



SLN Newsletter 14 — Christmas 2009 Edition

Season's greetings from our Director, Viki Faulkner

2009 has been an exciting year for the SLN, with lots of new staff joining the project, and the launch of a whole new phase of activity, focused on Learners in the workplace. As the Leitch Report pointed out, and reinforced most recently by the UKCES, 70% of the 2020 workforce has already left compulsory education. These are the potential learners who must be the focus of our activities now as we seek to genuinely widen access to higher education.



We are sad to say goodbye to David Percival, from Northbrook College, and Joanne Wright from the University of Sussex. Both of whom have been very active members of the SLN Board over the past few years and strong supporters of the Sussex Learning Network. I would like to thank them warmly for their support and to wish them both well in future ventures. Goodbye and good luck also to Petra Billings of Plumpton College, who steps down as the Chair of the SVPA management group – and thank you to Gerry Griffith of Chichester College, who takes up the baton for the coming year.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Maureen Haywood and her team on the fantastic work they have been doing this year on the Learning Opportunities in the South East service. It is great to see this work recognised and gaining two national awards – more of which later in this newsletter.

The last couple of months have seen the arrival of a dedicated team of Centre for Work and Learning project leads embedded within each of our CWL network partners. This team, introduced in more detail later in the newsletter, are focused on stimulating local employer demand and building institutional capacity to deliver employer responsive provision. This work has much resonance in the recent government strategy paper for HE 'Aiming Higher' which points to the economic imperative of business and higher education working together and creating "greater diversity of models of learning: part-time, work based, foundation degrees and home study" all aspects that we are striving hard to achieve. There is still a significant market for higher level skills. Research confirms that 80% of employers have some need to train at level 4 and above and that this market is worth around £450m per year in employer investments. Yet universities and colleges have only a small fraction of this market. In times of public spending 'fiscal constraint' we have to look towards projects such as the CWL to try to find new ways of working which will be able to provide an attractive and accessible CPD offer for businesses.

So, if 2009 has been an exciting year, then I feel that 2010 will be even more so! The Learning Opportunities team are building ever stronger links with local task forces and working to support those threatened with redundancy; the first delivery of modules under the CWL project begins in February; a complete review of the SVPA and progression accords for learners across Sussex and a review of the progression opportunities for apprentices – in line with the government skills strategy. Exciting times indeed, and none of this could be achieved without building on the strength of the network of networks which makes up the SLN.

I would like to end with a personal note of thanks from myself, to everyone who has contributed to the work of the SLN over this past year, and in years gone by. A network is only as good as the individuals within it – and I have been privileged to meet and work with a wonderful, welcoming, supportive and positive group of people here at the SLN. I thank you for making me feel welcome in my new role, and for making my job so much easier! I hope that you all have a good break and a well earned rest at some point over the holiday period. I look forward to working with you all in 2010.

Viki Faulkner, December 2009

Learning Opportunities in the South East scoops TWO national careers awards for the creation of a unique service for adults

Learning Opportunities in the South East, the local learning and work information service, has won **TWO** prestigious national career awards from the **Institute of Career Guidance** in **TWO** categories. Learning Opportunities was the outright winner of **Working with adults** and Maureen Haywood, Project Director, received a Highly Commended award for **Career Guidance Practitioner of the Year 2009**. Learning Opportunities helps all those with an interest in higher level skills, education and work by providing a wealth of jargon-free information, advice and guidance. It's for people in work, hoping to return to work or about to enter the workforce. The service includes a unique user-friendly and interactive career website and access to a team of experienced career advisers.



Helping people get back to learning

Learning Opportunities recognises and addresses the barriers to higher level learning that many adults experience. For example, fitting study around work and childcare, finding out about financial help, building confidence, finding out about part-time provision, simplifying qualifications and levels and understanding what adults need to do to apply for higher education.

Raising the profile of work related higher education

By bringing together careers advice and work related learning across the nine counties in the South East, Learning Opportunities helps people to use higher education to start, change or develop their careers.

Providing advice about job searching and redundancy

The website has a wide range of useful information and direct web links so that people who are worried about redundancy or actively job hunting can access everything from one place.

Giving personalised help

People who can't find what they need using the website and booklet are welcome to contact the team for one-to-one advice from qualified and experienced careers advisers - info@learning-opportunities.org.uk

www.learning-opportunities.org.uk



The Centre for Work and Learning goes into action

"Generating employer responsive provision at higher education level"

One of the key strands of SLN activity, the Centre for Work and Learning (CWL) is a distinctive and innovative response to the challenge of workforce development. It aims to create a coherent approach to employer engagement that provides a shop-window for the higher education offer, a new and exciting way of delivering learning and a series of support services that underpin the whole package.

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.



Please visit our policy and [research context](#) section of our website for a fuller understanding of the wider issues that underpin the CWL's work.

The Centre's aims

- to develop new provision to meet the needs of the workforce in Sussex and the South East
- to work with and through employers to build a curriculum that is both relevant and sustainable
- to deliver the new provision through co-funded Additional Student Numbers (ASNs) that will be supported by employer contributions
- to plan and deliver a programme of accredited staff development for all those involved in learning at work
- to maintain a research forum for workplace learning that is the basis for publication and sharing good practice
- to work alongside the SVPA Progression and Credit Service to develop new ways of accrediting workplace learning so that it supports progression into and through higher education.
- to promote the whole of this offer to employers, employees and brokers as part of the separately funded [Learning Opportunities in the South East](#).

Our partners

The CWL is a partnership project comprised of the following Higher Education providers:

- [University of Brighton](#)
- [University of Sussex](#)
- [University of Chichester](#)
- [The Open University in the South East](#)
- [Northbrook College](#)
- [Chichester College](#)
- [Sussex Downs College](#)
- [City College Brighton & Hove](#)
- [South Coast College Hastings](#)

To read more about each organisation's plans for the Centre for Work and Learning please click the relevant list item and link through to our website. Full introductions to the new CWL team will follow in the next newsletter in the New Year.