

Analysing what works: current collaborations

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Flexibility & Diversity

- No one model of 'access collaboration' post Aimhigher and Lifelong Learning Networks
- No clear national picture
- Appear to be significant differences in size, aims, activities, members and funding

Some emerging models

- Third sector led
- 'Quasi- third sector/HE based'
- HEI school sponsoring arrangements
- HEI: school compact/quasi-compacts
- School/LA/academy provider led...???

The new 'market' in collaboration

- **Advantages**
- Responsiveness to local needs
- Allows innovation
- Some deeper collaboration
- Allows new players to enter with new ideas

The new 'market' in collaboration

- **Disadvantages**
- Not systematic or equal with a real 'postcode lottery'
- Lack of agreed standards of practice or recourse to evidence
- Institutional/organisational not learner led
- Does not feature schools as equal players

Regulating the market?

- OFFA constructs a framework to regulate what HEIs do
- Does it have enough 'carrot' and 'stick'?
- It does not have a role where other stakeholders are concerned
- Very weak regulation of what schools do

Re-structuring the market?

- Would regulation work?
- Investment in a more systematic, evidence based framework is needed to underpin what the market does
- Not state led (2000s) not HEI led (2011 -), but third sector/civil society led ...?

An Access Endowment

- Time-limited investment
- Infrastructure to underpin the market
- Ensure equal and systematic support for all learners
- Produce a 'multiplier effect' in more efficient and effective practice
- Be led by the third sector/civil society organisations
- Have a regional and national dimension

An Access Endowment

- Named, trained network of Access Advocates in all schools
- Regional collaborative data collection and tracking of learners to HE
- Cross-sector forums to work with key access target groups
- **Develop professionalisation and ensure quality of access work**

NEON (National Education Opportunities Network)

- Founded in early 2012
- New professional organisation for those working on widening access to HE
- Independent, self financing, **cross sector**, open with wide definition of access
- www.educationopportunities.co.uk

NEON Aims

- To increase the professionalization of widening access work through the development & accreditation of practice.
- To be a research and advocacy resource for those working in access at the local, regional and national level.
- To develop institutional quality standards in widening access work.
- To offer input and support to policy makers and government from the widening access community.

NEON: Progress so far

- 4 'Supporting Practice' Events with 150 attendees
 - 50% HE: 50% non-HE
- Weekly NEON News
- Building links with partner organisations
- Interim constitution and committee established

NEON: Present and Future

- Over 250 members – **FREE** to join up until September
- Being taken forward by collective work of those in the access community
- Paid membership offer and full programme of events and activities being planned for 2012-13

NEON 2012-13

- Supporting Practice Events in Autumn – HEFCE toolkits
- Working groups launched
- NEON News
- NEON Policy Bulletins
- Thematic events Spring 2013
- PG Level Professional Access Qualification Early 2013

Making the market work

- Coverage and quality have to be guaranteed across sectors
- Will need more than regulation
- Community has to organise itself
- Government should meet us halfway