



SLN Newsletter 11 — Christmas 2008 Edition

This newsletter celebrates three years of SLN work, and looks ahead to an entirely new phase of activity as we move into 2009. With that in mind, the staff of the Sussex Learning Network would like to wish you season's greetings and a very happy new year!

Three Year Report

We are very pleased to announce the publication of our Three Year Report, which describes the broad range of activities and impact achieved by the SLN during its initial period of funding.

The SLN Three Year Report has been endorsed by HEFCE, and is designed to be useful to a range of audiences, each of whom will be looking for something different. It is intended to work primarily on the web, and therefore makes use of links to other documents and sites. You can also make use of the links to the various sections of the report to skip straight to the section that interests you. You can of course choose to print the full report or the relevant sections, and it has been designed in a print-friendly format to enable this.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the impact achieved by the Sussex Learning Network over its first three years of activity. This information is provided in various ways:

- If you are looking for an at-a-glance overview, the executive summary recalls the SLN's seven objectives, and outlines the impact achieved in each of our areas of activity.
- For an account of how we have gone about our work, the main body of the report documents our approach and takes a critical look at each area, in the context of what we set out to achieve.

For a copy of the Three Year Report, please visit our website



SLN e-book—"Bringing Higher Education Within Reach"

"Bringing Higher Education within Reach", the SLN e-book, is a free resource for those working in further and higher education, and anyone with an interest in vocational learning and the work done by Lifelong Learning Networks over the last three years.

As a web-based resource, the e-book disseminates the SLN's work in a public, accessible and interactive format. It looks at key strands in LLN activity, such as curriculum development, progression, Information Advice and Guidance, and employer and student engagement. The SLN also funded a number of practitioner research projects which present their findings here. The e-book looks at the challenges for evaluating LLNs, and considers the impact of the SLN (as one of the first LLNs to complete its initial period of funding).

We are grateful to the many contributors from our networks in Sussex, from the national LLN community, and those writing in an advisory or research capacity.





The Future of the Sussex Learning Network

As we come to the end of our initial period of funding, marked by the publication of our Three Year Report and e-book, the SLN is pleased to be able to report on its move into an exciting new phase of development.

Learning Opportunities in the South East

Funding has been secured from the Learning and Skills Council and South East England Development Agency to take forward the Information, Advice and Guidance service, Learning Opportunities, developed by the SLN. The project will extend Learning Opportunities both in terms of scope and geography, developing the service to cover the whole of the South East region. This is in partnership with the three other Lifelong Learning Networks in the South East, each of whom have also contributed funding to the project.

The Centre for Work and Learning

The SLN submitted a bid in the early autumn to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)'s Employer Engagement fund, to develop a Centre for Work and Learning. HEFCE's invitation to bid for funding from this pot proved overwhelmingly popular, and as a result the offer of funding that has been made is for substantially less than the amount originally requested. Despite this, HEFCE's feedback on the bid has been extremely positive, and partners, led by the University of Brighton, are currently in discussions with HEFCE to agree a new plan for delivery with the reduced level of funding, with the aim of beginning work on developing the Centre in the new year.

The Centre for Work and Learning will build on much of the work on progression and curriculum development begun by the Sussex Learning Network over the last three years. The Centre will have a particular focus on engaging employers in the development and delivery of a responsive curriculum that is fit for purpose for those in work or looking to enter the workforce.

A key aspect of the new Centre will be the trialling of new, flexible modes of delivery of work-related higher education, and four universities and five colleges across Sussex will work together to contribute to the development of curriculum in response to the needs of local employers. Universities, colleges and employers will work together to explore innovative funding models for work-related higher education, and to look in detail at the 'offer' for the educational provider, employer and employee in such a partnership. A further element of the CWL will be its engagement with brokerage services, and this will link closely with the newly established Learning at Work Information Service in the South East (LAWIS). This activity will focus on ensuring a match between supply and demand, using up to date intelligence on local higher level skills needs to inform the development of the new curriculum. Discussions with HEFCE on 3 years' funding for the Centre are due to be finalised in January 2008.

Say hello!

In October the SLN welcomed 3 new development managers to the LAWIS team: Andrea Purvis, Joy Lankester and Lynne Varney. Andrea, Joy and Lynne will be working closely with our partner learning networks on coordinating LAWIS work throughout the South East region.

You might recognise their names - before joining the LAWIS project all three were valued members of our SLN Information Advice and Guidance team!



Wave goodbye!

This Christmas the SLN bids farewell to Sarah Hardman, our Acting Director, and Rebecca Duffy, our Network Manager. Sarah leaves us to take forward the Skills Framework for West Sussex County Council, while Rebecca will be joining Aimhigher as the new area manager for East Sussex. Sarah and Rebecca have played key roles in the development of the SLN over the last three years, and will be much missed as both colleagues and friends.

