

2nd Interim Evaluation of London's Employability Demonstration Pilots

DRAFT

JHCONSULTING

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Introduction

This paper summarises the headline findings of the London Employability Demonstration Pilots (EDPs) at the second interim evaluation point (31st March 2008), setting them in the wider strategic context of the development of an integrated employment and skills (IES) system.

Drawing on the data provided by 11 pilots, the report highlights the progress of the pilots to the end of March 2008.

The report begins with a snapshot overview of the composite achievement of the pilots against agreed target outputs and, drawing on the data, headlines some of the key outcomes to date (pages 3 – 5).

The report then draws on pilot participants' evaluation returns to explore developments and issues under the headings:

→ **Internal improvements and relationships** (pages 5 - 8)

- Progression (page 5-6)
- Culture change (pages 6 - 8)

→ **External relationships** (pages 8 - 11)

- Recruitment (pages 8-9)
- Work experience(pages 9-10)
- Progression (pages 10-12)

The report ends with a summary of the key challenges that the colleges involved in the pilot feel will need to be met in order to roll out the approaches they have developed to become part of a mainstream culture and approach, and some suggested next steps to maximise the use of evaluation data and feedback (pages 13-14).

Overview

The data below provides a snapshot overview of the progress of the combined achievement of the Employability Demonstration Pilots up to April 2008.

EDP Outcome for all 11 colleges		Composite target	Composite achievement
participants recruited, screened and assessed		908	855
participants with an individual employability plan outlining goals (skills & work), milestones and key actions.		778	672
participants moving into sustainable employment (supported, unsupported, full-time, part-time, self-employment etc.)		306	254
participants moving into Train to Gain as a progression route. These outcomes have only been achieved by 2 colleges: CONEL, 12; South Thames College, 85.		131	97
participants gaining a qualification that is relevant to their employability aim.		741	404
participants moving into further skills development as identified in the employability plan		427	164
participants moving into other relevant destinations – volunteering etc.		162	90
participants continuing their skills development after job entry (other than Train to Gain).		98	92
employers paying for training – identify full cost recovery, part contribution etc.		41	11
Additional profile items chosen as desired outcomes by individual colleges			
PARTICIPANT ACHIEVEMENT			
1 college	Participants expressing confidence about their next steps towards employment	85	18
1 college	Students who have been helped to get a voluntary work placement	Not specified	Not specified
1 college	Participants continue onto higher level skills	40	20
DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY MATERIALS & COURSES			
1 college	Design and deliver 5 short employability courses for learners	5 courses 50 learners	2 courses 40 learners
1 college	Development of work focused materials mapped to ESOL curriculum to support the delivery of the NCFE employability skills qualification		
DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS			
1 college	Raise education and training awareness levels of JCP advisers	15 advisers	40 advisers
1 college	Organise Hackney Community College course information events in collaboration with JCP	2	0
1 college	Design and deliver short pre-college skills and information programmes based in the community	5 courses 30 learners	8 courses 49 learners completed 22 on course
1 college	Provide employability advice and support to mental health service users working with agencies	40 service users 5 agencies	50 service users
IMPACT ON IAG			
1 college	Increased IAG	150	128
1 college	Fully integrated IAG and job brokerage service Matrix accreditation		
1 college	Produce a range of bespoke marketing materials	20,000 leaflets	21,000 leaflets

CULTURE CHANGE			
1 college	Staff members receive specific training in delivering employability	70	70
1 college	Capability building to embed 'employability'		
	→ Seminar programme for staff	25 staff	7 staff
	→ Employability training for staff	10 staff	6 staff
	→ Employability modules delivered within 4 new Progression Diplomas	4 modules	4 modules
	→ ESOL staff trained in 'bespoke' employability training	50 staff	21 staff

It should be noted that the data does **not** reflect the contributions made by individual colleges to the outcomes: some have exceeded their targets very significantly, while others are in the process of achieving or have yet to achieve targets.

Not all colleges provided complete data or data in the format requested. Where this has occurred, care has been taken to ensure that the data is not unduly 'skewed'.

Key Outputs to Date

- **Collectively on or over profile for target achievement**

By 1st April this year, the 11 participating colleges had collectively recruited, screened and assessed over 94% of the overall target number of participants. This means that by July the overall number of participants in the pilots is likely to meet or exceed the initial target. Other achievement outputs are equally encouraging.

	target	% achievement by 1/4/08
participants with an individual employability plan outlining goals (skills & work), milestones and key actions.	778	86.4%
participants moving into sustainable employment (supported, unsupported, full-time, part-time, self-employment etc.)	306	83%
participants moving into Train to Gain as a progression route. NB: These outcomes have been achieved by 2 colleges: CONEL, 12; South Thames College, 85.	131	74%
participants gaining a qualification that is relevant to their employability aim. NB: This target is likely to be exceeded with number of the participants on track to achieve a qualification by July 2008	741	54.5%
participants moving into further skills development as identified in the employability plan	427	38.4%
participants moving into other relevant destinations – volunteering etc.	162	55.5%
participants continuing their skills development after job entry (other than Train to Gain).	98	93.88%
employers paying for training – identify full cost recovery, part contribution etc.	41	26.8%

- **Employment successes well over target** This statistic is particularly impressive given that colleges traditionally do not track and record employment outcomes and destinations. Of course,

many individuals **do** move into employment, but colleges have not had to develop a broad-based internal system to monitor and record this outcome. It appears that the systems that have been developed through the Employability Demonstration Pilots could be further developed and rolled out to other cohorts.

- **A pipeline for Train to Gain and other progression routes** Two colleges have demonstrated how effective employability programmes can be in creating a 'pipeline' into Train to Gain. It is recommended that the strategies and approaches that have been developed to achieve these impressive results are shared with the LSC and other colleges so that this success can be replicated.

It is also strongly recommended that more information is gathered to understand why such a high percentage of participants are continuing their skills development after job entry through routes other than Train to Gain. Is this because participants are ineligible for Train to Gain, the programme does not fit their employer and/or their needs, or due to other factors? How do colleges know that people are continuing – what are the tracking mechanisms and how do they define further skills development?

Another statistic that would benefit from closer analysis is the relatively low number of participants moving into further skills development *as identified in their employability plans*. Is this because suitable provision is not available for them to progress onto, the employability plans are too ambitious and should be reviewed and revised, or due to other factors? Again it would be useful to know what criteria and tracking is being used.

- **Employers paying for training** Whilst there is clearly some progress still to be made in increasing the proportion of full cost recovery provision, the achievement of 25% of target is encouraging, particularly when it is borne in mind that the Pilots are targeted on individuals with the lowest levels of skills and other disadvantages, such as health problems and disabilities. It would be very helpful to identify which employers are paying, whether this is full or part contribution and the level of contribution. In addition, identifying how colleges have encouraged employers to pay would provide useful information that could be disseminated to help drive up employer contributions.
- **Added value targets chosen by the colleges** In general, the colleges have met or significantly exceeded the additional targets they have set themselves under the broad headings of:
 - participant achievement,
 - development of employability materials and courses,
 - development of external relations,
 - impact on IAG, and
 - stimulating culture change within their organisations.

All of the above are important to the development of successful integrated approaches to employment and skills. However, the value of the Pilots as a catalyst in bringing about a culture change within their organisations (rather than viewing the integration of employment and skills as separate to mainstream ways of working) is very encouraging.

Internal improvements and relationships

Progression

Across all pilots, progression routes have been developed for specific cohorts of participants. These include progression routes into employment supported by further training through Train to Gain, further learning and/or employment.

In most instances, however, work has yet to start or is only just beginning to spread to a 'college wide' approach of including employment and skills progression as a twin-track consideration for all students.

Examples:

Capel Manor College continues to concentrate on delivering employability skills across the college to targeted student groups. The School of Floristry has introduced "Employability Drop In Surgeries" once a week for all students who wish to get help with any aspect of either finding a work placement or a more permanent job. These have been so successful that the surgeries will be open longer to capture more students. Work placements have been found for nearly all the Level 1 students and this has been supported by the delivery of a series of workshops to prepare them for their first experience of work. Job coaches will accompany the more vulnerable students in this group for the first few days to ensure that they settle down.

Business Workshops have been delivered to groups of Level 3 students and this will be expanded within the summer term. This is targeted at helping those students who wish to gain the knowledge to set up their own businesses.

Capel Manor College

Culture change

The impact of the pilots as a catalyst for culture change within individual colleges appears to be very varied. In some it has had an enormous impact, whilst in others pilots are still regarded as separate from the mainstream business of the college.

The evaluation returns from colleges have identified some excellent practice in bringing about culture change. Much could be gained by sharing these successful approaches more intensively with colleges that appear to need more support in understanding the benefits of bringing about an organisation-wide culture change.

Examples:

Mapping of course Schemes of Work to Employability Skills is now a course requirement. The checklist they are mapped to has been revamped to align it with the components of the Deloitte's Employability Skills Programme, for which City and Islington College is a Centre.

City & Islington College

The college has introduced generic work experience paperwork which captures both employability and vocational skills learnt on a work experience placement. This is a significant improvement on the existing paperwork.

The School of Floristry has re-organised timetables to reflect the different employability skill needs of their groups. Older students need to have more I.T training whilst the younger students need more work on communication and customer service skills.

Capel Manor College

A draft Employability Strategic Plan has now been completed, initial discussions held with Senior Management Team and information will be provided to staff by mid-April. New Job Descriptions are being prepared to reflect new structure based on Single Point of Access (SPA) model (part of the City Strategy Pathfinder). The SPA is fundamental to the College's Employability Strategic Plan enabling the delivery of seamless progression routes to employment and further learning for our students and external job seekers, providing employers with direct recruitment and training opportunities through a 'one-stop' shop approach.

A bespoke employability training programme has now been designed and will be delivered initially to the Integrated IAG team during Summer Term.

Tower Hamlets College

The college has embedded the use of the employability quality standard across the vocational provision. Skills for Jobs agenda is part of the college strategic plan.

Lambeth College

The College is increasing the profile of employability as a result of the Employability Demonstration Pilot and the ESOL Transitional Funding.

The College has written employability into the curriculum of two adult courses within the Faculty of Arts Community and Leisure studies. As a result of this each student now has a current CV and is undergoing a mock interview.

Two members of College staff have participated in the Deloitte Employability Skills Training Programme and will be rolling out the qualification in Employability Skills from September 2008. It is envisaged that more members of staff will participate in this training over the next year and resources can be increased.

There have been changes to the ESOL Curriculum as a result of adding the preparation for work Courses and delivering the ESOL for work qualifications. Staff awareness of the importance on employability has also been raised by the promotion of these courses and qualifications.

College of NW London

40 students have been given additional employability skills support on Financial Services & Administration (FSA) programme. Employability support has been mapped against the ASDAN accredited qualification framework. The NVQ Level Business Administration course is now mapped against the BTEC Employability skills level 2 qualifications. This project has supported the development of staff in developing more “employment skills” tailored curricula and students to gain improved quality employability skills training.

Although this project has been based in FSA the learning of embedding and contextualising employability skills into vocational curricula has been shared across the organisation. This is supporting **our whole organisational approach to embedding employability skills**. Indirectly this has also contributed to raising awareness amongst learners on vocational programmes that employability skills are essential components of the studies.

More individuals are benefiting from increased opportunities for employment and work experience, for example accounts and retail students at level 1 are gaining placement opportunities. More learners are requesting long term placement or volunteering opportunities. Student focus groups highlighted the importance of employability skills for themselves and requested more involvement with employers

This process has also enabled us to reflect on the synergy of class room employability skills training and the IAG services employment support. We have identified a need to develop improved IAG capacity to support learner transitions into employment. We have conducted a review of student’s services and are in the process of developing an improved Careers/Employment service for current and exited students.

Hackney Community College

We have linked our ‘employability’ provision to our ‘Business Solutions Unit’. Our two employer-facing co-ordinators who arrange work trials and job placements are in the Business Development Team. This means that the ‘package’ sold to businesses is not just skills training through apprenticeships, Train to Gain etc, but includes recruitment as well. By linking these two departments, employers now have a single contact for all their training and recruitment needs. We expect to improve our progressions on to Train to Gain and Apprenticeships for unemployed people and those entering employment at entry level.

The Business Intelligence Manager has run an Employability Agenda workshop for tutors and Business Development Advisors at the Croydon College Staff training day. An Employability Coordinator has now been appointed, working within the Skills for Life directorate and across the whole college.

New ESOL tutors will work with industry sectors making training more relevant to vocational needs.

Croydon SE

The college has a well established coaching ethos, with 60 staff being CEL trained coaches. This approach is most useful for all staff when engaging with trainees about their vocational pathways.

There is a greater awareness in the College of the increasing need to work closely with employers and workplaces. As a result of the pilot staff have also realised that future Train to Gain beneficiaries can be home grown for the workplace by developing employability skills. The link between employer and college is much closer, involving almost daily contact.

CONEL

External relationships

The pilots have continued to strengthen relationships between the colleges and a wide range of organisations in public, voluntary and private sector. The investment that has been needed to develop these relationships is now bringing returns, as the extracts from individual colleges' evaluation submissions illustrate.

Recruitment

In order to engage our target client group we have worked closely with JCP specialist advisors who have an understanding of the provision that is on offer and who are happy to refer clients on to both the retail and the construction pilot programmes.

In addition we work with local community groups, particularly targeting those who work with people with mental health issues. We have marketed our provision locally within the New Addington ward. We have promoted the provision to Prospect Skills Coaches who are also interested in referring clients.

Croydon SEC

A more consistent and effective approach to IAG services and job brokerage has led to a greater number of learners using these services. These services will be further enhanced with the addition of the borough's IAG services, the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service and specialist job broker's Tomorrow's people;

Lambeth College

Engagement programmes for residents who are workless and or mental health service users: Regular visits have been established to attend Jobcentre Plus venues within the Borough to promote awareness and access of information to the pilot, via JCP advisers. We have a good working relationship with JCP advisers providing advisers with updated information on new courses and initiative at the college.

Hackney Community College

Work experience

The Pilot has provided the catalyst for us to begin marketing our pre-employment and workforce development initiatives as a comprehensive package to employers mainly through the BDU and ES. Our new 'Course Guide for Employers' provides comprehensive information with a dedicated single point of contact for all employers so they can promptly be routed to the most relevant service area in the College.

The Temporary Resource Service has enabled us to develop sustainable relationships with employers with over 70% of clients undertaking temporary assignments achieving sustainable employment.

The College's team will become fully integrated with the borough's integrated Hub and Spoke employability model providing a 'no closed doors' approach for job seekers.

The Employment Solutions training team has been relocated within the National Skills Academy for

Financial Services along with the College's BDU team to provide a fully integrated pre-employment and workforce development programme for employers.

Tower Hamlets College

Engagement programmes for residents who are workless and or mental health service users: We have begun to develop volunteering opportunities with Hackney Voluntary Action (HVA) who currently provide monthly surgeries at the college. We will be working in collaboration with HVA to organise student volunteering week in the second half of the summer term. Links have also been made with Sutton House for arts volunteer placements.

The project has consolidated our partnership with East London Business Alliance and we now have a timeline for their training into work scheme (11-13 weeks work placements) which has been extremely useful in facilitating placement.

Hackney Community College

As a result of the Employability Demonstration Pilot the Employability Team and the partners are able to promote the three organisations and begin to develop a one stop approach to contacting employers regarding employment/work experience and the up skilling of employees once in work. Brent in 2 Work in conjunction with CNWL have developed an agreement with Brent council that all work experience placements will be coordinated by the College and clients/students who take part in these placements will be registered with Brent in to Work for further assistance. Currently ongoing work experience placements have been negotiated with the libraries and office positions.

This has been mirrored with Wembley Stadium and a College student has been placed within the Accounts department of the stadium on work experience.

The Employability Team are included on all job vacancies sent out to partners from Job centre Plus and Brent in 2 Work. These are posted on a daily basis on the College Jobs Board and the partners are kept in formed of any interviews planned.

College of NW London

Progression and employer involvement

In terms of future employment, Croydon Council have £3.5bn worth of construction plans in the pipeline, including a large capital regeneration project in New Addington. The College are working in partnership with LB Croydon to set up a BOSS which will provide a training resource for all levels including apprenticeships, 14-19 Diplomas, and Higher Education. The College and the LSC are in discussions with LB Croydon to ensure that a percentage of these jobs will be allocated to local people from priority groups under Section 106. This project will feed directly into these plans and will thus provide local people with pathways to access local job and learning opportunities in this growth area.

Croydon SE

“Value-added” scheme – a meeting has been arranged with the LDA, LSC and ELBA at the end of January to discuss the JobLink Programme and progress made in offering employers an inclusive pre-employment and workforce development model. Through the College’s BDU and workforce development team, a discrete pilot is being planned with ECOVERTFM designing a pre-entry programme as a pipeline to Train2Gain. The College has been approached by JobCentre Plus to use Skills for Jobs as a way of meeting their Local Employment Partnership Scheme and a development meeting has been planned for April 2008

Tower Hamlets College

We are working more closely with employers through the pilot to tackle both skill gaps and preparing trainees for employment. Lessons from pilot are reported to the highly successful North London Train to Gain Consortium providers.

We have identified Employer skills needs in Care through a survey of employers. LEP benefits to the CARE sector discussed with 25 employers

‘Employability’ is seen as a core element of delivery in most programmes and crucial to the development of vocational skills.

The steering group cuts across disciplines and includes JCP and Next Steps as well as employers and therefore allows us to exchange ideas about more generic themes such as ‘employability’. These discussions are rolled out within the college and at Senior curriculum staff meetings. The college structure enables the dissemination of information and ideas.

The project can help advance a model of learning and employment which highlights the person’s whole journey through that process and not just their ‘training course at college’.

The employer has been proactively involved in both developing and delivering the media curriculum. Training has been conducted on the employer’s premises during the weekends which has given learners access to industry standard equipment and helped the employer develop in-house training materials using college resources. In order to maximise resources the college purchased a computer and training software which it located with the employer rather than the college. This meant that learners could use the resource at all times and meant that the employer’s staff were better able to take on a role of learning assistant at times when a college tutor could not be present

CONEL

The College has continued to strengthen its collaborative working with Hackney and the City PCT and key stake holders .This includes:

Developing strategies for addressing the recruitment shortfalls within the Trust and how our learners can take advantage of employment opportunities. We have held regular partnership meetings to explore how our learners can access the Trust employment bank/pool and volunteering opportunities. We will be hosting a joint ‘ Careers in the NHS Trust ‘ fair, targeting Health & Social care & Business and financial service learners. The college has have also negotiated with Homerton Hospital a large number of work

placement opportunities for our learners

We are expanding our relationship on offering Internship opportunities with large city companies. Companies are benefiting from placement and internship opportunities and are keen on developing this further. Employers have commented on how they have enjoyed working with our learners.

The project has extended the College's link with employers for employment opportunities and work placements. Companies include: Whitting Hospital, Black Londoners Forum, Weavers Restaurant, London Borough of Hackney, Social Action For Health, Argos, John Lewis, Tesco and Homerton Hospital.

The pilot is changing employer perception of working with the education sector and are beginning to value this partnership as an important asset

Hackney Community College

By linking the Train to Gain programme with the funding to pay for a Routeway Broker at St Georges Hospital (employability demonstration project funds) we have been able to ensure that all the learners on the programme are employment focused and that all their needs are addressed. This includes help with employability skills, for example interview skills, Skills for Life numeracy and literacy and ESOL. We now offer Skills for Life courses at the Hospital for all staff, not just those undertaking the NVQ course.

South Thames College

A substantial improvement has occurred in the partnership working between the College and the Council both of whom represent the largest employers in Merton apart from the NHS. Employability is a key LAA target for the Council and officers have been working with the college to use council infrastructure and human resources to consolidate and extend the employment opportunities for local people. This is proving to be very successful and in the area of childcare will address a skills gap locally

Merton College.

Employers were invited to an employers' forum where they had the opportunity of meeting each other and hearing about other ways that they could get involved with college activities. As a result some have come in to the college to give talks to learners and we have been able to interest some employers in Train to Gain.

Through this increased engagement with employers the pilot has proved to be a catalyst for developing a college-wide database of employer engagement. This means that the college can coordinate its approaches to employers and keep a track of which employers are actively engaged and how.

CAPEL MANOR

‘Mainstreaming’ the approach

Whilst the positive impact that the Pilots are making in introducing employability as a key element across the curriculum is clear, there are still major challenges that remain to be tackled. These include:

- Consistency and coherence of approach across different departments within colleges to ensure that employability is sufficiently embedded and mainstreamed
- The role of Routeway Broker has been extremely important. The key challenge will be to find ways of sustaining this resource intensive role to continue with this level of support. This includes not only funding for additional capacity where needed, but identifying where the routeway broker role can be taken by existing staff (which may involve professional development).
- Providing sufficient and appropriate IAG, assessment and planning capacity to cope with the demands of Individual Employability Planning
- Incorporating the true facilitation of employment opportunities within the role of IAG, as opposed to offering ‘just’ advice
- Providing sufficient resource and developing effective mechanisms for tracking and monitoring outcomes for learners.

It is these challenges that both the LSC and colleges need to address as priorities over the coming months to ensure that the ground breaking developments of the Pilots are assimilated into the culture and mainstream provision of colleges.

Taking the evaluation results forward

It is not just the colleges that need to focus on mainstreaming the change and outputs created by the pilots. Whilst not part of the evaluation reports produced by colleges, it is recognised that if the significant learning points raised by the pilots are to have lasting impact, this must be supported by mainstreaming within the LSC (and other agencies where appropriate).

In order to get the maximum impact from this evaluation point, it is recommended that the results of the evaluation are considered and taken forward in the following ways. Different actions suggested for the various aspects of evaluation information are outlined below. These are not intended as an exhaustive list, but to provide a starting point for more effective use of evaluation information.

For overall findings from **across** the pilots:

- Feed into development of Integrated Employment and Skills Trial development, including sharing with regional partners
- Use at the regional Employability Group meetings to stimulate ideas and actions for pan-region development, including how to use evaluation information in the mainstream review, planning and

procurement processes of the LSC

- Use in staff development sessions to help identify how LSC staff can facilitate the dissemination and mainstreaming of successful pilot approaches into the development of the provider base

Information from individual evaluation reports:

- Feed the combined reports from EDPs in a sub-region into **sub-regional planning** of employability development, including Skills for Jobs, Employability Skills programme and 'learner responsiveness' funded provision. Similarly for Train to Gain and Apprenticeships.
- Use the information from individual reports in discussions with colleges about their mainstream provision and about tendered for provision including Skills for Jobs, the Employability Skills Programme, Train to Gain etc.
- Feed in relevant information from individual reports into the planning and allocations discussions.

The results from this evaluation, and consideration of that we are now in the final stage of pilot delivery, should also be used to inform the key questions that are reported on at the June evaluation point.

Appendix: EDP Colleges

1. Capel Manor College
2. City & Islington College
3. College of North East London (CONEL)
4. College of North West London (CNWL)
5. Croydon SEC
6. Hackney College
7. Lambeth College
8. Merton College
9. South Thames College
10. Southwark College
11. Tower Hamlets College