

Manual of Good Practice from 14-19 Pathfinders, Summary

About the Manual

14-19 Pathfinders were set up to test different models of delivering 14-19 education and training. Twenty-five Phase One Pathfinders began in January 2003, with a further 14 Phase Two pathfinders supported since September 2003.

The manual explores different aspects of Pathfinder delivery, and outlines aims, approaches, good practice examples, what works, and barriers and solutions.

The manual will be of interest to anyone working with young people aged 14-19, whether strategic planners, members of local partnerships, managing and delivering provision, or those involved in supporting young people.

The following provides a summary of the manual, which can be obtained from DfES (contact details are given at the end of the summary).

Policy Context

Part of governments plans for education and training reform first given in Green Paper 2002.

Building on previous vocational education programmes.

Jointly funded by DfES and LSC: £46m from 2002 – 05

Policy into Practice

Programme supports locally focussed provision targeted at particular socio-economic groups, addressing skills gaps and working with growth sectors.

Addressed transport issues in rural areas, in urban areas issues with learners from different ethnic backgrounds and learning needs.

14-19 Pathfinder Programmes Key Themes

During 3 year programme key themes evolved – documented in national evaluation reports years 1 & 2.

Reports can be accessed on good practice section of DfES website.

Many themes show how good practice was developed, implemented and supported.

Grouped into 6 overarching themes:-

1. Collaboration
2. Enriching the curriculum
3. Meeting student needs
4. Education and work
5. Inclusive provision
6. Sustainability

1. Collaboration

Institutions in each locality working together and playing to own strengths deciding how best to deliver 14-19 offer.

Generic lessons emerged from individual experiences.

Alignment with local concerns and skills gaps.

Successful collaboration established by:-

- Building on existing partnerships and provision
- Identification of appropriate partners

Building on existing partnerships (to...)

- Support professional development
- Reduce admin burdens
- Support different learning paces

Collaboration easiest where core management group established and partners have previously worked together.

Building on existing provision

Rather than re-inventing the wheel.

Reduced lead in time.

Previous partnership outputs act as springboard.

Linking with existing initiatives to support and diversify local developments.

Linking with other partnerships to build on existing good practice.

Networking with local support services eg. Connexions, to ensure a coordinated approach.

Initial development phase is essential, regardless of existing activity.

Potential partners and priorities are identified for delivery through seminars, networking events etc as well as sharing ideas and good practice.

Identification of appropriate and relevant partners

Research into existing local partnerships.

Engage with all necessary partners.

Schools, colleges, employers and training providers were involved in pathfinders from the outset.

Managing successful partnerships

Agree the right management structure.

Management arrangements are often determined by the scale and scope of the partnership, the number of institutions, staff and students involved and the geographical area covered.

Strategic management.

Frequently provided by steering group

Strong local leadership and ownership of responsibility is critical to success

Agreement of expectations, standards and working practices was important to establish a common vision.

The management style was varied at different stages. From a charismatic leadership at the outset, shifting to a democratic model at the delivery stage.

Student representation was included in management forums.

Milestone meetings held.

Health and Safety protocols were developed to safeguard learning outside of the school environs.

Operational Management

Often involved devolving responsibility to providers or task groups, supported by an umbrella management.

Some pathfinders involved young people in designing, testing and evaluating activities.

Other things that work well in operational management

- Regular meetings
- Checklists and responsibility agreements
- Having a central co-ordinating role
- Identifying outputs and actions
- Establishing a common curriculum

2. Enriching the Curriculum

14-19 White Paper pledges to achieve this by introducing more choice of what and where to study. Also by introducing Specialised Diplomas, both academic and vocational, covering each occupational sector of the economy.

Employers and HE put in lead in designing Specialised Diplomas, through Sector Skills Councils.

Pathfinders enriched the curriculum for 14-19 year olds by:-

- Increasing access to training
- Encouraging local provider collaboration
- Involving employers in curriculum design to ensure a provision of relevant, up to date materials
- Increasing the number and range of vocational qualifications

Accessing off site training

Activities to complement school curriculum and increase pupil employability such as supporting work placement opportunities and such examples as Nottingham Pathfinder giving students chance to complete 3 Open College Network Units at Level 2 in office skills.

Ideas that help enrich the curriculum:-

- Mixing qualifications with vocational, practical and academic elements – pupils make connection between school work and work skills
- Support agencies provide IAG to support and prepare students

Collaboration between schools and colleges

Schools, colleges and training providers in inner city and urban areas collaborated to enable students to access a range of institutions. This broadened the curriculum and resulted in improvements in retention and achievement.

Other good practice:-

- Development time to agree and develop complementary timetables between providers
- Sharing staff expertise across partner organisations
- Providers exchanging skills and knowledge
- E communication to increase access to curriculum materials
- Targeting local skills gaps

3. Meeting Students Needs

Enabled pupils to work at a suitable learning pace for them.

Tailored provision for individuals and small target groups.

Learners with Special Educational Needs, under achievers and those at risk of exclusion

E-learning for entry level qualifications

Extranet, compatible across all schools in LEA – provides unified guidance and a learner information portfolio to support learners in managing their own learning.

Interactive tools and quizzes – make learning enjoyable

Developing a consistent approach

Tailoring IAG etc to develop communication skills required for entry level

Supported work experience

Help learners achieve levels 1 & 2

Required close collaboration between organisations to confirm commitment and give practical support

Common risk assessment process implemented to support offsite learning and identify where additional support needed for learners

Engaging employers to ensure work experience covers their needs as well

Dedicated provision for under achievers

Tailored provision offered to students who are falling behind

Identify interests and link to employability skills

Demonstrate the relevance of the learning to later life and provide positive feedback

Gifted and talented groups

Accelerated learning online

Virtual Learning Environments are a forum for learners to progress independently. Students submit their work and staff provide marks and feedback much as in a classroom

Master Classes

Delivered outside core learning hours at schools, colleges and universities.

Reinforcing academia by providing extra curricula activities that apply to real life, eg. A French trip for French language lessons.

Fast tracking to early exam entry

Leaving more time to develop other abilities and work skills.

Extension of school day to offer additional learning time, involving additional teacher time

Through IAG encourage students to develop their own career pathway

Encouragement of out of school learning

Evidence based portfolios showcase extra curricula work

Learners credited for achievement through schemes like Duke of Edinburgh Awards and Millennium Volunteers

4. Evaluation of Work

White paper emphasises importance of linking education and work.

Work related learning became a statutory requirement for the curriculum in September 2004.

Learner motivation and achievement is increased by showing the relevance of study to later life.

The 14-16 age group were the main focus of WBL provision.

Successful Activities Linking Education and Work

Addressing skills gaps

Some pathfinders undertook and commissioned research to inform curriculum development in the area

Vocational learning experience in the workplace

Employer engagement provided work placements for learners to support their vocational learning

Flexible timetabling allowed learners to undertake work related learning

Young people can be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning when staff are busy

Exploring links with Young Apprenticeships

Young apprenticeship programme enables students to undertake extended work experience and vocational qualifications outside school 2 days per week

Ensuring work placements enable students to develop competences and work towards accredited units

Work related IAG

Work related learning supported by providing IAG on available options

Providers helped with CV writing, confidence and communication skills

Links developed between employers and Connexions to improve vocational IAG

Skills Roadshows

Enhance work related learning

Schools, training providers and employers ran school based skills roadshows and taster sessions to give learners hands-on experience which give learners a better understanding of skills and tasks involved

Provide interactive opportunities for young people to learn, test vocational skills and gain IAG in some areas

Test suitability before schools release learners for off-site activities

Must be flexible to meet learners needs

5. Inclusive Provision

Cross cutting support issues, e.g. IAG, and promoting equality is crucial for young people to have high quality, impartial information and get the most from learning.

Every young person should understand all the options open to them and the potential implications.

Young people must develop knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to make good choices, determined by their aptitudes and employer needs.

Innovation in 14-19 Pathfinder Programme Design and Delivery

Involving young people in the design process

Student feedback on their experiences and views was obtained by most Pathfinders

One approach involved a student consultative group looking into such things as whether curriculum materials were user friendly

Young people got involved in discussions with curriculum developers during the design process

Developing credit-based systems to reward achievement and facilitate progression

Credit ratings attached to alternative qualifications for different assessment options

Creation of individual learner pathways to demonstrate vocational options

IAG and Personalised Learning

Collaboration between providers

Collaboration between providers ensured students got consistent IAG to facilitate progression among local providers and reduce drop outs

Most IAG encouraged young people to take ownership of their learner pathway by developing Individual Learning Plans which record data and achievements

Collaboration between providers gave consistency to the ILP systems

Exploring ICT capacity

Pathfinders approaches to Personalised Learning often involved developing on-line ILPs which store information on each student accessible by the young person and teaching staff to monitor progress against agreed targets

Web-based nature of ILP systems improved access to IAG in rural areas

Exploring ICT capacity at project outset was essential to address compatibility and access issues

Community transport schemes

Links with local voluntary and community sector to minimise transport barriers

Local community participation encouraged for drivers/co-ordinators

Combination of commercial and community

E-learning, local skills centres and mobile learning facilities

Circumvent transport difficulties and use student time more productively

E-learning materials were made available through Virtual Learning Environments on project websites

Local skills centres in rural areas increase local access and save on travel time

Equal Opportunities

Promoting non traditional subject choice

Girls encouraged to explore the possibility of engineering, construction, vehicle maintenance etc

Boys offered subjects like fashion, catering and childcare etc

Derby City Pathfinder developed interactive and touch screen CD Roms with local employers to promote diversity in student subject choice

Employers engaged to develop promotional materials

Non traditional role models

For example the Developing Dads Programme – delivery supported by prep work in schools

A DD trainer helped young fathers become more involved in their child's life

Guest speakers from sexually imbalanced industries that buck the trend

Positive promotional materials featuring industry examples

IAG for students considering a non traditional choice

6. Sustainability

Pathfinders encouraged to consider how their work could be sustained beyond the life of the 3 year programme. Some developed mechanisms to mainstream good practice.

Developing sustainable provision

Some pathfinders adopted successful approaches to help mainstreaming of good practice

- Staff development
- Embedding systems for sustainability in an urban area
- Developing web based ILP's in inner city areas

Longer term partnerships commitments secured by agreeing mainstreaming policy and procedures during the projects lifetime

Investment in systems related activities with limited running costs like ILP's

Development of common working practices that can be mainstreamed between institutions

CASE STUDY 1: Building on Existing Collaboration in a Rural Area

(Cumbria 14-19 Pathfinder)

The Issue

Cumbria is 2nd biggest county so Pathfinder needed to develop an effective partnership system to improve the standard of 14-19 learning provision available over a dispersed rural area.

Pathfinder realised to build on existing arrangements established through Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), established in 1985 by central government, was the best way to achieve this. It was a 5 year pilot scheme aimed at promoting technical and vocational training for 14-18 yr olds.

The Barrier

Competition between providers.

The Solution

Building on existing arrangements reduced demands on staff time.

LEA led model involved close partnership working with Cumbria LSC, Connexions and Business & Education consortia.

Pathfinder devolved arrangements to 5 area strategic management groups, each with Area Development Managers to provide independent support and guidance and develop provider collaboration.

Each of the 5 areas reported to a Cumbria-wide Pathfinder steering group, enabling the partnership to include 43 secondary schools, 4 general FE colleges, 1 sixth form college, 2 HE institutions and WBL providers.

Two development seminars were held to promote cultural change and establish collaboration.

A Costings Working Party was established to identify costs required to sustain collaborative practice, transfer successful working arrangements to other initiatives and identify future funding.

Each of the 5 Pathfinder areas signed an Area Concordat – pooling resources and information to minimise duplication county wide.

The Pathfinder management arrangements were formalised into a model for Area Based Strategic Planning of 14-19 provision.

The Outcome

An effective partnership delivery model organised around 5 area working groups with Vocational Programme Area Network Groups supporting the process.

The County Council, LEA and LSC in Cumbria have adopted the Model for Area Based Strategic Planning.

CASE STUDY 2: Collaboration to Improve the Quality and Range of Learning provision in a Rural Area

(Cumbria 14-19 Pathfinder)

The Issue

Cumbria has huge diversity of need and is challenged by several rural issues such as:-

- Low population density
- Limited access to local provision
- Problems recruiting staff with high level vocational experience skills

No single provider could meet all the local learning needs and there were concerns over the quality of some provision.

The Barriers

Improving provision in rural area had practical and developmental problems.

Transport difficulties.

Alternative ways needed to access learning.

Confidence needed building between providers to overcome scepticisms.

The Solution

County divided into 5 area Strategic Management groups/learning zones, based on traditional travel to work and learn areas, to meet specific local priorities.

County-wide online 14-19 database of learning opportunities and progression routes – help provision planning

Also provided IAG for learners

Area Strategic planning model and concordat devised and implemented to promote and guide collaboration
Programme of developmental seminars designed to promote cultural change and successful collaboration and also address resistance.

Partnership working encouraged local schools to broaden vocational options by building on existing specialisms and implementing new schemes to increase access to quality vocational opportunities, e.g. one area supported employment of peripatetic chef to travel round schools tutoring in catering.

The Outcome

Collaborative working arrangement formalised into a model which was adopted by Cumbria's County Council, LEA & LSC as their joint plan on 14-19 provision.

The peripatetic chef model demonstrated value of collaboration to local providers and convinced head teachers to work with local colleagues to improve vocational education.

Chef model expanded to cover all 5 areas and similar travel and tourism model implemented.

Summary of manual provided by

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