




# Annual Report Year I

December 2007 to November 2008



The Lifelong Learning Network  
for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire,  
Oxfordshire and Surrey

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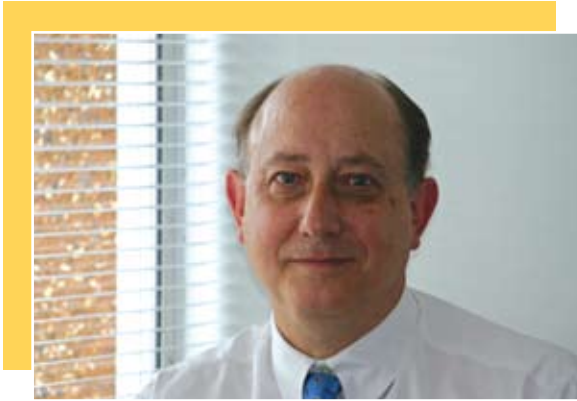
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Report compiled by Dr Emma Thomas  
Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Progress South Central

# Foreword

Professor Rob Robson, Chair, Progress South Central Executive Board



*Even in these rapidly-changing times, there is much work to be done to ensure fair access to Higher Education for all students who would benefit from it.*

## **Welcome to the first Annual Report for Progress South Central, the Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey.**

Progress South Central is one of 30 Lifelong Learning Networks funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England as part of its mission to widen access to, and improve participation in, Higher Education. LLNs have a central role in bringing about the reforms identified by the Leitch Review of Skills as essential for the UK's continued competition in the world skills market. Even in these rapidly-changing times, there is much work to be done to ensure fair access to Higher Education for all students who would benefit from it. Progress South Central is a provider-facing LLN and its central aim is to assist those working with potential entrants to Higher Education to effect an environment conducive to improving progression opportunities.

Our first year of fully-funded activity has been a time of both opportunity and challenge, as our core team and partner institutions have focused on our shared objectives to deliver innovative new provision for vocational students, support the progression of those students into Higher Education, and work together to broker new relationships and effect positive change. As you will know and understand, the activities discussed in this report have been undertaken in the context of economic uncertainty and competing institutional pressures, and I am pleased to say that our commitment to these shared objectives has not allowed the challenging external environment to affect our achievements. This report demonstrates that the strength of Progress South Central is its ethos of collaborative partnership, enabling the sharing of expertise and channelling of resources to achieve maximum effect, and its ability to deliver to the changing needs of its partner institutions.

The plan moving forward into Year 2 will build on the relationships established during the development phase and Year 1. The efforts of Fay Croft and her team have established a solid basis for much additional exciting new work in the year to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob Robson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

# Progress South Central: the first year

Fay Croft, Director, Progress South Central

The first year of any initiative which is to be delivered over a relatively short period of time can pose particular challenges, as staff are recruited and the presence of and rationale for the particular project are established. Progress South Central had the benefit of a development phase which brought together this diverse partnership and laid the foundations for delivery. Nevertheless, our first year has been characterised by the ever-changing national context, varying regional drivers and internal challenges. This report demonstrates the clear value of focused collaborative partnership working and what can be achieved with dedicated resources and skilled individuals.

The core partners – four universities and twenty-two colleges (see list on page 27) – have shown their support for and engagement with this initiative throughout the year. The core staff team has been able to work with a range of individuals and to offer funding for development work which is innovative and offers excellence in delivery. In addition, we have been ably supported by a variety of stakeholders who are both interested in and working on our core aims and objectives: to develop vocational progression opportunities into and through Higher Education.

A particular highlight has been establishing very successful Forums for each of our vocational sectors. These open meetings have brought together academic staff from Higher Education and Further Education, and from employer organisations, to share experiences, expertise and current challenges. There are already signs that these will go from strength to strength over the lifetime of the LLN.

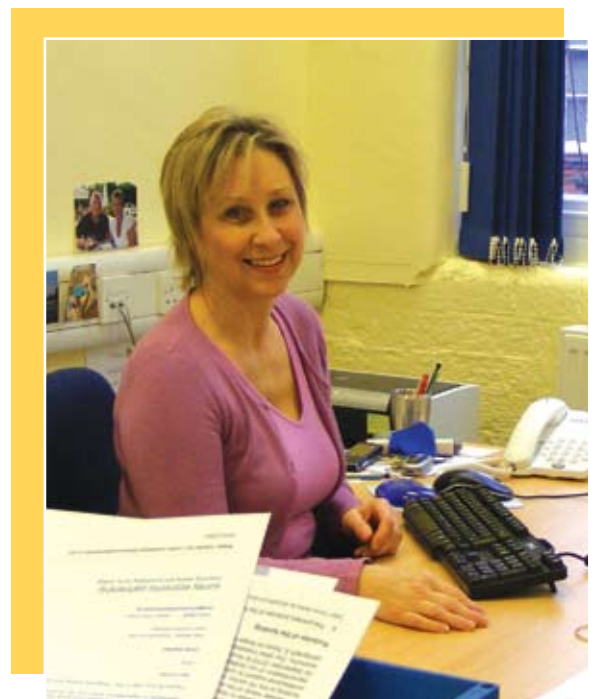
Much of our work is with staff in partner and stakeholder organisations. We see this work as a means of securing longer-term effectiveness through impact on institutional practice and on individuals working in those institutions. As well as our four funded sectors – Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Land-based Industries and Construction and the Built Environment – we have emphasised cross-sector working in order to ensure as wide an impact as possible. For example, we are working with guidance staff across our region and delivering a range of staff development.

We have included some work direct with learners whilst ensuring that what we offer complements what is being offered by individual institutions and other partner organisations such as Aimhigher. Students

from Oxford & Cherwell Valley College attended the National Construction College 'Constructionarium'. Students from a range of colleges and training providers have benefited from Peer and Tutor mentoring programmes. Adults who have the potential to progress to Higher Education have been provided with guidance interviews by the local nextstep service.

This report represents a selection of the work undertaken in the development phase and in Year 1. We are now consolidating early work and moving to expand the range and volume of work being delivered, and are looking forward to continuing to collaborate with existing colleagues and to engaging with others across our network.

My thanks to all the partners, stakeholders, staff and organisations who have worked with us so far. Thanks in particular to the University of Reading for hosting this initiative on behalf of the partnership. Thanks also to the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff team. We have funding and resources, but, as always, it's the people that 'make things happen'.





# About Progress South Central

## Vision and objectives of Progress South Central

Progress South Central is a Lifelong Learning Network that focuses on the needs of the learner and the employer, encompasses a breadth of provision and mission within its partner institutions, represents the voices of Further and Higher Education equally, and delivers clear benefits to the region that could not be achieved by individual institutions.

It seeks primarily to:

- Address those barriers to progression from vocational Further Education into and within Higher Education that might be removed by a better understanding of, and greater responsiveness to, the needs of learners and employers, and improved communication and co-operation between institutions in the region;
- Support institutions in the region to design and deliver provision which meets the needs of both learners and employers in the context of lifelong learning, through the sharing of effective and innovative practice, the brokering of relationships with regional partners, and the provision of opportunities for development.

## Wider context

### *The Leitch Review of Skills*

The raison d'être of Progress South Central, in common with all Lifelong Learning Networks, is to contribute to the challenging target of at least 40% of UK adults qualified to Level 4 and above by 2020, set as a result of the Leitch Review of Skills. In their work with and for vocational learners, and with employers, LLNs acknowledge that the bulk of work necessary to achieve this will have to be done in the context of the current workforce and of 'non-traditional' learners. At a regional level, Progress South Central is working in the context of the Regional Economic Strategy for the South East, which is committed to increasing the percentage of working age individuals in the region with qualifications at Level 4 and above from 28% in 2003 to at least 40% in 2016.

### *Need to demonstrate additionality*

As with all government initiatives, there is a need to focus on value for money and to demonstrate impact. The concept of additionality – what the LLN has added that would not have happened if it had never existed – was identified as a core concept for LLNs in the Interim Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Networks published in April 2008. Additionality can be seen through increases in numbers of working age individuals in the region entering vocational HE, increases in numbers of progression routes and, equally importantly but less easily measurable, through the LLN's brokerage activity, including partnerships generated through the LLN's interventions and efforts in 'bringing people together'.

### *Need for realism*

While there is a necessary focus on measurables, there is also a need to consider the 'wider picture' and to take a broader view of the effectiveness of the LLN as a project. It is also necessary to be realistic about what is achievable within the funding period and to understand that the overall drive – to increase participation in HE – is a large-scale and long-term endeavour.

## Themes for judging the impact of the Lifelong Learning Network

Progress South Central's Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy focuses on three key themes: **Provision**, **Progression** and **Partnership**. They are overarching themes which underpin all the work carried out by the Network and in themselves define what the Network 'is about'.

*'As with all government initiatives, there is a need to focus on value for money and to demonstrate impact'*

# Progress South Central: the regional context

## Population and labour market statistics

Progress South Central is the Lifelong Learning Network for a relatively large and diverse geographical region, with a much larger population than any of the regions covered by the three other Lifelong Learning Networks in the South East: almost twice as much as Kent and Medway LLN and more than twice that of the population of the regions of Sussex Learning Network and Hampshire and Isle of Wight LLN. This presents both advantages and challenges. Table 1 shows numbers in employment (includes the self-employed) for the year July 2007 to June 2008, for the Progress South Central geographical region – this comprises the three counties of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey and the six unitary authorities that make up Berkshire.

Levels of employment overall in Progress South Central's geographical region, at around 79.0% of the working age population, compare favourably to those in the South East overall

(78.6%) and very favourably to the overall figures for Great Britain (74.5%). There is however variation within Berkshire: Bracknell Forest and West Berkshire unitary authorities have employment rates well above the overall rate for the South East, while Slough's employment rate is below the national rate, at 72.5%.

## Qualification levels of the working age population

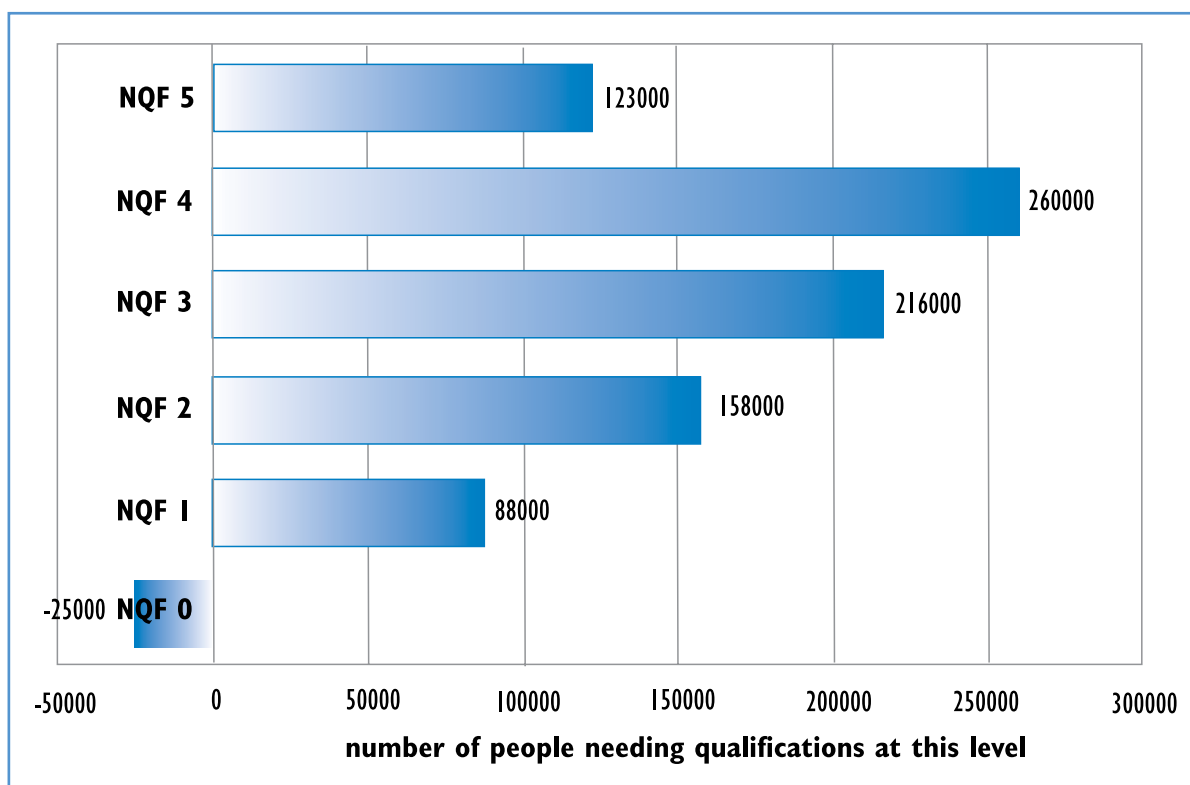
Table 2 shows qualification levels of the working age population in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey. The proportion of the population qualified to Level 4 and above in Progress South Central's region

**Table 1** Numbers in employment by county/unitary authority (July 2007 to June 2008)

	In employment	% of working age population
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	234000	79.1
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	316500	79.3
<b>Surrey</b>	533700	80.0
<b>Berkshire</b>		
<i>Bracknell Forest UA</i>	62300	85.5
<i>Reading UA</i>	75100	78.2
<i>Slough UA</i>	56500	72.5
<i>West Berkshire UA</i>	78900	84.4
<i>Windsor and Maidenhead UA</i>	69100	80.1
<i>Wokingham UA</i>	81300	81.8

**Table 2** Qualification levels by county/unitary authority, as % of the working age population

	NVQ 4 and above	NVQ 3 and above	NVQ 2 and above	NVQ 1 and above	No qualifications
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	34.4	48.7	70.2	83.8	9.6
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	33.1	53.3	68.4	81.7	7.6
<b>Surrey</b>	38.0	56.1	73.2	84.5	7.7
<b>Berkshire</b>					
<i>Bracknell Forest UA</i>	34.5	53.1	68.9	84.0	6.5
<i>Reading UA</i>	33.2	50.7	63.4	75.2	9.8
<i>Slough UA</i>	20.5	35.3	53.5	67.1	13.4
<i>West Berkshire UA</i>	35.6	54.4	71.0	83.3	8.7
<i>Windsor and Maidenhead UA</i>	39.3	56.7	72.2	81.9	7.7
<i>Wokingham UA</i>	40.9	59.0	76.0	85.7	6.1



**Figure 2** Net qualification demand in Berks, Bucks, Oxon and Surrey, 2004-2014

compares favourably with that for the South East as a whole – in all counties/unitary authorities except Slough, qualification levels are well above the 30.8% figure for the South East. The figure for Great Britain as a whole is lower, at 28.6%.

### Predicted qualifications demands

The Learning and Skills Council Learning and Labour Market Area Profiles for Progress South Central's region note that the occupational mix of the Thames Valley<sup>1</sup> and Surrey workforces is predicted to shift over the course of the next decade towards higher order occupations (this is in line with the national picture) and that this is likely to have a significant impact on the overall demand for qualifications. Total net employment demand<sup>2</sup> in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey between 2004 and 2014 is estimated to be around 823,000. Of this, around 383,000 people will need to have qualifications at at least Level 4 of the National

Qualifications Framework (NQF). Figure 1 shows the net qualification demand for Progress South Central's region over this ten-year period, in terms of numbers of people needing qualifications at each of the NQF Levels 1 to 5. There will also be an overall reduction of 25,000 jobs that do not require staff to have any qualifications at all (the negative figure for NQF Level 0).

The above gives a general picture of the local labour market situation in Progress South Central's region and the predicted skills needs in terms of numbers of jobs that will require qualifications at Level 4 and above. Although Progress South Central's region has a relatively highly-qualified workforce when compared with wider regional and national figures, the predicted shift towards occupations requiring higher qualification levels, and the consequent predicted net qualification demand, will have inevitable implications in terms of training and skills needs within the region.

### References

*Learning and Labour Market Area Profile: Surrey.* Learning and Skills Council 06/07, version 1.1.

*Learning and Labour Market Area Profile: Thames Valley.* Learning and Skills Council 06/07, version 1.1.

NOMIS official labour market statistics at [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk).

<sup>1</sup> Covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

<sup>2</sup> This relates both to demand created by expansion and to that created by the need to replace existing workers.



# Provision

## Foundation degrees

During its first year Progress South Central has sought to support the development of Foundation degrees across all four of its vocational sectors: Creative Industries, Health and Social Care, Construction and the Built Environment and Land-based Industries. By the end of Year 1, the LLN had allocated either funding

or Additional Student Numbers (ASNs) for 18 Foundation degrees.

Foundation degrees have obvious relevance to the work of Lifelong Learning Networks. They were designed to be accessible by learners in the workplace and as such reflect the wider shift towards lifelong learning. They combine academic study and workplace learning and are developed and

delivered in partnership with employers to ensure that their content meets current industry needs. We have been especially keen to support partners in working with employers on both the design and delivery of new Foundation degree programmes.

Foundation degrees<sup>3</sup> which received support for their development during Year 1:

Foundation degrees in Construction and the Built Environment	Institution
Construction Management	Aylesbury College
Construction Management	Oxford Brookes University
Heritage and Restoration Skills	Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
Sustainable Construction	Amersham & Wycombe College
Foundation degrees in Creative Industries	Institution
Acting for New Media	Amersham & Wycombe College
Costume and Fashion	Amersham & Wycombe College
Musical Theatre	Amersham & Wycombe College
Performing Arts	The Henley College
Publishing	Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
Radio Production	Amersham & Wycombe College
Writing for a Living	Ruskin College
Foundation degrees in Health and Social Care	Institution
Children and Young People	Aylesbury College
Health and Social Care	Oxford Brookes University
Hearing Aid Audiology	Mary Hare Charity
Paramedic Emergency Care	Oxford Brookes University
Social Care	Farnborough College of Technology
Foundation degrees in Land-based Industries	Institution
Amenity Horticulture	Abingdon & Witney College
Arboriculture, Sports Turf and Horticulture	Guildford College

<sup>3</sup> In some cases these are still in development

## Perspective from Bob Digby of *fdf*

Foundation Degree Forward (*fdf*) has found real added value in working with Lifelong Learning Networks nationally and specifically with the four LLNs in the South East. To meet the demands of workforce development, business improvement and the knowledge economy, *fdf* stimulates, supports and works to develop sustainable employer partnerships with Higher Education. Working with partnerships of Higher Education providers that focus on improving vocational progression for learners through shared Progression Agreements is clearly an important part of this agenda. Bob Digby, an *fdf* Consultant, has worked with Progress South Central particularly around the area of information, advice and guidance in support of work-based learners.



*'The LLN simplifies communication with a lot of stakeholders and provides a driving force that might otherwise not exist.'*

*fdf* [www.fdf.ac.uk](http://www.fdf.ac.uk)

## New provision in Health and Social Care

Progress South Central is supporting the development of Foundation degrees in Health and Social Care to create a variety of pathways suitable for the needs of local staff and employers which fit with the strategic plans identified by NHS South Central Strategic Health Authority and the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority. Widening the scope and development of Foundation degrees will ensure that the new emerging roles within the Assistant Practitioner workforce are supported.

Progress South Central has provided funding to recruit ASNs to two Foundation degrees offered by the School of Health and Social Care at Oxford Brookes University. The Foundation degree in Health and Social Care was developed in partnership with Oxfordshire



The first Health and Social Care Foundation degree students, September 2008. Photo courtesy of the School of Health and Social Care, Oxford Brookes University.

Course prospectus entry: [www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/courses/undergraduate/2009/hscfoundation](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/courses/undergraduate/2009/hscfoundation)

NHS Trusts and successfully launched in 2008. The degree is designed for people taking on new roles such as Assistant/Associate Practitioner. The 23 students who enrolled in September 2008 came from a variety of health and care settings. The Foundation degree in Paramedic Emergency Care has considerable employer involvement – in addition to the work-related units students undertake, lectures have also been delivered by local practitioners. Thirty part-time students – all of whom are employees of South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust – and 13 full-time students enrolled for the first year of this Foundation degree in September 2008.

**Oxford Brookes University School of Health and Social Care** [shsc.brookes.ac.uk](http://shsc.brookes.ac.uk)

**NHS South Central** [www.southcentral.nhs.uk](http://www.southcentral.nhs.uk)

**NHS South East Coast** [www.southeastcoast.nhs.uk](http://www.southeastcoast.nhs.uk)

## Foundation degrees in the Creative Industries

Supporting our partner colleges in the development of Creative Industries-related Foundation degrees has been an important aspect of our work during Year 1. As a result of our involvement, two new Foundation degrees are now operational and five are due to be validated for a 2009 or 2010 start, offering approximately seventy-five new student places from their first year. We are especially keen to encourage employer engagement activities to ensure that new programmes of study are relevant to the needs of industry and that graduating students will be suitably



equipped with appropriate skills. Our support has enabled development teams to undertake appropriate research, in the form of surveys and employer advisory groups, which has informed the overall aims and learning outcomes of the eventual programme.

Typical of one such development is the Foundation degree in Radio Production at Amersham & Wycombe College. The College offers a range of courses in



FdSc Construction Management students on a residential course visit.

Photo courtesy of the School of the Built Environment, Oxford Brookes University.

design, music, performing arts and media at both FE and HE level, and Radio Production was a natural addition to their portfolio. We approached several local FM stations who responded positively to the idea of a Foundation degree in 'radio' and offered both expertise and work placements. We were happy to support Amersham & Wycombe College by enabling them to contract a project leader with extensive industry knowledge and, importantly, industry contacts. Extensive feedback was acquired through face-to-face and telephone interviews with over 20 radio broadcasting experts, including BBC Radio Training, The Radio Skills and Development Forum and The Radio Academy, and the information gathered has informed the 'contextual document' and the learning outcomes of the course. Students will be able to take advantage of work placements and work-related projects offered by various broadcasting organisations. Subject to validation by Bucks New University, this new Foundation degree will run from September 2009.

### FdSc Construction Management at Oxford Brookes University

Progress South Central provided funding in 2008 to recruit Additional Student Numbers to a new Foundation degree run by the School of the Built Environment at Oxford Brookes University. The Foundation degree in Construction Management has been designed in an innovative way, with students studying via distance learning while receiving support through Brookes Virtual Gateway and four residential visits throughout the year. At the end of the Foundation degree there is the opportunity for successful students to progress to an Honours degree at Brookes.

The curriculum and learning outcomes of the Foundation degree were designed in collaboration with Kier, a construction and development employer. The programme is tailored towards modern contractors

who are currently working in the industry. In between the residential course visits, students receive weekly support from a Kier mentoring programme, which has been quality assured by Oxford Brookes University. While the first cohort of 48 students who joined the course in January 2008 were all Kier employees, there are plans for the University to deliver the course in collaboration with additional construction employers in the future. The first year of programme delivery has been very successful and the majority of students have progressed to year 2.

**Oxford Brookes University School of the Built Environment** [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be)

**Kier Group** [www.kier.co.uk](http://www.kier.co.uk)

### University Experience Days for prospective HE students

Progress South Central held a programme of pre-session events in May 2008 for learners and potential learners considering HE study in the Creative Industries. The events were held at Bucks New University over a four-day period and covered subjects such as Drama and Film and Television Production. A total of 76 students took part in these programmes, which were aimed at anyone 17 and over looking to 'bridge the gap' to studying at HE level. The events were interactive and required participants to engage in HE level work, with the aim of improving their understanding of HE and enhancing their existing skill set.





The majority of participants were FE students, with a handful being in employment and others being neither in education nor employment and recruited through local Jobcentres. Attendees reported back that the most memorable part of the day was finding out about different types of HE courses on offer in the Creative Industries, the presence of approachable and willing tutors to answer any questions and being able to work alongside current HE students.

The pre-session concept has been modified and enhanced for Year 2 and the events are being

marketed as 'Experience Days', with dates scheduled for February and June 2009 at Bucks New University. The revised events have a greater focus on academic content and are part of a larger 'progression package' that includes priority invitations to course events, access to the pre-enrolment Virtual Learning Environment and a student 'buddy' scheme.

### Learning at Work Information Service: a learner resource for the South East

Progress South Central is one of four Lifelong Learning Networks in the South East working together to produce information, advice and guidance to support Higher Education vocational curriculum development and progression across nine counties. This will be reinforced by a programme of staff development across the region. The **Learning at Work Information Service (LAWIS)** project is jointly funded until August 2010 by the four LLNs, the Learning and Skills Council South East and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), making this the first example of all the LLNs in one region working collaboratively to obtain external funding to sustain part of their work.

Building on the Sussex Learning Network's earlier work on **Learning Opportunities in Sussex**, the LAWIS project draws together a range of generic and subject-specific material produced by the networks and other agencies and institutions under the umbrella of **Learning Opportunities in the South East**. The **Learning Opportunities** website provides a one-stop shop for learners who know little or nothing about Higher Education. The emphasis is on personalising the service so that the user is equipped to make informed choices or ask further questions of providers based on their current study, job or career aspirations. It directly targets and encourages those who are in work, returning to work or currently studying vocational courses. The website will include **SoutheastRoutes**, an online progression tool that identifies relevant Progression Agreements for learners and advisers.

The first phase of the website went live in January 2009 and the second phase, with enhanced technical features and search facilities, will be launched in June 2009. The site will be complemented by an Adviser Pack, a Learning Opportunities booklet for each LLN area, marketing materials and information about staff development events.

#### Learning Opportunities in the South East

<http://www.learning-opportunities.org.uk>

#### Launch event for new CPD initiative

In December Progress South Central supported the launch of a new CPD initiative, the Diploma in Leadership in Multi-agency Settings. The programme,

### Perspective from Ruth Gunstone, Deputy Dean Faculty of Creativity & Culture, Bucks New University

Working with Progress South Central in relation to student Experience Days in the Creative Industries has really helped to widen awareness of our courses in the local FE sector. Participants benefit from a very rich insight into University life. Our student ambassadors reinforce this through providing the student perspective. The certificate of attendance gives value to the day and the invitation to attend an admissions interview provides both access and information to help students decide on their future career pathway. One really useful aspect of the Experience Day is keeping in touch with students after they have spent time with us, through the buddy system and through access to our pre-enrolment Virtual Learning Environment. Progress South Central has given us the support to develop a framework which makes these days a very worthwhile and informative experience.



#### Bucks New University Faculty of Creativity and Culture

[http://bucks.ac.uk/about/structure/faculties/creativity\\_\\_culture.aspx](http://bucks.ac.uk/about/structure/faculties/creativity__culture.aspx)

offered at both NQF Levels 6 and 7, was developed in conjunction with Bucks New University and the Buckinghamshire Workforce Strategy and was aimed at team leaders within Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Services.

Those who attended the launch received a presentation from the course leader and the opportunity to meet the university staff. This helped them to make an informed decision as to whether the course was right for them. As a result the first cohort has been recruited and is now attended by staff from a variety of agencies with approximately half studying at Level 6 and half at Level 7. Although developed with Children's Services in mind, interest has already been received from Mental Health Services for adaptation to the needs of their workforce.

### Constructionarium: a unique experience for students

One of Progress South Central's most exciting ventures in its first year has been to develop an innovative collaboration between Oxford & Cherwell Valley College (OCVC) and the Constructionarium at the National Construction College at Bircham

Newton in Norfolk. Constructionarium is a unique hands-on construction experience for students and young professionals. It takes the form of a week-long field course which is usually delivered through the partnership of a contractor, a university and a consultant. Over the course of the week, students construct scaled-down versions of one of a number of projects – projects available include the Ravenspurn Oil Platform, which is constructed in dry dock, and then floated into and secured in the middle of a lake, the Millau cable bridge, and a 40ft replica of 30 St Mary Axe in London, otherwise known as the Gherkin. Students are assessed on the final day in terms of budgetary control, methodology and the timely completion of their project.

In October 2008, funded and organised by Progress South Central, OCVC sent a small group of Level 3 Built Environment students to participate in a Constructionarium project alongside a group of undergraduate civil engineering students from the University of Greenwich. This was the first time any FE students had attended the Constructionarium and it created a huge amount of interest in the construction education community. The site was visited during the week by Nick Raynsford, MP for Greenwich and Woolwich, who is also President of the Constructionarium.

The course gave the students a valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities of higher level study in their chosen field, the opportunity to discuss both university life and undergraduate study with current HE students and the experience of working on site with real contractors. They worked alongside the HE students on every aspect of a project from drawing up plans and budgets to ensuring there was enough toilet paper on site! Progress South Central hopes to extend similar opportunities to other FE students in future.

#### Constructionarium

[www.constructionarium.co.uk](http://www.constructionarium.co.uk)

#### Oxford & Cherwell Valley College

[www.ocvc.ac.uk](http://www.ocvc.ac.uk)



*'The course gave the students a valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities of higher level study...'*

## Support for work-based learning in the Health and Social Care sector

Work-based learning is a key element of several of the Foundation degree developments and projects which Progress South Central has supported.

Oxford Brookes University worked with local partners to further develop work-based learning modules for the Foundation degree in Health and Social Care. Together, they designed flexible work-based learning approaches within the Foundation degree framework, easily understood by students and their supervisors, that can be utilised by new and emerging Foundation degree programmes. The work has strengthened links with Health and Social Care providers and a report on the development will be used to disseminate the learning across the network.

Additionally, Progress South Central helped Bucks New University to develop a 15-credit module offered as a five-day course for mentors who are assisting learners at work. It aims to provide a comprehensive package of support by identifying needs and building a structured programme. Bucks New University's Faculty of Society and Health have now completed the planning and implementation phase of this project, with the development of the module named 'Introduction to Enabling Learning and Mentoring'. This module

has been piloted with mentors from the Foundation degree in Community Development and is now being offered to all Foundation degree mentors in the Faculty.

**Bucks New University Faculty of Society and Health** [bucks.ac.uk/about/structure/faculties/society\\_and\\_health](https://bucks.ac.uk/about/structure/faculties/society_and_health)

**Oxford Brookes University School of Health and Social Care** [shsc.brookes.ac.uk](https://shsc.brookes.ac.uk)

*'Work-based learning is a key element of several of the Foundation degree developments and projects which Progress South Central has supported...*

*It aims to provide a comprehensive package of support by identifying needs and building a structured programme'*

### Perspective from Liz Westcott, Director of Pre Qualifying Learning and Development, Oxford Brookes University

Oxford Brookes University is pleased to have received support from Progress South Central for Additional Student Numbers for the first year of delivery for the two new Foundation degree programmes in Health and Social Care and Paramedic Emergency Care. The Foundation degrees have been designed in close collaboration with local Health and Social Care partners. This effective partnership working has ensured that the course follows a work-based learning philosophy throughout a curriculum that completely integrates the relationship between academic study and the students' clinical workplace.

### Perspective from Crystal Oldman, Associate Dean Academic and Professional Development, Bucks New University

We are delighted to be supported to undertake this valuable work. The initial idea arose from a combination of the mentors seeking formal recognition of the work they were undertaking in the workplace and the teaching teams in the University wishing to produce a standard for the preparation and support of mentors across all the Foundation degrees in the school. There is every indication at this half way stage that we will have some good feedback from the project which will be applicable to mentors in a wide range of settings.

# Progression

## Progression Agreements

Progression Agreements are a key part of the work of all Lifelong Learning Networks. They are formal agreements between educational institutions to support progression from one course of study into a higher level course of study, and will normally articulate a range of routes at a number of different institutions within the region. Each Progression Agreement will include a specific guarantee, such as a guaranteed interview or offer of a place, for learners from particular courses and institutions, and may include a range of additional support. The real benefit of Progression Agreements is that they provide clarity and coherence for the learner. They remove some of the typical hurdles vocational learners can face when trying to progress into Higher Education, by ensuring that institutions have already thought about the type of offer they might make to a particular vocational student.

In this first year of activity, Progress South Central built on the work of its development phase to complete 13 separate Progression Agreements that represent

a total of some 57 different Higher Education routes across our priority sectors. Many of these agreements broaden opportunities for Foundation degree students to progress to Honours level qualifications, while others focus on progression from Level 3 programmes, such as BTEC National Diplomas, into specific relevant HE programmes.

In September 2008, we commenced the development of two Network-wide Progression Agreements for learners following any Level 3 courses in Animal Science and Equine Studies. We have sub-contracted a specialist researcher from the University of Reading's School of Agriculture, Policy and Development to identify all the relevant Higher Education course options in the region and map progression routes, with a view to providing specific guarantees for each course. Current work on Network-wide Progression Agreements is being done in conjunction with VETNET LLN, the National Lifelong Learning Network for Veterinary & Allied Professionals.

While the Progression Agreement itself is the main objective, the importance of the process of negotiating



Progress South Central staff discuss Progression Agreements in the Land-based Industries with staff from the University of Reading's School of Agriculture, Policy and Development.

## Perspective from Dr Jennie Litten-Brown, Lecturer in Animal Science, University of Reading

Network-wide Progression Agreements offer real opportunities for vocational learners in the animal science area, and a valuable alternative market for potential Higher Education students who are not coming from the traditional A-level route. We are delighted to be involved in this work.

it cannot be underestimated. It brings together institutions delivering Further and Higher Education to work in partnership, and raises awareness of the quality and variety of vocational qualifications that young people and adults are studying. Progression Agreements are one mechanism by which we can facilitate both improved progression for vocational learners and increased collaboration across the FE-HE divide.

**VETNET LLN** [www.vetnetlln.ac.uk](http://www.vetnetlln.ac.uk)

### Support for regional 14–19 Diploma development and delivery

The new 14-19 Diplomas were launched in September 2008 and have been an important topic of discussion for many of our partners and stakeholders during our first year. There are now young people studying Diplomas in Construction and the Built Environment, Engineering, Creative and Media, Society, Health and Development and Information Technology, across our region and beyond. The availability of appropriate progression opportunities into Higher Education will be essential for these learners and will play a crucial role in the Diplomas' longer-term success. To this end, Progress South Central has been working with its partners to facilitate the development of clear and coherent progression routes and to raise the profile of the Diplomas with colleagues in Higher Education.

Our work in this first year of activity culminated in an event for Higher Education admissions staff and tutors in November 2008, entitled 'Progression Potential', which explored the potential for Diplomas as routes into Higher Education programmes and encouraged colleagues to begin to consider the particular skills and attributes that Diploma learners will bring to HE. Approximately 50 delegates attended from across the region and beyond, and 96% rated the conference as 'excellent' or 'good'.

Going forward, Progress South Central will be co-ordinating and funding a small number of focused projects to develop progression routes for particular groups of Diploma learners on the basis of the areas of interest and expertise of its partner institutions. We will also be seeking to roll out good practice and respond to the changing national and local contexts.

*'Good opportunity to get HE perspective and to see what the issues are'*

*'Incredibly worthwhile for an insight into Diplomas and relationship with HE as well as Diplomas themselves'*

*'Great day for raising awareness and networking'*

*Delegates attending Progress South Central's 'Progression Potential' event in November 2008*

## Mentoring for Progression

Progress South Central has contracted The Learning Ladder Ltd to manage several learner-facing projects during Year 1. The two 'Mentoring for Progression' projects work with FE colleges and with private training providers to train progression mentors who will then work with others to develop personal development plans.

### **Mentoring for Progression – Peer Mentoring**

involves working with FE college students to identify life goals and pathways of progression into Higher Education. Learners targeted are students on Level 3 vocational courses. Pairs of students are trained to mentor one another on progression to Higher Education. The Learning Ladder is delivering the training sessions and providing training materials, including a contract between each pair of students stating that they commit to an ongoing mentoring relationship. In addition, each student is provided with a mini Personal Development Plan and a record of the training session. Training of peer mentors has begun and this project will continue into Year 2.

### **Mentoring for Progression – Working with Training Providers**

is an exciting project working with private training providers in Berkshire and Surrey. The Learning Ladder are training and supporting designated staff from training providers to become progression mentors to Level 3 vocational or work-based students. The mentors will then mentor learners, developing personal development plans and helping them realise their full potential through Higher Education.

**The Learning Ladder** [www.thelearningladder.co.uk](http://www.thelearningladder.co.uk)

### **Perspective from Karyn Buck, Director, The Learning Ladder Ltd**



The Learning Ladder have enjoyed working with Progress South Central and found them to be flexible and very supportive. They have developed an ethos that encourages partnership working and are successfully bringing together different types of academic and vocational institutions.

*'I enjoyed finding out about future prospects and working in groups'*

*'I enjoyed being a mentor and a mentee'*

*'I will use the websites that we looked at today to help my friends decide what they want to do after college'*

*Learners participating in the Peer Mentoring project*



Karyn Buck, Director of the Learning Ladder, works with a mentee to help them identify goals and ambitions. Training Providers are currently being trained to carry out this valuable intervention with their learners.

A group of students sitting at desks in a classroom, looking at papers and talking. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow filter.

*‘Oxford Brookes University is grateful for the support received from Progress South Central, which has contributed to the development of an exciting range of new Foundation degree programmes...’*

# Partnership



Fay Croft, Director, Progress South Central chats with Professor David Airey, Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Surrey and Clive Robertson, Head of Student Learning Experience, Oxford Brookes University at the formal launch of Progress South Central in April 2008. Both are members of Progress South Central's Executive Board.

## A partnership of institutions

Partnership is the mechanism used for much development work in our field. This partnership is a coalition of a diverse range of institutions over an extended geography brought together with one common aim. It spans different educational sectors and a range of institutional priorities. Each partner brings to the table a range of opportunities, ideas and enthusiasm, leading to the collective LLN being much greater than the sum of its parts.

The formal structure is of an Executive Board with representatives of the four university partners and the colleges. This group has responsibility for approving reports and returns to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), our funding body. In addition, the Advisory Board, comprising stakeholder representatives, has been continued from our development phase to engage the wide range of organisations also working to deliver better opportunities for progression for vocational students into and through Higher Education.

**Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)** [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)

## Other strategic partnerships

The LLN is supporting the development of other strategic partnerships which share or overlap with our aims and objectives. In our first year of operation there has been a focus on the development of the *University Centre for Aylesbury Vale*. This is a collaborative partnership of two universities, a college, a national training provider, the district council and associated organisations (including Progress South Central). It is developing new opportunities for Higher Education in and around Aylesbury Vale. More information is available from the UCAV telephone enquiry number 01296 780280 and from the soon-to-be-launched web pages at [www.ucav.ac.uk](http://www.ucav.ac.uk).

We are currently working with the emerging *Employment and Skills Boards*. In particular we are engaged with those in Surrey, and also for Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. These new

**Perspective from Adam Lambert, Partnerships Liaison Manager, UK Partnerships and Recruitment, Oxford Brookes University**



Oxford Brookes University is grateful for the support received from Progress South Central, which has contributed to the development of an exciting range of new Foundation degree programmes created in collaboration with employers. Foundation degree courses enable students to study locally and to apply their learning to a relevant work-based setting. Oxford Brookes has also worked with Progress South Central to create Progression Agreements which offer both Further Education College students the chance to progress to a Foundation degree, as well as providing full-time industry employees the opportunity to up-skill and gain additional qualifications. The support Progress South Central has given Oxford Brookes to implement projects has helped to strengthen the University's relationships with partner Further Education Colleges.

## Perspective from a partner College

Hazel Brown, Director of HE at Guildford College, answers a few questions put to her by Progress South Central ...



### What does Guildford College already do to improve progression?

Guildford College is keen to promote learning at HE level to all students and, where appropriate, to ensure students progress into and through HE. For example:

- Through our partnership with Aimhigher Surrey we have a plan of activities to raise aspirations and awareness of HE among students from non-traditional backgrounds.
- During our annual Progression Week, HE tutors visit the programmes at the level below to raise awareness of HE internally. Students can also attend college presentations about the benefits of HE study.
- We have also appointed a Widening Participation Manager who works with students from non-traditional backgrounds to encourage progression to HE.

### How is Guildford College involved with Progress South Central and what benefits have you seen for the staff, students and the college?

Guildford College has worked closely with the LLN since its inception. Over the last year we have successfully bid for ASNs for FdSc Arboriculture, Sports Turf and Horticulture at Merrist Wood Campus in association with the University of Reading. The College has also been the recipient of funding for four projects related to curriculum development and Foundation degree marketing. We also now have our first signed Progression Agreement, which guarantees BTEC ND students in Construction from BCA an interview for the HND in Construction at Guildford College. A number of our staff are now regularly involved in the Forum meetings for the four sectors and are benefitting from the networking and sharing of ideas and practice that these facilitate. In September, Guildford College hosted a stand at the Progress South Central IAG Conference. Finally, being part of the partnership has facilitated a visit for FdA Photography students to Amersham & Wycombe College to explore progression to their BA in Photography.

The benefits of all these collaborations and projects have been felt by staff, students and the college. The staff have enjoyed opportunities for networking and sharing creative ideas and practice. The students have experienced opportunities that previously had not existed for them. The college has benefitted from being part of a bigger network of HE and FE providers, sharing challenges and solutions to these.

### What are your hopes for future work and collaboration, and for the Lifelong Learning Network?

We hope to continue to work with the LLN on new curriculum developments in the four main sector areas, and in particular we would hope to reach out to more employers to address the higher level skills agenda.

**Guildford College** [www.guildford.ac.uk](http://www.guildford.ac.uk)

Boards will provide a vehicle for the LLN to deliver enhanced progression opportunities in response to the higher skills agenda and the current challenges in the economy and employment. We expect to promote and support the development of further strategic partnerships over the lifetime of the project.

## Bringing people together

### Sector Forums

Forums have been established for each of our four funded vocational sectors. They are open meetings of academic staff from HE and FE and are chaired by senior academic staff from our partner universities. They also include colleagues from associated organisations including Sector Skills Councils. Where practical, employers and other employer organisations are also involved. The Forums provide opportunities for consideration of ideas, potential and challenges and for the exchange of knowledge and expertise. They advise on the development of the LLN and on delivery. They will advise on how the work of the LLN can be sustained beyond dedicated HEFCE funding and continued for the long term.

## Perspective from Professor David Airey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Surrey and Chair, Health and Social Care Forum

The Health and Social Care Forum provides a valuable opportunity for colleagues from FE, HE, the Sector Skills Councils and Health and Social Care employers to get together to share information and expertise and discuss issues of concern. Health and Social Care is a complex, rapidly changing and developing sector so it is vital for all the stakeholders to be able to work together, learn from each other and coordinate their responses.

The first Sector Forum to be established was the Land-based Industries Forum, which met three times during Year 1. Two of these meetings were held at partner colleges of Progress South Central – Abingdon & Witney College (at their Common Leys Farm campus) and BCA – and delegates had an opportunity in each case to tour the specialist facilities on offer. Forum meetings have included representatives from the Royal Horticultural Society, BCA, Guildford College, NESCoT, Sparsholt College, Abingdon & Witney College, Aylesbury College and University of Reading, and have provided a valuable opportunity for networking and for the discussion of possible collaborative work.



BCA – Berkshire's Countryside College – celebrating 60 years

### Perspective from Dr Julian Park, Director of Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Reading and Chair, Land-based Industries Forum

The specialist Land-based Sector Forum established through Progress South Central has proved a valuable setting in which to consider the scope of work within this sector and has supported the expansion and development of work across the Progress South Central partnership. FE and HE partners have had the chance to share the latest developments in land-based provision at their institutions and to air any issues and benefit from others' input. Topics addressed have included, among others, Foundation degrees and the development of HE provision generally, and progression and the bridging of gaps between colleges and universities in the Land-based sector. Discussions at the Forum have led to the establishment of a range of initiatives including the establishment of a land-based summer school, students from the University of Reading being taught at BCA, the establishment of a range of Progression Agreements and an open day for college staff to visit the University of Reading to investigate research possibilities which may lead to college staff attending the University of Reading Centre for Staff Training and Development. It is to be hoped that this Forum will continue to flourish and go from strength to strength during Year 2.

*'Previously I couldn't have summed up my knowledge [of Foundation degrees] in one sentence but I feel that I can now'*

### Partnership with Train to Gain in the South East

Progress South Central delivered, on behalf of Higher Education South East (HESE), a Higher Level Skills workshop for Train to Gain Skills Brokers in July 2008 at the University of Reading (a second workshop was held at the University of Surrey in October, for Surrey-based Skills Brokers).

The workshop was organised and delivered by Anna Price, Development Manager, Progress South Central with support from Bob Digby of **fdf**. The workshop featured input from colleagues from the University of Reading's Business Development Unit and Knowledge Transfer Centre. The day included a focus on what Higher Education institutions have to offer employers, the business benefits of Higher Level Skills and sources of funding available for workforce development. One of the objectives of the workshop was to help brokers achieve elements of the Skills Broker Standard and support them in their ongoing Continuing Professional Development. The day included a 'virtual' tour of the University of Reading campus focusing on those areas of the University likely to be of interest to businesses. To take away from the day, brokers were given a comprehensive broker pack covering the whole of the South East region and including information about Higher Education, current initiatives in the South East, funding information and lists of area-specific contacts.

In advance of the event, delegates were invited to complete an electronic questionnaire which gave them the opportunity to feed back their current state of knowledge of HE and to state the specific areas on which they hoped to be better informed as a result of the workshop. None of those who responded considered themselves to have a good knowledge of the specific aspects of HE stated, and all rated their level of knowledge prior to the workshop as either Average or Limited/None. Following the workshop, almost all the feedback indicated that brokers now had a better understanding of higher level provision and potential progression/development routes and felt more able to promote the business benefits of Higher Level Skills to employers.



*'The 'campus tour' ... was great, lots of information about what's available for students at the University'*

*'A thoroughly worthwhile event. Thank you indeed'*

*Comments from Train to Gain Skills Brokers attending Progress South Central's Higher Level Skills workshops*

- Provided support for partner Employer Engagement bids to HEFCE's Strategic Development Fund (bids from Oxford Brookes University; University of Surrey and Academy of Contemporary Music; University of Surrey and Guildford School of Acting)
- Provided support for Thames Valley Colleges FE Specialisation and Innovation Pathfinder bid to the Learning and Skills Council

#### **Work with Sector Skills Councils**

Representatives from Skills for Care and Skills for Health attended the Health and Social Care conference in December 2007, where it became clear that workforce planning needs to dovetail with education provision. Both Sector Skills Councils took active roles in the first Health and Social Care Forum, held in October 2008, hosted by University of Surrey which is taking a sector lead across the Progress South Central network. The key speaker, who represented Skills for Care in Surrey, gave a lively presentation and highlighted key issues for employers involved in social care which provide some challenges for education and training providers. Skills for Health contributed by drawing attention to the national Sector Skills Agreement and the development of the Skills Academy.

#### **Perspective from Vivienne Gray, Information and Projects Executive, Higher Education South East**

HESE would recommend Progress South Central as a key sub-regional partner in developing higher level skills projects that are relevant and add value.

#### **Train to Gain in the South East**

[traintogainse.co.uk](http://traintogainse.co.uk)

**HESE** [www.hese.ac.uk](http://www.hese.ac.uk)

#### **Partnership with Employers and Sector Skills Councils**

##### **Work with employers**

During Year 1 we have:

- Established working relationships with both Surrey and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (MKOB) **Local Skills for Productivity Alliances** – three core members of staff contributed to an MKOB Local Skills for Productivity Alliance event for approximately 60 employers
- Held initial discussions for potential representation on the emerging **Employment and Skills Boards**
- Reached agreement with **Surrey Education Business Partnership** to sponsor Business Breakfasts
- Brokered and funded professional body support for the development of a Foundation degree in Construction Management at Aylesbury College
- Provided support for an employer engagement and widening participation project at East Berkshire College, focusing on construction and related industries

#### **Perspective from Mary Somerville, Skills Academy for Health, South East Region**

We have found Progress South Central easy to engage with and the complementary aims will provide opportunities for closer partnership working in the future. These opportunities will engage the employer with the education sector during a time of rapid change, and the involvement of the LLN in this process will ensure that future training and education provision meets the needs of the employer, the employee and in turn will contribute to improved services.

The meeting of the Creative Industries Forum in September 2008 featured a presentation from Creative & Cultural Skills. Ross Anderson, Qualifications and Standards Manager gave a short presentation giving an introduction to the main areas of work being carried out by the Sector Skills Council. ConstructionSkills have been represented at meetings of the Construction sector Forum. Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries, have been invited to attend meetings of Progress South Central's Land-based Industries Forum.

*'A brilliant networking opportunity'*

*'Everyone has been motivated to move things forward'*

*Comments from delegates attending Progress South Central's Health and Social Care conference*

## Partnership with Health and Social Care practitioners

### Health and Social Care conference

The Health and Social Care conference held at BCA in December 2007 was the first major cross-partnership event for Progress South Central since the receipt of substantive funding for the LLN. Delegates represented universities, colleges, employers, Sector Skills Councils, Aimhigher, other Lifelong Learning Networks and students on Foundation degrees. The purpose was to engage participants and their organisations with Progress South Central, to meet potential partners for collaborative working and to give delegates an opportunity to influence the future direction of the LLN.

The conference was interactive, to encourage participation by delegates throughout the day, and the feedback from the workshops and exchanges of ideas formed the basis of Progress South Central's subsequent plans for delivery in this area. Key topics and priority areas emerged from the discussions which highlighted the increasing demand for up-skilling the healthcare workforce and the need for new education programmes.

### Assistant Practitioner Steering Group

Working in partnership with the NHS South Central Strategic Health Authority and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Lifelong Learning Network, Progress South Central is a member of the Steering Group which

## Perspective from Emma Wilton, Widening Participation Manager, NHS Education South Central

By working in partnership with Progress South Central we are helping to create new progression opportunities for our staff employed within NHS South Central, based upon the needs of our patients. This partnership working is helping to develop our widening participation agenda and remove barriers to progression. It is contributing towards growing the skills, competence and motivation of our non-registered workforce.

**NHS Education South Central** [www.nesc.nhs.uk](http://www.nesc.nhs.uk)

aims to deliver an education framework for the development of Assistant Practitioners. This is an opportunity for the two LLNs to make a significant and lasting contribution to the employer and learner agendas. Agreement has been reached to:

- Utilise expertise in translating employers' needs into viable, stimulating and manageable educational experiences which are attractive, relevant and fit for purpose
- Pursue shared goals to widen access to education and support learners to succeed
- Identify gaps in provision and opportunities in order to plan effectively, draw upon existing resources in new ways or develop new provision
- Facilitate and formalise progression within, between and across existing provision for the benefit of learners and employers



Ann Stainton, Development Manager (Health and Social Care) meets with Emma Wilton, Widening Participation Manager, NHS Education South Central and Julie Wintrup, Health and Social Care Curriculum Group Lead, Hampshire and Isle of Wight LLN.

## Partnership with IAG practitioners

### Guidance Interviews for Level 3 learners

Progress South Central joined forces with nextstep Berkshire and Aimhigher Berkshire to provide guidance interviews for adult learners. Learners selected were aged 20 and over and were qualified to a minimum of Level 3. The interviews assessed their potential for Higher Education and offered information about progression opportunities. Thirty interviews took place initially, with progression information being offered and progression pathways agreed. Clients appreciated the one-to-one help and guidance (previous experience had suggested that group work would not be welcomed by the target clients). This pilot programme of interviews could be rolled out over subsequent years in Berkshire and, potentially, in other areas of the Progress South Central region, and would be a parallel programme to that already offered through Aimhigher Berkshire for under-18s.

## Perspective from nextstep South East

Funding from additional sources such as Progress South Central complements the core nextstep funding and enables more in-depth help to be given to this client group. Additional help for clients looking to enter HE helps to meet targets for participation in HE.

*Surinder Khera, Careers Adviser and Chris Brear, Team Leader, nextstep South East*

*‘Good networking opportunities in addition to the conference itself’*

*‘Very useful to find out about the various progression activities/organisations in this geographical area’*

*‘I have learned a lot about ways into HE’*

*‘Excellent conference’*

*Delegates attending Changing Routes to Higher Education*

### **Changing Routes to Higher Education conference**

In September 2008 Progress South Central held its first conference for Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) workers in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey. In total, 45 IAG workers and other interested parties gathered at Newbury Racecourse to discuss the IAG provision in the area, to participate in workshops addressing topics such as Foundation degrees and the 14-19 Diplomas, and to hear Kevin Whitston, then Head of Widening Participation at HEFCE, talk about LLNs and their impact on routes into Higher Education.

Participants also had the opportunity to get a first look at the Progression to Higher Education toolkit being produced by Progress South Central in partnership with Aimhigher Berkshire and nextstep Berkshire. The day was further enlivened by a panel of students studying Foundation degrees at local Further Education Colleges, who spoke about the IAG they had received and answered questions put to them about their progression to Higher Education. The conference also included a marketplace of local HE providers focusing on vocational courses and non-traditional entry into Higher Education. The conference was well-received by participants and we hope to build on this success with another conference next year.

### **Training and resources for guidance workers**

We worked with the same partners to provide training and resources for guidance workers on changing routes into Higher Education. The Aimhigher Progression to Higher Education Toolkit, first developed in 2006 by nextstep and Aimhigher Berkshire, has been revised and updated to ensure it is current, relevant and accurate. The Toolkit provides information on the changing nature of and routes into Higher Education for potential adult learners. Through using the Toolkit, guidance workers receive training in the changing nature of Higher Education and are better equipped to deliver advice and guidance interviews to potential learners. It also includes a ‘Getting through the Maze’ game which enables learners to embed their knowledge of progression to Higher Education in an informal way. The programme is being evaluated, with potential for roll out over the lifetime of the Progress South Central partnership and across other parts of the Progress South Central region.

**nextstep South East** [www.nextstepsoutheast.org.uk](http://www.nextstepsoutheast.org.uk)

### **Partnership with Aimhigher**

During its first year, Progress South Central has developed mutually supportive relationships with the three Aimhigher partnerships in its geographical region. The two HEFCE-funded initiatives have different, yet complementary, aims: Lifelong Learning Networks are centrally focused on progression, while Aimhigher is focused on widening participation through raising aspirations. The aim is for collaborative and complementary delivery of raising aspirations and progression activities.

At a strategic level, Progress South Central’s Director is a member of the Area Partnership Committees in MKOB and in Berkshire and on the Advisory Board in Surrey. At an operational level, Progress South Central has a presence on the Aimhigher Berkshire Implementation Group and the Aimhigher MKOB Implementation and Evaluation Group. In addition, Progress South Central staff meet regularly with members of the MKOB team to co-ordinate work delivered with the colleges.



Ann Stainton, Development Manager (Health and Social Care), chats to a delegate at Aimhigher Berkshire's recent annual conference.

During Year 1, Progress South Central had a presence at Aimhigher conferences run by Aimhigher MKOB and Aimhigher Kent and Medway. Progress South Central are collaborating with Aimhigher MKOB to run a joint conference for practitioners working in the field of information, advice and guidance 'Progression to Higher Education: Choices in a Diverse Market' in March 2009. We are funding jointly with Aimhigher Berkshire a 'Residential Progression Programme' to be held in summer 2009 and aimed at students wishing to progress to HE programmes in the land-based industries.

#### **Aimhigher Berkshire**

[www.aimhigher.ac.uk/berkshire](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/berkshire)

#### **Aimhigher MKOB**

[www.aimhigher.ac.uk/MKOB](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/MKOB)

#### **Aimhigher Surrey**

[www.aimhighersurrey.ac.uk](http://www.aimhighersurrey.ac.uk)

## **Partnership with other LLNs**

### **LLNs in the South East**

In our first year of delivery we have collaborated with the three other Lifelong Learning Networks in the South East Region: Kent & Medway LLN, Sussex Learning Network and Hampshire & Isle of Wight LLN. In Year 1, we worked collaboratively to deliver training for Train to Gain brokers on opportunities in Higher Education across the South East region. We meet regularly to share and disseminate ideas and expertise. We are collaborating specifically on the development over the next two years of Learning Opportunities in the South East. We have liaised with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), in particular through membership of the South East Higher Skills Alliance. This offers opportunities to embed our work to benefit providers, employers and learners in the longer term. In Year 2 we plan to work together on a regional project to provide tracking information to our partners on current progression to Higher Education across the region, together with a 'gap analysis'.

### **South East England Development Agency**

[www.seeda.co.uk](http://www.seeda.co.uk)

### **Peer evaluation**

We have valued the opportunity during our first year to take part in peer evaluation with Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network. Peer evaluation is part of HEFCE's evaluation strategy for Lifelong Learning Networks and is intended as an opportunity to obtain constructive comment and advice from colleagues who are familiar with the challenges faced in developing a Lifelong Learning Network.

The process so far has proved a valuable opportunity to share good practice and to discuss successes and challenges, and a mutually supportive relationship has been established. The peer review process is continuing into Year 2 with completion scheduled for spring/summer 2009.

### **Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network**

[www.wvlln.ac.uk](http://www.wvlln.ac.uk)





# Looking forward

In Year 2, we look forward to establishing and embedding the effective work that is currently being developed and delivered. We expect to consolidate the excellent working relationships established in our first year, and also to reach out to additional colleagues and stakeholders. In addition, we expect in Year 2 to focus on the dissemination and sharing of the best practice which has been developed so far. The context within which we are working continues to change frequently, presenting challenges but also opportunities. We look forward to building on the secure foundation we have established.

*‘We look forward to building on the secure foundation we have established’*

# The team

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### **HE/FE Liaison Officer, Oxford Brookes University – Janet Cox**

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## **Profile of Ann Stainton, Development Manager, Health and Social Care**

As Development Manager for Health and Social Care, Ann is looking at ways of supporting the development of progression routes into Higher Education. A Careers Adviser by profession, Ann spent two years as the local project lead for Aimhigher South East Healthcare Strand. She has collaborated with several partner organisations to help raise aspirations and encourage people to pursue careers in health and social care. The Health and Social Care 'sector' is really two overlapping sectors, both currently going through periods of considerable change. Local employer organisations are developing their strategies which include workforce reform and Ann will be seeking opportunities to promote innovation and to work in partnership.

## **Profile of Godfrey Smith, Development Manager, Creative Industries**



Godfrey joins Progress South Central as Development Manager for Creative Industries and Employer Engagement. Prior to this new role he was Higher Education Manager for Amersham & Wycombe College, a partner college of Bucks New University, where he was closely involved with the development of the Higher Education portfolio which specialised, mainly, in the Creative Industries. Godfrey brings a wealth of experience to his role at Progress South Central, especially knowledge of FE in HE, IAG and employer engagement activities. The Creative Industries are a complex and diverse vocational sector and Godfrey is looking forward to taking forward both existing and new projects in this area over the year ahead.



# Glossary

ASNs	Additional Student Numbers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
Fd	Foundation degree
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESE	Higher Education South East
HND	Higher National Diploma
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
LAWIS	Learning at Work Information Service
LLN	Lifelong Learning Network
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MKOB	Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire
ND	National Diploma
NESCoT	North East Surrey College of Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OCVC	Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency



# Our partner universities and colleges

## Partner universities

University of Reading [lead partner]

[www.reading.ac.uk](http://www.reading.ac.uk)

Bucks New University

[www.bucks.ac.uk](http://www.bucks.ac.uk)

Oxford Brookes University

[www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)

University of Surrey

[www.surrey.ac.uk](http://www.surrey.ac.uk)

## Associated colleges

Abingdon & Witney College

[www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk](http://www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk)

Academy of Contemporary Music

[www.acm.ac.uk](http://www.acm.ac.uk)

Amersham & Wycombe College

[www.amersham.ac.uk](http://www.amersham.ac.uk)

Aylesbury College

[www.aylesbury.ac.uk](http://www.aylesbury.ac.uk)

Basingstoke College of Technology

[www.bcot.ac.uk](http://www.bcot.ac.uk)

BCA (Berkshire College of Agriculture)

[www.bca.ac.uk](http://www.bca.ac.uk)

Bracknell & Wokingham College

[www.bracknell.ac.uk](http://www.bracknell.ac.uk)

Brockenhurst College

[www.brock.ac.uk](http://www.brock.ac.uk)

Brooklands College

[www.brooklands.ac.uk](http://www.brooklands.ac.uk)

East Berkshire College

[www.eastberks.ac.uk](http://www.eastberks.ac.uk)

Farnborough College of Technology

[www.farn-ct.ac.uk](http://www.farn-ct.ac.uk)

Guildford College of Further and Higher Education

[www.guildford.ac.uk](http://www.guildford.ac.uk)

GSA Conservatoire

[www.conservatoire.org](http://www.conservatoire.org)

Highbury College

[www.highbury.ac.uk](http://www.highbury.ac.uk)

Newbury College

[www.newbury-college.ac.uk](http://www.newbury-college.ac.uk)

North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCoT)

[www.nescot.ac.uk](http://www.nescot.ac.uk)

Oxford & Cherwell Valley College

[www.ocvc.ac.uk](http://www.ocvc.ac.uk)

Ruskin College

[www.ruskin.ac.uk](http://www.ruskin.ac.uk)

Solihull College

[www.solihull.ac.uk](http://www.solihull.ac.uk)

Sparsholt College

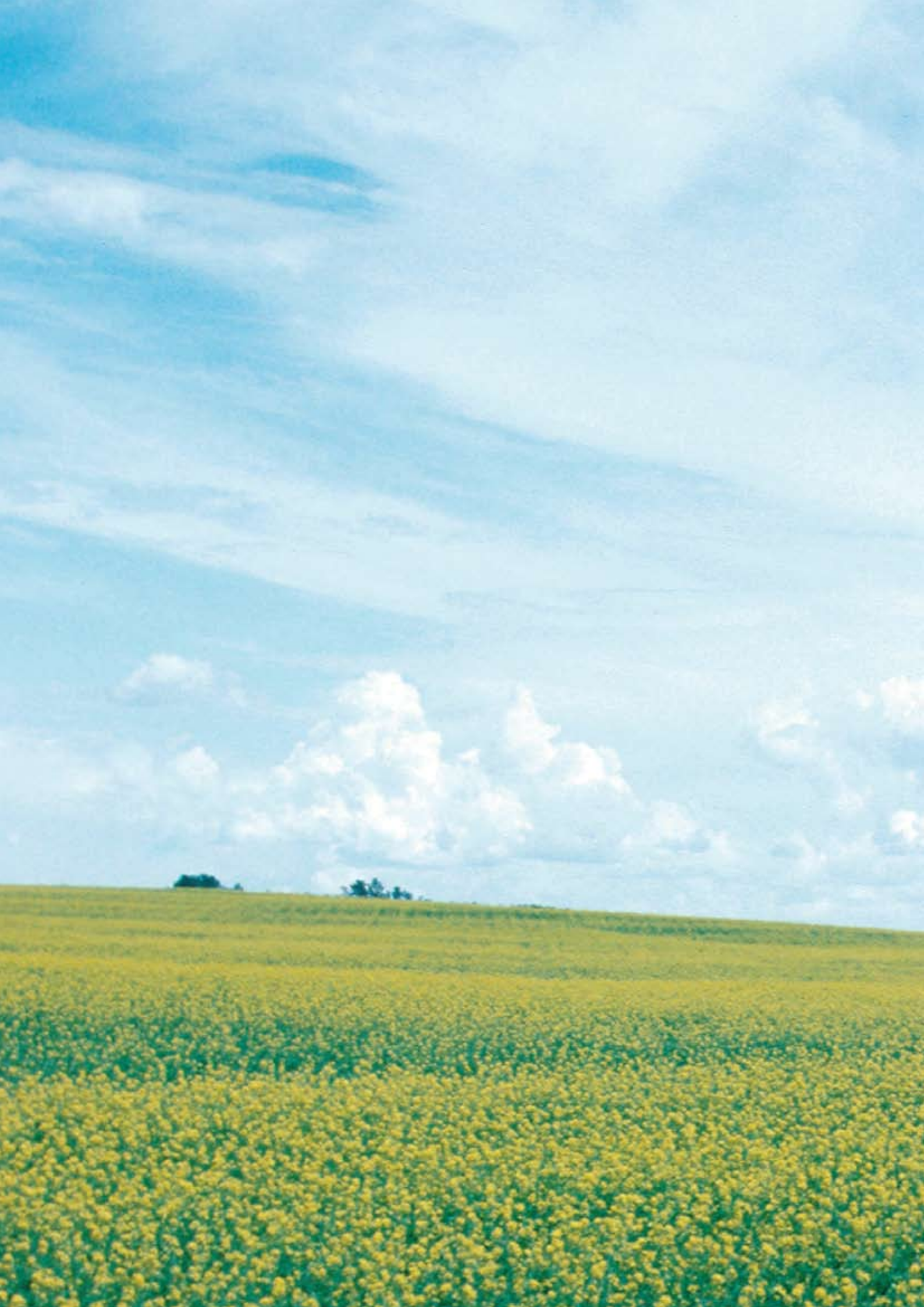
[www.sparsholt.ac.uk](http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk)

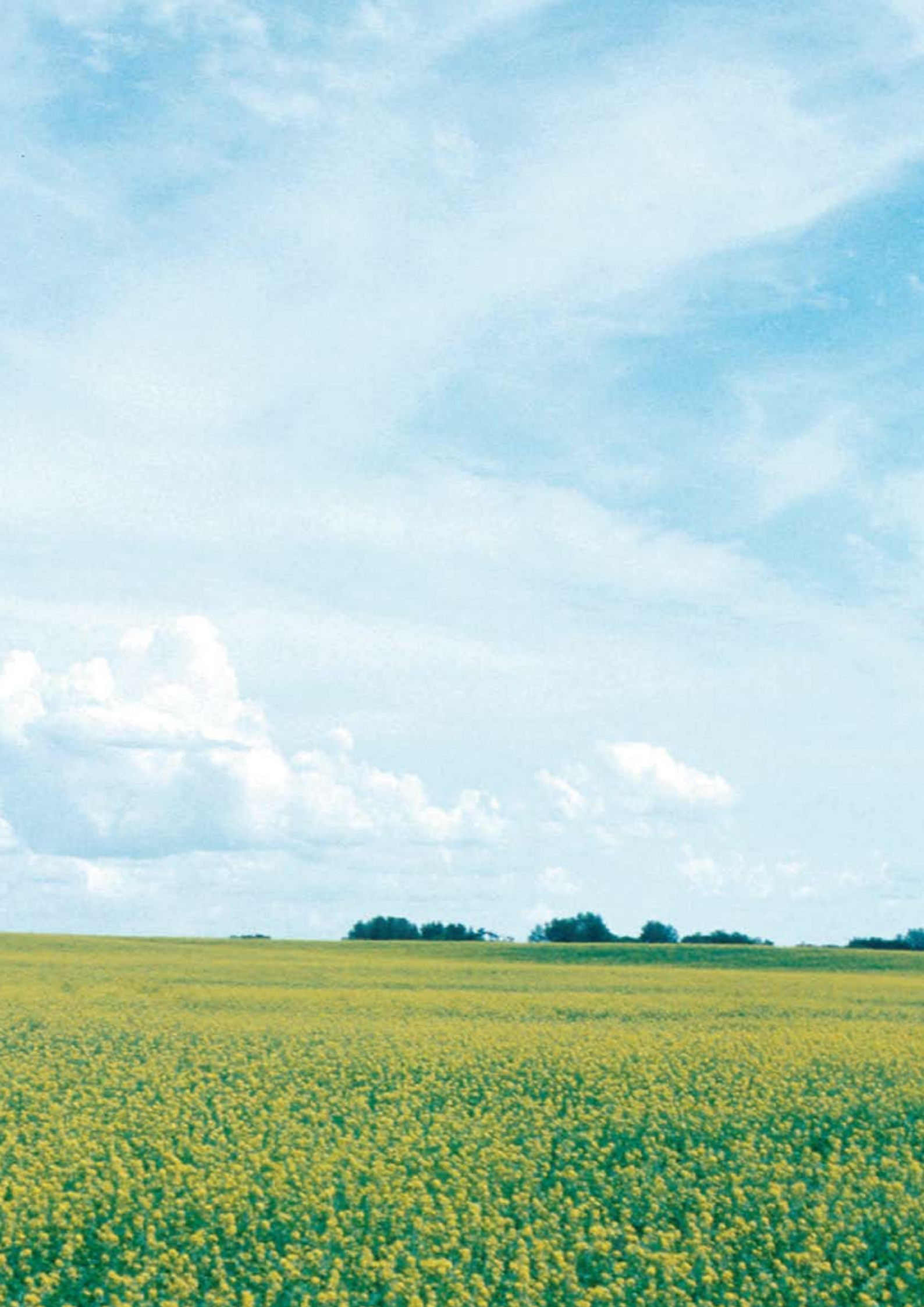
Swindon College

[www.swindon-college.ac.uk](http://www.swindon-college.ac.uk)

Uxbridge College

[www.uxbridgecollege.ac.uk](http://www.uxbridgecollege.ac.uk)







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