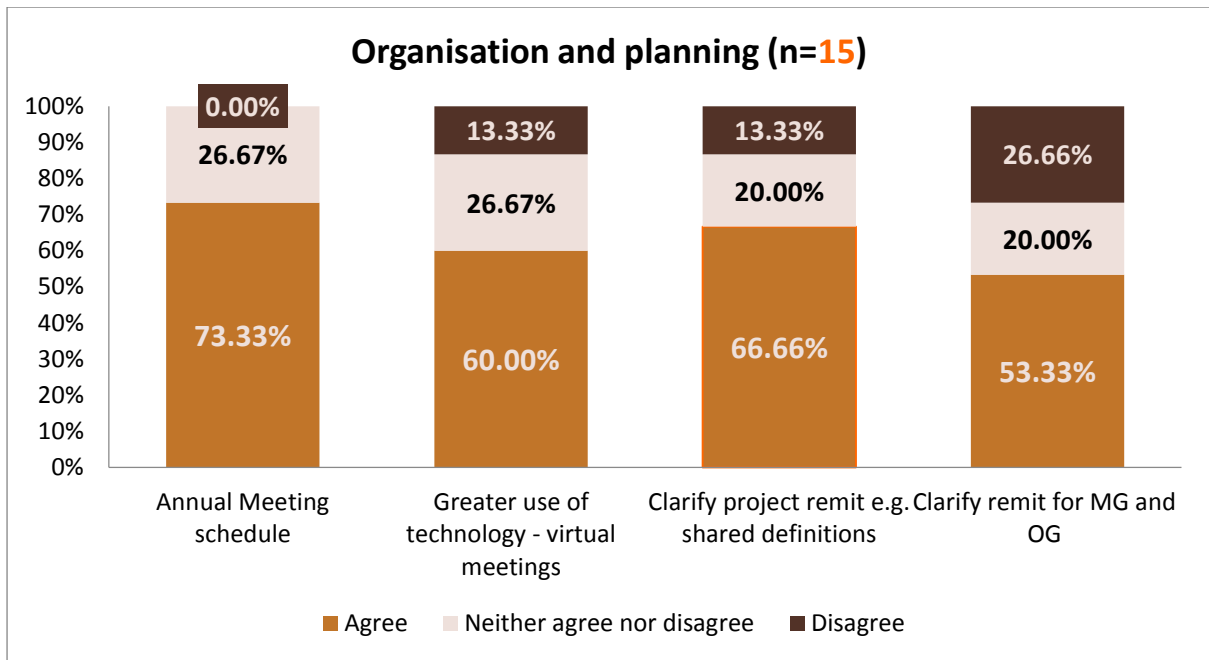


Figure 22: Ideas for organisation and planning collaboratively

Despite initial discussion about governance arrangements the implications of decisions for all concerned were not fully anticipated, in hindsight building in an opportunity to review systems of governance would have been useful. In many respects the external pressure arising from the short timescale of the NCCO initiative was an influencing factor, unlike established partnerships CLNCO was new with a large membership. The time required to develop effective working relationships is longer than the time HEP were allocated in this two-year initiative. This disparity was noted at the celebration event and in meetings and interviews conducted towards the end of the project.

Celebration, inspirational which came at the wrong point, I took a lot away from it, this is what we can do in projects like this, but it takes time, we are only just at this point now ... For new members of staff it's a shame it's coming to an end, it gives evidence that these projects do work (OG).

The criteria for membership in either the MG or OG were not always clear, nor were the boundaries of responsibility and roles; some members of the MG were more hands-on than others who took on a role more akin to that found in a steering group:

My role in CLNCO is as a member of the Management Group although I don't have any direct involvement in any specific stands or activities (MG).

Members noted that not only internal factors, such as lack of time, hinder communication, but also external factors outside their control such as changes in policy at a national level:

... time pressures upon partners; continual changes in terms of organisation of collaboration at a national level, with more change on the way at the end of the year with the shift to bidding for funding (OG).

One suggestion for change was a structured overlap between OG and MG meetings:

I think it would be good if there could be some overlap between the two, maybe having one in the morning and one in the afternoon so people could mingle in a more informal context perhaps over the lunch break (OG).

This practical approach may also have saved time for those staff from the central team who attended both meetings; however, at the same time, it may have limited the extent to which decisions from one meeting could be acted upon because MG members in the early stages of the network wanted the opportunity to confirm the minutes before actions were taken to the OG. The size of the network also meant communication was often slower and more complex; a somewhat unavoidable issue in any collaborative work. As one respondent commented:

There was a lot of people involved, if there were fewer people it was cleaner, I think we did well because we'd never done anything before. I think at times it was a bit overwhelming. I think it's more about running things past each other so we are all on the same page (HEP).

A Single Point of Contact

At the same time, however, the scope of the network brought advantages in terms of communications with schools. As one OG member noted:

From the school perspective, simplifying things, one place to go to, avoiding duplication, inundated with people knocking on their door, not being able to get to universities they want, which might be why we are getting in (MG).

Similarly, the website was viewed as centralising a multitude of resources enabling potentially easier communication.

I can see the benefits for external stakeholders of having a one-stop-shop for information about progression opportunities to higher education (MG).

Communication channels

Reviewing the projects suggested the significance of channels for communication in terms of how information gets passed on, through what channels and whether there are hierarchies or associations. The channel through which information travels is closely related to the structure, discussed above. Effective communication requires smooth exchange with clarity regarding who needs (and doesn't need) the information. Figure 23 shows the feedback of MG and OG members who attributed degrees of importance (where 1 was most important) to questions about channels of communication. The regular attendance at meetings was more of an issue at OG level where there were often new members attending (see also discussion on Time wasted).

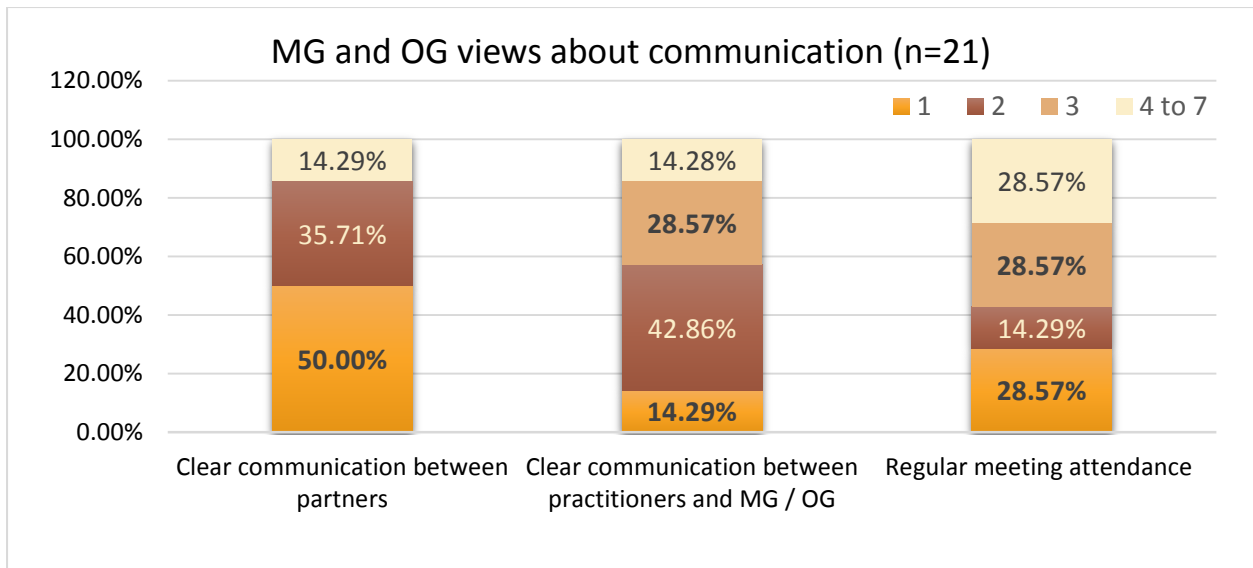


Figure 23: MG and OG views about communication

Next, we look at the ubiquitous email, as well as planning and debriefing meetings.

Emails and access to information

There was ambivalence regarding email exchanges; for some it seemed that there were too many, for others not enough, or rather missing links through people not replying. One HEP staff member commented that she had received too many emails which weren't relevant for her work while not receiving enough regarding the work in which she was involved. To make information available without clogging emails the central team placed documents on a shared 'Drop Box', this was a partial solution providing a central store but lacked the immediacy and targeted nature of emails. Whatever the means, the information needs to be presented in way appropriate to its audience and clearly targeted. Wider adoption of this channel of communication would have benefited from developing protocol for naming and file storage. A similar point relates to the website structure in offering sections for different stakeholders: young people, parents/carers, and teachers and influencers.

Planning and debriefing meetings

The structure of CLNCO, while holding together diverse and dispersed institutions, appeared problematic in some respects. For example, HEP staff delivering the outreach events felt they would have benefited from greater involvement with meetings of OG and MG. Being excluded meant they felt they lacked important information which may have reduced the risk of misunderstanding. Some comments regarding the channels for communication from one member included:

...things get twisted; Current method of approaching schools is cumbersome; System of SPoC contacting cold spots – [it is a] bit clunky (OG).

For logistical reasons levels of engagement with the formal governance communication channels varied, at times this hampered progress with the need to revisit previous decisions. There was also a reference to 'Chinese whispers' with ideas watered down or misrepresented at each level, *"I think people had the best of intentions but it's falling fowl of*

Chinese whispers". This issue points to the importance of appointed administrators taking detailed minutes for distribution and agreement.

Post event de-briefing meetings appeared particularly valuable in terms of allowing an open discussion of challenges, achievements, and solutions. Feedback from HEP staff, including MG and OG members who delivered activities, suggested that debriefing sessions with and without evaluators provided a valuable opportunity to acknowledge achievements and constructively address any tensions or frustrations which may have surfaced during the project.

Factors outside of CLNCO's immediate control complicated communications. For example, staff turnover which impacted on attendance at meetings and the pressure of other work commitments reducing the time for engaging with CLNCO communications. Changes in policy at the national level also influenced communication between members especially at the MG where different levels of awareness, interpretations of information existed. Furthermore, the dispersed character of institutions as well as the number involved meant that channels could be by-passed albeit unintentionally.

Means of communication

It is also useful to consider how communication takes place; here we consider the use of virtual technologies and the CLNCO website.

While the number of partners and the distances in travelling across two large counties would seem to suggest more use of virtual technologies there was some resistance. For example, it was felt important that members met face to face for effective working relationships to be established. Perhaps, if CLNCO had a longer lifespan, more use of technology (e.g. video conferencing) would have been made once relations of trust had been developed. The importance of trust has been noted by Foskett (2005: 363) who proposes that:

Trust between organisations rarely exists; it is, in reality, trust between individuals that is the cement in the relationship and that will ensure sustainability. This clearly depends on stability of personnel until completion of the job...

An additional factor, not discussed in detail but mentioned by some members, was their personal familiarity and confidence in using technology to communicate. Although of relevance to communication between HEP practitioners, this is an issue for interaction with schools and pupils. Identifying the development needs of outreach staff is something worth exploring as part of a wider review about how universities might use technology to support outreach to pupils and schools not in their immediate locale.

Website

The website was a requirement of the NCCO initiative. A website was developed with a single identity 'Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach'.

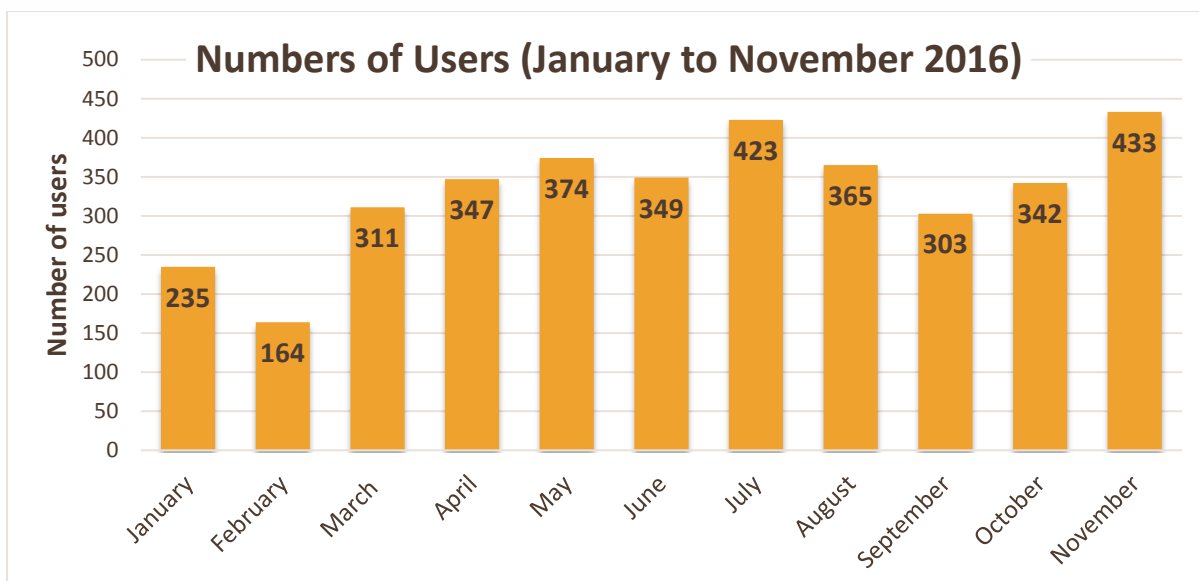


Figure 24: Number of users for CLNCO Website

The CLNCO website contained general information about the network with a breakdown and further details about projects and case studies. Separate sections for teachers / advisers and parents/carers allowed CLNCO to target information. CLNCO engaged UniTasterDays to facilitate partners' uploading of their tailored events to the central website. The information was refreshed by the network's partners and linked to institutional web pages to ensure schools, colleges and other groups had access to the latest events happening within Lancashire and Cumbria. For FE providers the site potentially increased their reach. Both MG and OG reviewed google analytics to help understand website usage and inform decisions about future content.

Levels of support and use of the website varied among the MG, OG and HEP staff. Views tended to depend on the individual's substantive role and responsibility or location within their own institution. Factors reported as influencing levels of engagement related to: differences in opinion about its purpose; the principle of having a shared communication tool; the time required to develop and maintain the site; and the practicalities of sustaining the site.

The Teacher and Influencer survey and meetings with SPoC suggested the potential value of the internet as an effective means of communication; it seemed that the internet was a popular source of information about outreach activities, alongside general HE publicity and specific invitations. This suggests that any future collaborative network would benefit from having a central website with links to individual HE provider WP pages which would lessen the burden associated with keeping up to date and presenting material in an accessible way. A single site offering links to outreach in the region was also expected to reduce the 'overload' of information some teachers reported having experienced save time required to search multiple sites. As part of the evaluation, REAP's review of institutional websites revealed considerable diversity and highlighted the challenges schools might have in finding

the required information. While the comprehensiveness of the CLNCO website was useful in providing a 'one stop shop' for finding out about forthcoming events, maintaining the degree of detail without major investment would not appear sustainable.

Resources

Resources are crucial to the success of any project. Here they are discussed in relation to finance, time, and staffing. CLNCO was perhaps unusual given that the funding was considered generous relative to the time within which it had to be spent; the short timeframe, in turn, had implications for the staffing of CLNCO.

Finance

Sufficient resources are vital to effective collaboration. Participants commented that while the amount of funding was 'fantastic' (and somewhat unusual), the timeframe for its use was too short:

No one knew sort of which way to go really because it was just such a lot of money that had to be spent so quickly really (OG).

Confusion over the allocation and parameters was also noted by members. For example, in relation to the funding:

It was formulaic, I don't know, based on various factors... I think what was interesting was the varying amounts that each institution had... I don't know how much transparency there was about how much people had. (Unequal resources) It was just an odd way to come to the table really (OG).

Funding model has been wrong; different institutions have had different allocations, central team have always been able to engage those partners who have small or no financial contributions, when we were given extra money [we] put it into a central pot people could bid into, it's been difficult for people to understand (MG).

That was confusing and part of differing opinions from HEFCE what we could use the money for, they changed the information and this wasn't passed through from the lead. Number of issues who does, doesn't agree with how we spend the money (MG).

As the above comments indicate, members felt that the funding of the network was at best confusing and at worst 'wrong'. Changes made during the lifetime of the project by HEFCE compounded this issue. It appears that clarity in allocation is important in fostering a sense of fairness which, in turn, positively impacts upon collaboration. Likewise, clarity in terms of legitimate uses of the funding aids decision making and a longer timeframe would have enabled potentially better use of the monies overall.

The amount of money seemed adequate but its allocation was perhaps, in some cases, not appropriate:

it's about capacity when I go to meetings I'm dead enthusiastic and I'd love to be involved but the reality is that I get 1k a year to attend meetings. I haven't time to

put a bid in, but if I could put the bid in I'd have the time. It's a chicken and egg situation (OG).

Funding is often the issue at the forefront but the practice of collaboration requires *time* and adequate *staffing* alongside money.

The issue of finance is closely connected with the perceived, and actual, impartiality of a network. CLNCO was perhaps disadvantaged in this respect due to the way in which funding was allocated. As Wiggins (p. 5) notes, centralisation and independence from any one institution may well be preferable for success collaboration:

When central funding was provided at national level for widening access, partnerships offered a means to implement policy while minimising the differences in approaches and outcomes that arise where funding is granted to individual institutions.

Time

As noted above, the timespan for such a large project was relatively short. Ultimately the time span was not within the control of CLNCO and, given the size and number of partners, to reach the end of the project with a sense of momentum constitutes an achievement in itself in view of the fact that other collaborative networks (e.g. Manchester) were continuing previous well-established partnerships in a relatively self-contained / small area where a member from one institution could sometimes walk around to see a member in another institution nearby.

There were three inter-related time factors which emerged:

- the time necessary to establish effective working relationships;
- the time staff had to dedicate to CLNCO activities;
- the wasted time resulting from staff turnover and availability to regularly attend meetings.

Time needed to establish effective collaborative relationships

Time is particularly important in large collaborative projects involving many partners since to be 'truly' collaborative partners believed as many participants should be consulted on decisions as possible. However, this means that decision-making takes much longer:

Relationship building and that part is invaluable and working with education, but it's SLOW and everyone has another job, meetings that should take 45 minutes, ran over... People have enough to do so it's extra (OG).

I think it took a long time to get the whole concept of collaboration off the ground and then you obviously have a big gap over the summer and then now there's a lot going on (OG).

The interviews indicated a feeling of regret amongst partners that the project was ending since many responses suggested that having taken the time to establish working relationships momentum had gathered; there was a fear that this would potentially be lost:

It's a shame it's ending cos it's really coming together now but I think there is a real will to continue (OG).

Dedicated staff time

The benefit of having centrally funded staff with dedicated time to devote to CLNCO was important. The SPoC and their administrators made an important contribution to several core activities, some of which are discussed elsewhere. Tasks that benefited from dedicated time and provided some continuity for CLNCO included:

- the mapping exercise which built on the initial details provided by HEFCE and provided a more nuanced baseline of coldspots and the type of outreach which individual HEP already delivered;
- liaison with individual schools to raise awareness regarding the range of outreach opportunities available from individual HEP, and CLNCO funded projects which they could access;
- establishing and maintaining the website, as well as sourcing and commissioning other shared promotional materials (see section means of communication);
- servicing the MG and OG and undertaking monitoring and providing advice for project leads;
- assuming a leadership role for several CLNCO projects that typically involved external stakeholders with whom they had networked on behalf of the partnership.

In the main there was support for these activities, although the process of liaison with schools and the resulting processes were questioned because of the level of gatekeeping. Although MG and OG recognised and valued the initial engagement there remained a diversity of views about when and how communication gained from the meetings should be shared with the member partners. With a longer project several OG felt it would have been useful to reflect on the processes and consider how to streamline them to reduce the number of emails involved.

These concerns related to the other end of the continuum, the absence or limited staff time allocated to CLNCO. Many HEP staff reported that involvement in CLNCO activities was additional to their existing commitments, the extent to which this was a challenge depended on the level of overlap. One OG reported:

For me it's about capacity, when I go to meetings I'm dead enthusiastic and I'd love to be more involved, but the reality is that I get time to attend meetings, but I haven't any more time even to put a bid in, but if I could put then bid in [and get someone in post to do the work] then I'd have the time. It's a chicken and egg situation (OG).

For some staff, it was the demands made on their time by other projects; this may explain why there was sometimes a mismatch between personal interest and enthusiasm to collaborate or get involved in specific projects, and the capacity to contribute. This sometimes resulted in project leads having to pick up additional tasks, which in turn

influenced their capacity to fulfil their contribution to another project (See also discussion regarding staffing).

This observation regarding time has been emphasised by others, (including Kewin et. al. 2011, in Wiggans), who found that the most persistent barriers to partnership working were, “partners’ finding time to participate in network activities”. Even when activities are planned well in advance of an event there may be difficulties; one of the most striking examples is from the STEM project where, just prior to the event, money from the budget was used to pay for supply teachers to cover those involved in the workshop; without this cover the event could not have taken place.

Time wasted

Having invested time and effort into establishing effective working relationships there was inevitable frustration at the duplication of effort that related to: the numbers of HEP at the table; the differential short term funding that shaped levels of participation and HEP decisions about staffing. As one OG member explained:

I’ve been to conversations re Operational Groups, I’m sure they are very nice but they don’t understand the purpose, they aren’t clued up, I think I can’t have that conversation again – there hasn’t been enough stability on membership [and] you keep having to start information [from] scratch (OG).

It is important to stress these issues are not unique and are highlighted to illustrate the complexity and inter-related nature of factors which influence collaborative work. Practical suggestions for how to mitigate against these are noted in section 5.

Staffing

Staffing opportunities and challenges related to: the diversity of staff involved, competing commitments concerning existing job and CLNCO requirements, and differences in capacity depending on contractual arrangements and internal staffing structure.

The extensive CLNCO provided access to a wide range of staff and expertise. However, as noted, while there was a potentially large pool of staff those already in post had existing commitments and with a few exceptions there were only a handful of short-term appointments. As Jo Wiggans notes in her review of collaborative partnerships, staffing projects like CLNCO and sharing responsibilities within partnerships ‘*may have been cost-effective but they were not cost-free*’ (Wiggans, 2012 p16). Most CLNCO staff reported a tension between the demands of their substantive post and the range of commitments associated with CLNCO projects.

CLNCO staffing included two SPoC each with an administrator; these network staff, paid through CLNCO rather than by specific institutions and accountable to CLNCO, aided impartiality which, in turn, was welcomed by partners especially schools. As discussed in the previous section, dedicated time was a positive aspect of the project.

From an individual HEP perspective, the appointment of staff rested upon having adequate time to advertise and recruit individuals. If internal staff were to be 'seconded' into the role then, crucially, their posts needed to be covered for the duration of the project. Several members of the OG described the competing demands of their existing job and CLNCO responsibilities, some of which arose unexpectedly.

I was put on [the project a long time after it had started] and told to fix it, work some magic. I believe it had set off late (OG).

... it's people's attitudes, [My institutional colleagues see NCCO] it's additional work, so why should they do it, it's a hardship for them, it's not on their job list, so they are the people I find difficult ... and that's a challenge where it's over the time, there isn't any staff within CLNCO (OG).

Funding per se was not specifically the challenge, *...a year seems long but it is short when you have so much money (HEP)*, often it was finding the time for the existing staff. As another OG member explained:

Staffing, two years isn't long to do that. If you've got staff resources internally to draw on obviously that's a lot quicker but then you're pulling them away from something else and that's where that conflict of recruitment and WP and everything else comes into it (OG).

A further issue, noted by HEP staff who were involved in delivering activities, was what they perceived as an imbalance between the number of management posts and the number of staff available to deliver activities. One of the staff felt that CLNCO was shaped like an inverted triangle rather than a triangle in that there were too many senior staff and too few practitioners to deliver the activities on the ground. While this may reflect the staffing within one HEP rather than the structure of CLNCO it is perhaps worthwhile considering in conjunction with the way institutions staff collaborative activity alongside their own recruitment and WP work.

Sustainability

Sustainability is inevitably an important consideration for any project; the relatively short lifetime of the NCCO initiative placed challenges on creating an enduring legacy. An evaluation of the much longer Aimhigher Lancashire project identified four pillars of concern about sustainability that related to a change of purpose, people, priorities and policy (Houghton, et al, 2011: 165). It is interesting to reflect on these and compare with the current context. There are several similarities but also differences.

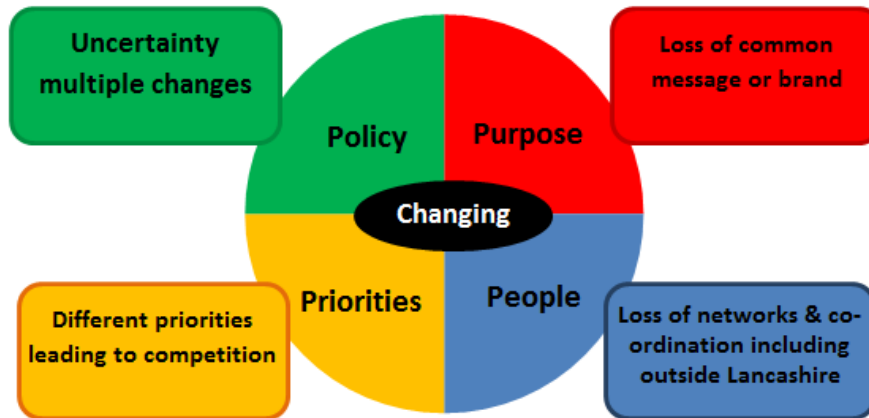


Figure 25: Aimhigher Lancashire Four pillars of concern about sustainability

One way of thinking about sustainability is to consider if and how the activities may have influenced the participants. The focus of the external CLNCO evaluation was on collaboration between HEP and other local stakeholders who shared a commitment to widening access and tackling the participation gaps among young people.

The evaluation generated evidence of a complex web of interactions based on multiple points of collaboration especially between OG. This appears to have been effective in enabling colleagues to plan and deliver collaborative activities; with respect to sustainability, there is also evidence of an exchange of working practices which are likely to last beyond the project. The CLNCO experience has arguably helped to change perceptions as well as build relationships between individual HEP who would not normally work together and external stakeholders.

The relationships have developed well and we have seen cross-fertilisation of ideas between projects. There is a tangible sense of support, passion, commitment and true spirit of collaboration (MG).

It is these alliances based on successful activities, often involving a steep learning curve, and the infrastructure of the next HEFCE collaborative initiative the National Collaborative Outreach Project which may help to sustain the networks in a way which did not happen within this region at the end of Aimhigher.

Specific sustainability plans

In the HEFCE monitoring returns Cumbria and Lancashire identify materials and actions designed to leave a CLNCO legacy. These relate to:

Activities and resources

In the final MG and OG questionnaire, HEP expressed their interest in each of the core activities. Based on the number of HEP willing to take a lead or play an active role as a partner, the top five activities are listed in Table 4, with a complete list in table 5 in appendix 6.

List of CLNCO projects.	Lead	Partner	Receive information	Not interested
Collaborative Health Programme	4	4	5	4
Looked After Children Conference	3	6	5	3
Disability Conference	3	5	4	5
Looked After Children Residential	3	5	5	4
Collaborative STEM: STEM Career Paths	3	3	5	6

Table 4: Sustainability – Top five HEP expressions of interest

The CLNCO project generated multiple resources with the potential for reuse in their current format or revising for use in the future. To support dissemination, the central team have placed films on the CLNCO website and a vimeo site (<https://vimeo.com/user57685066>), and will distribute a USB flash drive with collated material to CLNCO members.

Future collaboration, networking and outreach

Schools will receive a final message with details of resources produced and a list of HEP contacts as outlined in appendix 9. Following discussion at the final MG it was agreed not to introduce NCOP as the models for Cumbria and Lancashire are slightly different and plans still developing. To support individual HEP to build on outreach it was also agreed to confirm institutional willingness to share details from the initial mapping exercise; at the time this information was only circulated anonymously. This represents a possible sign of openness arising from working together, as one member of the MG noted:

I think for me one of the biggest achievement is the ability of bringing together partners around one table around a single cause... there are a lot of people with passion around the table and within that is willingness to share data ... partners needed to share schools they worked with, a lot of details, the way, the number of activity and type of activity they engaged in with that school (MG).

The PRU project partners have already agreed a programme of activity including CPD, external partners have purchased photographic equipment and the freelance photographer is in the process of establishing a Community Interest Charity to support continuation of the work and roll out to PRU in Cumbria.

The University of Cumbria and University of Central Lancashire have worked with HEP from the CLNCO partnership to successfully submit projects under the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The structure of this report with its emphasis on collaboration and lessons learned from the constituent members is intended to inform ongoing developments.

Website

At the end of the project the CLNCO website hosts a range of relevant material, however, as noted earlier MG and OG members did express concern about its future. Current plans

include:

- the site remaining live for the rest of the academic year with HEP able to publicise events;
- individual films located onto vimeo and collated materials disseminated via USB;
- the Cumbria NCOP taking a copy and planning to rebrand and reuse much of the information on their website;
- a possible FE college hosting the site in Lancashire.

Professional development

CLNCO provided multiple opportunities for working together; feedback from 15 MG and OG members illustrates the different types of collaboration. The opportunity to share good practice (80%) and gain awareness of activities that other HEP deliver (86.67%) is a valuable legacy for the future.

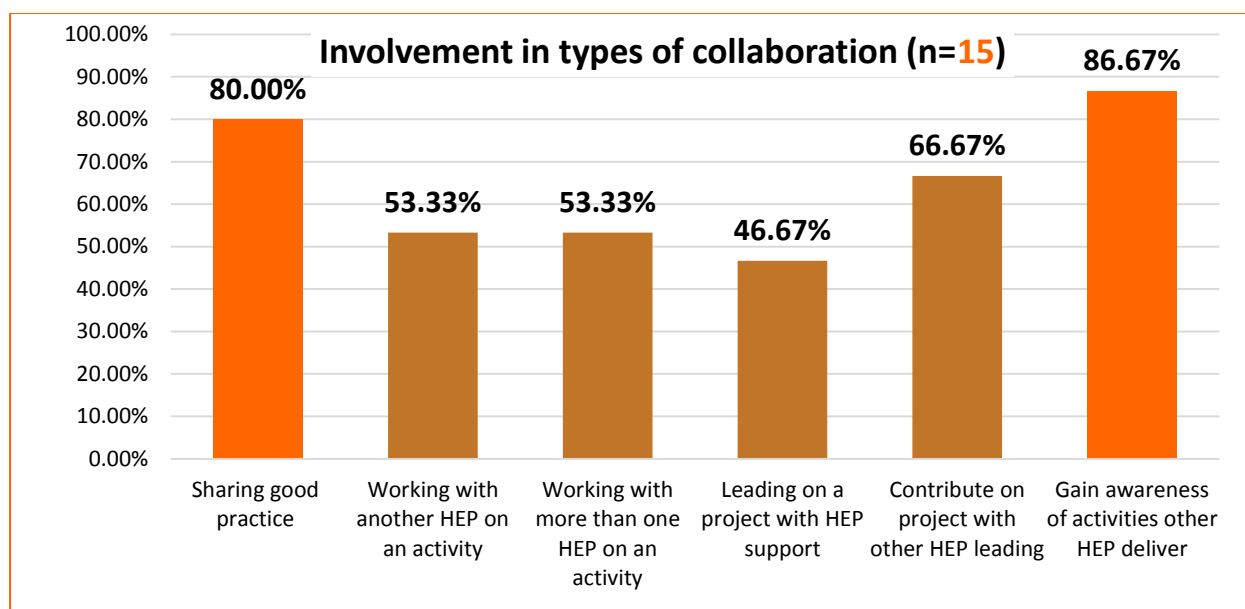


Figure 26: Involvement in collaboration and opportunities for professional development

Summary: ACERS

Overall, in reviewing the evidence on ACERS across the various projects and considering the overarching network, it seems the key challenges were experienced early in the programme. This finding is not surprising, given the starting point ('from scratch') in sometimes sensitive contexts (e.g. schools in special measures) and with guidance which was, in places, open to interpretation. Indeed, towards the end of the project there was a sense that despite the challenges much had been achieved and there was a sense of regret regarding the impending end of the current network accompanied with a sense of optimism that the momentum would be carried through to the forthcoming NCOP with continuation of learning.

The range of sustainability plans outlined in the previous section covered use of resources developed during the project, plans for ongoing collaborative projects and highlighted the

importance and benefits of collaboration for individual and institutional development. At the final celebration event participants were invited to share their individual plans and unintended outcomes of CLNCO. Someone suggested it was important to:

champion this collaborative approach by leaving your organisational affiliation at the door – focus on the project and young people – take time to develop shared aims.

And another person said:

I have learnt: that there is so much enthusiasm for collaboration by the people on the group that has been clouded by the politics. This network is more successful than it has sometimes appeared.

Overall, it was evident that CLNCO gathered 'momentum' in the months towards the end; its real potential may therefore be curtailed by the (relatively) short timeframe. This observation may, in isolation, seem negative though at the same time it points hopefully towards the continuation of collaborative relations under the new NCOP as well as the increased capacity (skills and knowledge) residing in individual institutions that is a result of their collaboration.

Section 5: Lessons for future collaboration

This section draws from the preceding material to identify the components that appear important for future collaboration networks, the ‘lessons learned’. The emphasis is upon using the experience of CLNCO to inform future collaborative activity. Some of the issues will be more relevant to the Cumbria and Lancashire context while the majority appear applicable to collaboration generally.

The issues are interconnected and can be viewed as the building blocks upon which strong networks can be developed and as pointers for priorities in future collaborative partnerships, most notably the forthcoming National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)¹¹.

Lessons from and for Higher Education Providers (HEP)

It is important to note that issues relating to history, geography, organisational size, structure and culture will influence the extent to which a HEP might respond. The lessons represent an ideal and, as the experience of CLNCO suggests, flexibility and adaptability are often necessary, if not essential.

Lessons from HEP

- a) To acknowledge that despite personal commitment to impartiality, institutional challenges are not likely to disappear, consequently **transparency between partners is vital**. Greater levels of transparency over what is possible or not is likely **to increase a sense of trust** and enable practitioners to be clear when they are being partial (which is also a lesson for funders of networks and the overall organisation of collaborative programmes);
- b) To take time to **establish clear aims and parameters of the overall network, and a project time and decision line** for reference to reduce duplication of effort.
- c) To **develop core documentation at the outset** outlining: governance – roles, responsibility and remit; communication protocol – key contacts, details of communication channels and advice about training to support use of relevant technology;
- d) To clearly **define roles and responsibilities** from the outset with institutions ensuring that there is sufficient time allocated to collaborative projects to prevent this project work becoming positioned as only ‘additional’ to other ‘core’ work.
- e) To recognise the importance of **inducting new staff joining a partnership**, this needs to be proactively planned and might include a named mentor ‘to bring them up to speed’ and guide them through core processes.

¹¹ See HEFCE: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/ncop/>

Lessons for HEP

- a) To offer more **opportunities to raise teacher and influencer awareness of the range of higher learning opportunities including the diversity of pathways**, this might include organising teacher inset or awareness raising activities collaboratively; ideally these should involve academic staff as well as central recruitment outreach staff and external partners, including those relating to specific career pathways (e.g. Health professions) or specific subject areas (e.g. STEM).
- b) To explore ways in which they can make **use of CLNCO resources within their outreach** such as the Cumbria and Lancashire films and consider evaluation of their effectiveness.
- c) To **identify which collaborative project activities developed under CLNCO to integrate into institutional OFFA plans** as a long term goal extending beyond the life of short term projects to facilitate building of capacity (and ultimately save resources).
- d) To review **where and how information about outreach activities is located on their institutional website** and communicated to schools and colleges.
- e) To draw on OFFA 2015 guidance, and the reflective questions in Rawson's (2016) guide to supporting care experienced students.

Lessons from and for Schools

It is important to note that feedback from schools has varied enormously and is clearly influenced by the school context, the existing links schools and their staff had with one or more HEP before CLNCO and their capacity to respond to the opportunities offered. Those schools able to engage with SPoC and participate in CLNCO activities or take advantage of the 'introductions to HEP' facilitated by SPoC provided very positive feedback. Several factors influenced individual school capacity including proximity to HEP and multiple competing agenda. The following practical considerations reflect the most commonly raised factors:

Lessons from schools

- a) To plan the school year in advance requires HEP to **have timetable of activities in place**; ideally negotiated with key teachers to fit in with the school year (though this awareness is already present).
- b) To consider offering, on an institutional or ideally collaborative basis, a more systematic and **incremental programme of outreach**, rather than what one teacher perceived as the 'piecemeal' approach.
- c) To **actively work with schools not providing education beyond 16yrs** since these institutions, which may be neglected by recruitment teams, can provide a base for outreach targeted at younger pupils.
- d) To recognise the importance of maintaining contact(s) and communication by having a **named HEP contact** who can develop an understanding of the school / college context.

- e) To consider retaining a **central location for schools to access information** about outreach activities and gain easy access to individual HEP who deliver outreach, and provide staff development for teachers to support them in their role of providing IAG.

Lessons for schools

- f) To identify **senior staff** to communicate the value of outreach and provide the necessary resources and support to staff with responsibility for outreach in their school;
- g) To **assign a lead member of staff** for Outreach / Widening Participation in school/college with time assigned to co-ordinate activity within school, and develop a relationship with HEP contacts.
- h) To **identify aspects of the curriculum suitable for subject focused outreach**, by identifying staff, possibly subject leads or staff responsible for careers and IAG, who would be able to communicate specific requirements regarding activities that would support attainment and raise awareness of progression pathways.
- i) To invite HEP to support a **staff development programme** of opportunities to recognise the important role that teachers play in raising aspiration and providing IAG. This might include HEP contributing to subject cluster meetings, and a rolling programme of staff attending and disseminating among colleagues current impartial IAG about HE progression opportunities.
- j) To consider **using Cumbria and Lancashire films within their IAG and careers education**.

Lessons from and for external stakeholders

CLNCO engaged with a diverse range of external stakeholders, often the relationship was targeted at a specific activity and the lessons from and for stakeholders are very localised. The following suggestions are more general and applicable to multi-sector collaboration.

- a) To spend time exploring individual organisational and / or partnership aims and objectives to **establish shared objectives and clarify where it is impractical or undesirable to collaborate**.
- b) To recognise the skills required of a 'blended professional' and the time, **complexity and need for compromise when working in 'a third space'** (see introduction, conceptualising collaboration).
- c) To take time to plan to effectively **coordinate calendars, discuss logistics, assign roles and responsibilities** and reveal assumptions regarding working practices that can lead to unnecessary duplication of effort or undesirable gaps in arrangements.
- d) To **share and standardise resources** (e.g. registration documents, evaluation forms) at an early stage to ensure consistency and support the development of age and audience appropriate publicity material. Several CLNCO resources may be useful as a starting point for development by CLNCO partners.
- e) To **use RUFDATA or a similar evaluation planning tool** to build in opportunities throughout the project development process to identify the accountability and

development focus of any evaluation and features of the project to retain in future collaboration.

Priorities for forthcoming NCOP

CLNCO will be replaced with two collaborative networks funded under the NCOP. Although the following points capture the core priorities, it is the lived experience of seeking to work collaboratively that will inform how and the extent to which these priorities are enacted.

- a) To ensure that **project aims and objectives are translated and understood by staff working at a strategic and operational level**. This includes sharing definitions of terms and, where possible, reaching consensus over how terms will be interpreted; where this is not possible to be transparent to avoid misunderstandings.
- b) To **establish a clear structure with leadership**, dedicated staff, transparency in funding and accountability, to be clear about delegated responsibility assigned to an operational group. This is likely to require decisions about level of seniority and delegated authority of the strategic group to embed NCOP activity alongside institutional OFFA Access Agreements as well as identifying operational staff with sufficient seniority and operational insights to access other staff within their institution who can be practitioners to work in project groups.
- c) To devise **clear processes to involve, communicate with and recognise the efforts of all HEP staff** who may deliver or contribute to activities but are not members of the operational / practitioner networks; where possible providing them with centralised access to information rather than sole reliance on institutional representatives.
- d) To consider ways in which the Cumbria and Lancashire NCOP, together with individual HEI might **collaborate over monitoring using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) and evaluation** of specific activities or initiatives targeted at named groups of learners. This might involve ongoing evaluation of activities initiated by CLNCO and taken forward as part of their programme of sustainability.
- e) To **organise a joint annual conference** to encourage ongoing exchange of good practice that builds on relations of trust and effective collaboration begun during CLNCO as well as foster a sense of achievement and bolster staff morale.

Lessons for Policy makers

- a) To recognise the longer time span required to allow development and investment in relationships and building of capacity especially of new partnerships.
- b) To simplify and ensure transparent funding formula.
- c) To acknowledge the difficult context created by the overall competitive policy environment.
- d) To initiate an impartial body to oversee the collaborative network, funded and staffed independently.

- e) To recognise specific barriers associated with work in some counties (e.g. rurality) and the cost implications of these factors.

Post Script: Unplanned collaboration

As a post script to this report, we share an observation made by some student ambassadors who attended and supported the final CLNCO celebration. The group, including students from Cumbria and UCLAN, were asked to share ideas in some 'free time' during the afternoon. This impromptu opportunity to gain some feedback from the group about their training and overall experience of working on CLNCO activities proved useful in other ways. The students shared aspects of their respective institutional student experiences. As one student commented:

We've been collaborating too, normally we don't talk to the students from [other university] other than about practical things, like where to put stuff, ... it's been really interesting to find out how their courses work, what they get paid for work like this, ... you know you go to things like UCAS fairs and we've never talked to each other like this. I think we should do this more often.

In response, another student confirmed:

Yes, I suppose that's what it's all about, learning from others.

A final lesson for HEP would therefore be to proactively encourage their student ambassadors to work collaboratively and, if necessary, scaffold those skills important to effective networking and communication. Such skills, in addition to strengthening collaboration, would be invaluable to students' future employability.

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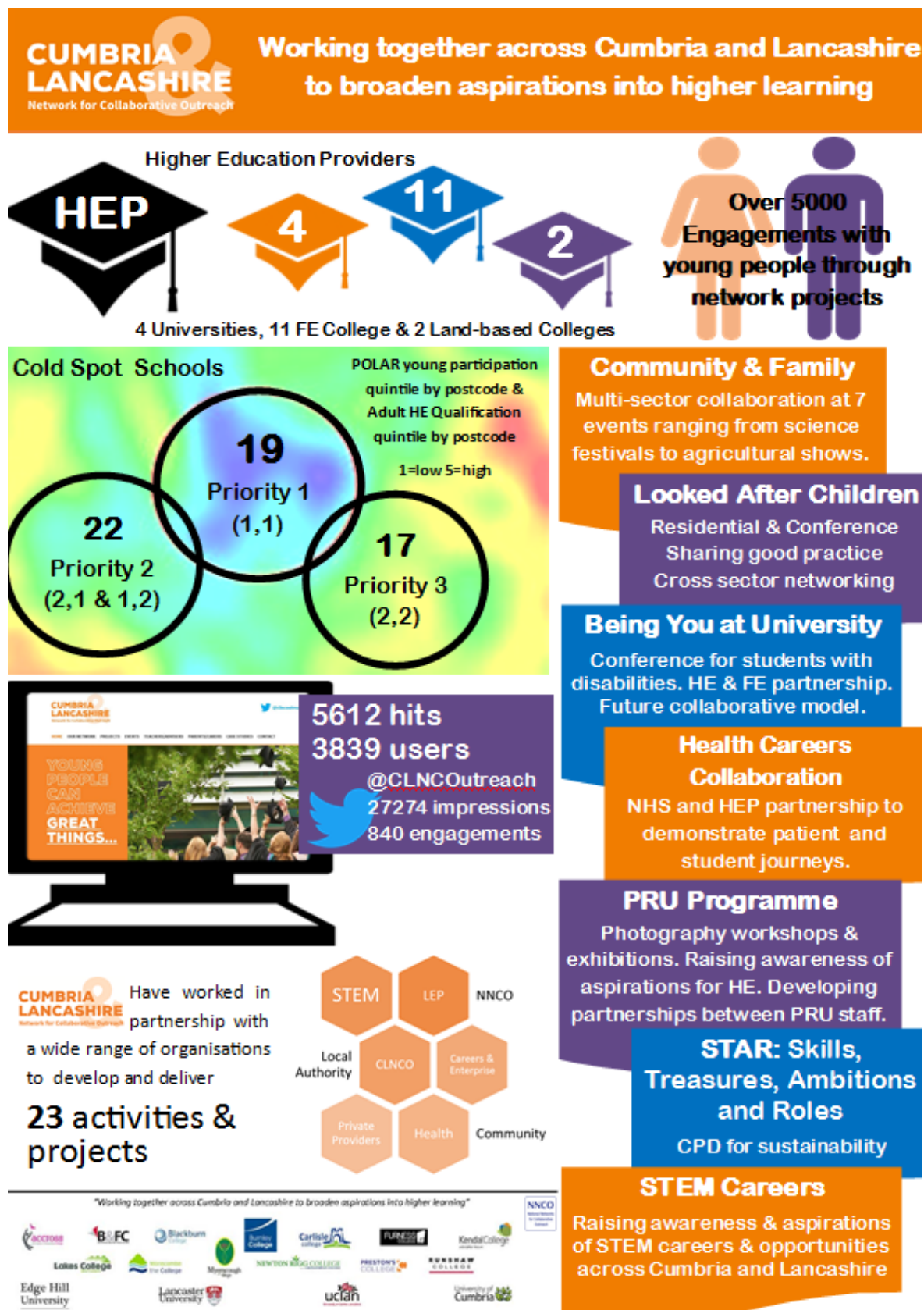
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Glossary

Central Team	consisted of SPoC administrative assistants and Lead institutional Management Group representatives
CLNCO	Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach, for further information http://cumbrialancsoutreach.ac.uk/
Cold spots	Areas identified by HEFCE as
HEP	Higher Education Providers including Universities and FE Colleges offering higher learning
LAC	Looked After Children
MG	Management Group who included representatives from the four Universities and representatives of the FE Colleges, their remit was to focus on strategic direction of the project
NNCO	National Network for Collaborative Outreach a HEFCE initiative, for further information http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/nnco/
NCOP	National Collaborative Outreach Programme
OG	Operational Group a named representative from all four universities and 13 FE Colleges, their remit was to focus on implementation and delivery
SPoC	Single Point of Contact, within CLNCO there were two SPoC each with an administrative assistant, who focused on either Cumbria or Lancashire. Each assumed responsibility for co-ordinating cross network responsibilities.

Appendix 1: Celebration Infographic



RUFDATA is an evaluation planning tool. It asks 7 questions to help inform the evaluation. RUFDATA is an evaluation planning tool The

following example relates to the Disability Strand.

What are our **Reasons and Purposes** for evaluating ...

These could be planning, managing, learning, developing, accountability

1. To establish if there is interest from disabled students and those personal and professional 'helpers' who guide them in attending a targeted IAG event.
2. To provide evidence for HEFCE and network partners of factors influencing collaboration around IAG for disabled students and those personal and professional 'helpers' who guide them

What will be our **Uses** of our evaluation?

They might be providing and learning from embodiments of good practice, staff development, strategic planning, PR, provision of data for management control.

1. To identify areas of good practice amongst partners that can be shared and adopted by individual HEP (Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges offering HE)
2. To inform future decisions by HEP regarding institutional and collaborative OFFA funded disability outreach activity

What will be the **Foci** for our evaluation?

These include the range of activities, aspects, emphasis to be evaluated, they should connect to the priority areas for evaluation

1. The processes involved in developing the Disability IAG day
2. The exchange of information between network partners on the co-ordinating group and the wider CLNCO [This can be explored by the October Operational Group Questionnaire]
3. The feedback from participants regarding the benefits of a collaborative event

What will be the range of **Data and Evidence** for our evaluation?

Numerical, qualitative, observational, case accounts

- a. Non-participant observation during event and at planning meetings
- b. Copies of minutes, publicity and documentation
- c. Feedback from co-ordinating group via email, telephone and face to face interviews
- d. Questionnaire distributed to the participants
- e. Questionnaire completed by all members of the Operational Group

Who will be the **Audience** for our evaluation?

- CLNCO members in particular Management Group
- Section of HEFCE Report

What will be the **Timing** for our evaluation?

When should evaluation take place, coincidence with decision making cycles, life cycle of projects

- **a to c** Ongoing throughout the project + date of event
- **d** Distributed during event, preparation before
- **e** Questionnaire to Operational Group will include specific Disability Strand questions - October

Who should be the **Agency** conducting the evaluation?

Yourselves, external evaluators, combination

- **a to c** Disability Strand Co-ordinating Group (DSCG) to provide access, send materials, REAP to analyse evidence and including within report
- **d** Questionnaire - Disability Strand Co-ordinating Group to generate draft questions based on interest, REAP to advise, DSCG to oversee data entry and REAP to provide analysis and report
- **e** REAP to draft questions for DSCG to approve and provide analysis and report

Appendix 3: Post Project Feedback Form

Purpose: The purpose of this tool is to capture information for the monitoring and evaluation of the completed project with the intention of building on strengths and learning from mistakes. This will allow lessons learned to be applied to future initiatives. We will use the information for the monitoring report to HEFCE and pass details onto REAP who are supporting us with evaluation.

Scope: This tool will provide a framework for providing post-project feedback.

Project Information

Project Title:	Click here to enter text.			
Date:	Dd/mm/yy	Location:	Click here to enter text.	
Lead Institution:	Click here to enter text.		Project Leader Name:	Click here to enter text.
Partner Institutions Involved:	Click here to enter text.			
Anticipated Budget:	Actual Budget:			
Cold Spot Schools involved:	Please tick schools you have worked with on the list provided at the end of the document .			
Others involved (e.g. non target schools, community groups, general public)	Click here to enter text.			
No. of Students/Attendees:	56	Year group/Age:	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 10
			<input type="checkbox"/> Year 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 11
			<input type="checkbox"/> Year 9	
			Other: Click here to enter text.	
Priority Groups Included:	LAC	Disability/Specific Learning	11-16	PRUs
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	WP	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other: Click here to enter text.			

Project Assessment

Did this project meet the outcomes/targets set out in the project description?

Please outline the aims of the project and how they were met

Aim:

Which aspects of the project worked well?

Which aspects of the project were problematic?

Lessons Learned

In the below table please detail anything which you feel worked particularly well for the project and recommendations for how this can be used or was problematic and recommendations for how this could be improved. When considering impact it would be helpful if you could consider the following questions: what was the successful positive impact of the issue? How did it lead to success? How did the issue have a negative influence on the project? How did it hinder or limit the activity?

Issue	Success/Problem	Impact	Recommendations
Issue.	Success/Problem.	Impact	Recommendations
Issue.	Success/Problem.	Impact	Recommendations
Issue.	Success/Problem.	Impact	Recommendations

Do you have any other recommendations resulting from this activity?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

What examples do you have of project partners learning from each other?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Future Considerations/Sustainability

Please discuss any future work which could be done regarding this project or how this project could be sustained:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form, please submit by email below:

Submit by Email

Cold Spot Schools – please tick those you worked with on this project.

If possible, please identify one or two schools with names & contact details of teachers you have worked with for REAP to follow up with:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Appendix 4: CLNCO Collaborative Projects

The Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach delivered 22 projects collaboratively, each project lead was asked to produce a project summary that contained standardised information which was used for monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes. Below is a list of the projects, the lead partner and contact details. Seven broad areas were also evaluated by REAP based on an individual RUFDATA plan discussed with project lead (emboldened in table below), and included in a film. Given the change of staff the institution leading the project is listed / collaborating institutions are listed, a contact name for each organisation is given in appendix 7 <http://cumbrialancsoutreach.ac.uk/>

CLNCO videos also available on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/user57685066> see appendix 8.

Name of project	Project Lead, institution
CLNCO Website	Cumbria and Lancashire Central Team
Made it in Cumbria and Made it in Lancashire	
Careers - Information, Advice and Guidance	
Adult and Family Programme	UoC,
Learn, Earn and Grow	Preston, UCLAN & Preston Collaborative Partnership
Yr8/9 Options Workshops	UoC and UCLAN
Top Trumps	UCLAN + other NNCO
Interactive Project	UCLAN, Blackburn and Burnley building on DCON
STAR: CPD Programme	Blackburn, Blackpool & Fylde, Burnley, UCLAN
Targeted at Specific Subjects and Careers	
Creative Arts (Shakespeare Challenge)	Blackpool College, Blackpool Grand Theatre
Health Programme: Patient & Student Journey	EHU, LU, UoC, UCLAN
PRU Character Building Programme	Blackburn, Blackpool & Fylde,
Sports Leaders	Blackpool & Fylde
STEM: Yr7/8 Robotics Workshops	Cumbria STEM
STEM: STEM Career Paths	STEM Cumbria, Lakes College
STEM: STEM Scholars' Programme Work@IT	STEM First, Accrington & Rossendale Blackburn Blackpool & Fylde, Burnley, Runshaw, UCLan,
Targeted Groups of Learners	
Disability Conference	LU, EHU, UCLAN, UoC, Blackburn, Blackpool & Fylde
Muslim Boys Residential	UCLAN
Muslim Girls Residential	UCLAN
NEET project	Preston College, Preston Collaborative Partnership
Looked After Children Residential	UoC / UCLAN
Looked After Children Conference - CPD	UoC / UCLAN, Blackpool & Fylde College
Inspiring You, Windrush Initiatives	UCLAN

Appendix 5: Mapping of common features

The focus of the REAP evaluation was on the collaborative aspects of the Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach. Whilst individual case studies reported in section 3 concentrate on factors that were most relevant to that project, many of the factors were evident to other projects. To indicate this see table below ■ main focus ● evident or a consideration.

Enabling and Process indicators	Carer	Adult	Disability	Health	STEM	PRU	STAR
Frameworks for action		■	●	●			●
Protocols	■			●	●		
Space	●	■	●	■	●		
Time		■	●	■		●	
Suitable staffing	■	●	■	■		●	
External stakeholders	■		●	■	■	■	■
Student Ambassadors	●	●	●	■	●		
Communication			■	■			
Resources	●		●		●		■
CPD	●		●	●	■	●	■
Ways of working	■	■				■	●
Impartiality		■	■	■			
Processes	■		●	■	●		

Appendix 6: Sustainability HEP expressions of interest

To support future planning MG and OG were invited to indicate their interest in specific projects, the contact details and information would be made available to all members with those HEP willing to take the Lead asked to initiate first meeting to take things forward. The list of CLNCO projects below is in order of the number of HEP willing to act as Lead or contribute as an active partner.

List of CLNCO projects.	Lead	Partner	Receive information	Not interested
Collaborative Health Programme	4	4	5	4
Looked After Children Conference	3	6	5	3
Disability Conference	3	5	4	5
Looked After Children Residential	3	5	5	4
Collaborative STEM: STEM Career Paths	3	3	5	6
Learn, Earn and Grow	2	3	8	5
Collaborative STEM: Yr7/8 Robotics Workshops	2	3	7	5
Families/Communities events	2	3	7	5
Muslim Boys Residential	2	3	6	6
Muslim Girls Residential	2	3	6	6
Sports Leaders	2	3	5	7
STEM Scholars' Programme	2	3	7	5
Yr8/9 Options Workshops	2	3	5	7
Adult/Family Programme	2	1	8	6
CLNCO Website	2	1	6	8
Creative Arts (Shakespeare Challenge)	2	0	6	9
PRU Character Building Programme	1	4	9	4
STAR Programme	1	3	8	5
Interactive Project	1	2	6	8
Made it in Cumbria and Made it in Lancashire	1	2	5	9
NEET project	1	2	9	5
Top Trumps	1	2	5	9
Inspiring You, Windrush Initiatives	1	0	6	10

Table 5: Sustainability - HEP expressions of interest

NB The central team plan to contact those HEP who did not respond to ensure the information circulated is complete.

Appendix 7: List of interim Reports prepared for CLNCO

Armstrong, J. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: Carers* (May, 2016) Unpublished

Armstrong, J. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: Adult Learners and Community* (May, 2016) Unpublished

Houghton, A. (2016) *Evaluation of the Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach (CLNCO): outline plan* (February 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: Disability* (March, 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: STEM* (July, 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: HEALTH* (July, 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: PRU* (August, 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. (2016) *RUFDATA Planning Framework: STAR* (August, 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. and Rosewell, K. (2016) *Teacher and Influencer views about WP activities for targeted groups across Cumbria and Lancashire: A Baseline Survey* (February 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Houghton, A. (2016) *Progress Report for Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach including RUFDATA plans* (July 2016) Researching Equity, Access and Participation, Lancaster University (unpublished)

Appendix 8: CLNCO video case studies and good practice resources

One of the strategies adopted to disseminate the outcomes of the collaborative CLNCO projects was to create video case studies which captured good practice or outlined educational and career pathways. These are available on Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/user57685066> and the CLNCO Website.

Title	Brief description	Weblink
CLNCO Celebration	Compilation of CLNCO projects including STEM, PRU, Disability, Health, Carers and Adult & Community.	https://vimeo.com/193579473
Families and Communities Roadshow	Taking HE outreach to families and young people to familiar environments	https://vimeo.com/195672849
Be your own superhero	Inspiring young people through role models and providing Careers and IAG	https://vimeo.com/195660379
PRU Character Building	Pupil Referral Unit activities including photography exhibition, IAG scripted play	https://vimeo.com/195636645
PRU Character Building film	Process and photographs about the local community – seeing the world differently	https://vimeo.com/192494259
STEM Careers Day	Meeting STEM ambassadors and learning about STEM curriculum links	https://vimeo.com/195605898
WORK@IT	STEM Scholars Programme - CPD	https://vimeo.com/195692695

Case Studies, Name – Role - Employer	Video Link
Tom Collins: Senior Engineer (Gilbert Gilkes and Gordon Ltd.)	https://vimeo.com/190994705
Tom O'Connor: Director Corporate IT (IDEX Corporation)	https://vimeo.com/190993923
Tansy Sabben: Senior Structural Engineer (Self employed)	https://vimeo.com/190993902
Jayne Moorby: Marketing Manager (Oxley Group)	https://vimeo.com/190993901
Philippa Marr: Senior Orthopaedic Occupational Therapist (Ormskirk Hospital, NHS Trust)	https://vimeo.com/190993900
Natalie Hailey: Co-owner (The website doctors)	https://vimeo.com/190993898
Claire Brockie: Project Manager (Carlisle Key)	https://vimeo.com/190993897
Lee Macneall: Engagement and Outreach Officer (UCLAN)	https://vimeo.com/190993896
Amy Pennington: Fylde sand dune project officer (Lancashire Wildlife Trust)	https://vimeo.com/190992911

Appendix 9: Cumbria and Lancashire Network for Collaborative Outreach: Members and Institutional Contacts

Listed below in alphabetical order are all the Higher Education Providers (HEP) involved in CLNCO. These are the names of the individuals who contributed to the project and who are at the time of writing in the best position to share good practice. The information is provided to support future follow up.

Name of Institution	Contact name and email	
Accrington and Rossendale College	Name: Claire Edmundson Email: cedmundson@accross.ac.uk	Tel: 01254 389933
Blackburn College	Name: Gill Piper Email: g.piper@blackburn.ac.uk	Tel: 01254 292929
Blackpool and the Fylde College	Name: Jane Mahon Email: jane.mahon@blackpool.ac.uk	Tel: 01253 352352
Burnley College	Name: Peter Mounsey Email: p.mounsey@burnley.ac.uk	Tel: 01282 733187
Carlisle College	Name: Andy Dodds Email: adodds@carlisle.ac.uk	Tel: 01228 822758
Edge Hill University	Name: Maria McCann Email: mccannm@edgehill.ac.uk	Tel: 01695 575171
Furness College	Name: Jo Anson Email: jo.anson@furness.ac.uk	Tel: 01229 825017
Kendal College	Name: Adele Mundy Email: adele.mundy@kendal.ac.uk	Tel: 01539 814734
Lakes College	Name: Sue Watkins Email: susanw@lcwc.ac.uk	Tel: 01946 839300
Lancaster University	Name: Leanne Bates Email: l.bates@lancaster.ac.uk	Tel: 01524 65201
Lancaster and Morecambe College	Name: Iain Parkinson Email: i.parkinson@lmc.ac.uk	Tel: 01524 66215
Myerscough College	Name: Stuart Davidson Email: sdavidson@myerscough.ac.uk	Tel: 01995 642222
Newton Rigg College	Name: Jane Sullivan Email: jane.sullivan@newtonrigg.ac.uk	Tel: 01768 893400
Preston College	Name: Ian Fazackerley Email: ifazackerly@preston.ac.uk	Tel: 01772 225522
Runshaw College	Name: Tim Cahill Email: cahill.t@runshaw.ac.uk	Tel: 01772 622677
University of Central Lancashire	Name: Louise Oldfield Email: loldfield@uclan.ac.uk	Tel: 01772 894409
University of Cumbria	Name: Lisa Martin Email: lisa.martin@cumbria.ac.uk	Tel: 01228 616283

"Working together across Cumbria and Lancashire to broaden aspirations into higher learning"

