Support & Recognition for Widening Participation Practitioners

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Executive Summary

Background

The outcomes from the Dearing (1997) and Bett (1999) reviews alerted institutions, funding agencies and the Government to the need to focus on improvements in human resource management and staff development. A report to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) found that: "*human resource management has become embedded in institutional strategic planning frameworks (although there is still some way to go)*" (HEFCE, 2005a:4). The report also noted that by investing and developing staff, institutions would be better placed to meet student needs.

HEFCE have recognised the importance of building research capacity in widening participation through its work with the ESRC (HEFCE, 2005b), funding a suite of research projects. This study highlights the value and need to see research capacity building as including the provision of appropriate professional development for WP practitioners.

Within the context of access to and retention in further and higher education; supporting, developing and recognising the diverse staff groups who work in this area is critical to sustaining and embedding widening participation across the education sector.

Aims

It was in this context that this scoping study on support and recognition for widening participation practitioners was commissioned by the Higher Education Academy. It aims to:
- identify the existing accreditation opportunities to support widening participation practitioners;
- identify and explore potential unmet recognition and accreditation needs;
- develop proposals as to how such practitioners could be supported.

Methodology

There were three elements to the scoping study: firstly a web based review of the existing provision of training and learning opportunities for widening participation practitioners with the aim to establish the amount and type of training and learning currently available. Secondly an online survey of widening participation practitioners, which aimed to establish the roles and backgrounds of practitioners, the learning and training that they had already received, training and learning opportunities they felt they needed and the likelihood of the practitioners responding engaging in further learning and training. Thirdly, a workshop attended by invited stakeholders and practitioners was held, aiming to interrogate the results of the survey and agree proposals for the future of this work.

Findings

The report identifies a clear need for further development and support from the majority of practitioners; a demand which is supported by those who have

identified themselves as senior managers. Practitioners want to engage in further professional development and learning but they want those learning opportunities to be more focussed on their specific needs, and delivered at a time and place appropriate to them and their context.

This report identifies important yet subtle differences between formal and informal learning for practitioners. In a rapidly changing policy environment most learning by practitioners is informal and takes place in the workplace, and at conferences and workshops. The survey shows that the majority of practitioners would like to have their learning formally recognised or accredited in order to accumulate credit leading to a professional or academic qualification. In developing learning and training provision for WP practitioners, providers need to take these requirements into account.

Comments and proposals

The report concludes with comments and proposals for taking the scoping study forward:

- A proposal to funders and agencies with a staff development remit for WP practitioners to create a single unified web-based directory of learning and training opportunities to enable practitioners to take full advantage of the existing provision.

- A proposal to funders, learning providers and practitioners for a number of pilot sites to be established based on existing sites of formal and informal learning. These should pilot different content and delivery methods as well as seeking to overcome barriers to learning.

- A proposal to funders, accreditation bodies and learning providers to establish an effective credit framework for WP practitioners through the pilot sites.

- A proposal to funders and researchers to develop an evaluation of the pilot sites and to develop a suitable credit framework.

Introduction

This report contains the findings of a scoping study commissioned by the Higher Education Academy and carried out by Continuum, the Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies at the University of East London.

The aims and objectives of this scoping study have been:
- to identify the existing accreditation opportunities to support widening participation practitioners;
- to identify and explore potential unmet recognition and accreditation needs;
- to develop proposals as to how such practitioners could be supported.

The scoping study was in 3 sections, a web based review of existing provision of training and learning opportunities for widening participation practitioners; an online survey of widening participation practitioners; and a workshop attended by invited stakeholders and practitioners. More detail on the methods employed in each will be presented at the start of each section of the report.

In seeking to identify provision the scoping study recognises that learning and training opportunities may be defined along a continuum ranging from informal learning to formal learning. We define formal learning as being intentional, where the learner follows a structured programme provided by training organisation or institution leading to certification. Informal learning, on the other hand, is typically unstructured and does not lead to certification. Learning may result from work or other activities, and in most cases it is not intentional on the part of the learner.

There are a number challenges in researching informal learning. As Eraut (2004) has noted, informal learning is either taken for granted or not recognised by respondents. Most people still equate learning with more formal education and training and assume that work and learning are separate activities.

Practitioners working in widening participation come from very different institutions and often work in many different specialist areas. In the survey, respondents worked for HE institutions, LEAs, FE institutions, Connexions and Aimhigher, and were performing a whole range of roles including outreach work; information, advice and guidance; senior managerial roles and disability support as well as many others. However, they can be united through their commitment to inclusion in higher education and by their shared knowledge and experiences, which can bring them together in a community of practice.

This scoping study is focused on practitioners located in higher education. There is, however, a need to work in partnership across traditional sector divides in order to build better support and recognition for all WP practitioners. Learning opportunities created will need to encompass formal and informal learning to allow practitioners the flexibility that they need to develop as professionals in a dynamic educational landscape.

This report will now discuss the findings of the web based review of existing provision, followed by a detailed discussion of the findings of the survey of widening participation practitioners. It will then summarise the discussions and outcomes of the workshop of key stakeholders before producing a series of comments on all the findings and proposals for future developments in conclusion to this report.

Existing Training and Learning Opportunities for WP Practitioners

Methodology

Desk-based research was carried out to identify existing training and learning opportunities for widening participation (WP) practitioners. An extensive internet based search was made of organisations and universities, looking for training and learning opportunities that they provided. This was based on a report commissioned by the Higher Education Academy on Learner Support Professionals (Pierce, 2006), using the list of organisations identified in the report, and searching the websites of universities, training organisations, Aimhigher at national, regional, area and local levels, Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) and other organisations for information about any training courses or learning opportunities currently offered.

Findings

This section will give an overview of the learning and training opportunities found during the web-based searches. Firstly it will cover academic courses that may be relevant to practitioners (listed in Appendix 1); then it will go on to discuss the types of training provided by Aimhigher, LLNs and other training providers; before outlining some of the informal learning opportunities that are available to WP practitioners. This review covers external providers of training and deliberately excludes training and learning opportunities provided for practitioners by their employers, which are many and varied but are often challenging to find information about externally.

Academic Courses

Academic courses relating specifically to WP are very unusual; however there are a number of courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that contain one or module either specifically on WP or on issues that are very relevant to many WP practitioners. There is a full list of courses identified in Appendix 1. There are a large number of undergraduate courses in Education Studies (or similar) based in HEIs across the country, however a few contain more focus on issues of WP and social exclusion, such as the BA Race & Ethnic Studies and Education at the University of Central Lancashire, the BA Education, Culture and Society at Goldsmiths College, University of London and the BA in Community Education at the University of Dundee. As with many of the postgraduate courses; the Dundee BA is available through work based learning (WBL) allowing practitioners to make use of their experience and daily practice.

Many of the postgraduate courses identified are not directly aimed at WP practitioners, but can be broadly classified into three categories: education management; specific courses closely related to WP issues in HEIs; and general masters in education with more focus on either sociology of education and inclusion agendas or on HE level education. Nearly all the postgraduate courses listed in the directory are available with a number of exit points and modes of study: they can lead to postgraduate diplomas, certificates and to full masters courses and most can be studied either full or part-time. Many have teaching in

the evenings or weekends and some use work based, distance or e-learning to allow flexible delivery to practitioners working and studying at the same time.

Management related courses that are specific to HEIs are quite unusual, but the Institute of Education, University of London offers an MBA in Higher Education Management; and the University of Sussex offers an MA (or Postgraduate Diploma) in the Management of Change, aimed specifically at education and social work and social care professionals. These courses are both aimed at practitioners with management experience, who want to certificate it, rather than new managers wanting support.

Three postgraduate level courses are aimed specifically at WP practitioners; the PG Diploma in Community Education at the University of Dundee; the MA in Higher and Professional Education at the Institute of Education, University of London and the Postgraduate Certificate in Leading and Researching Widening Participation at the University of Liverpool. All specifically target WP practitioners in recruitment and have a large component of the course on WP. The other courses specifically relating to WP and allied areas are nearly all modules on wider courses rather than whole courses. These include the MSc in Teaching in Lifelong Learning at Birkbeck, University of London; the MA in Education, Culture, Language and Identity at Goldsmiths College, University of London; the MA in Education Studies at the University of Sussex and the MSc in Lifelong Learning at the University of Stirling, which is a distance learning only programme, delivered via the internet. Many other masters courses in Lifelong learning at other institutions cover the broad areas which overlap between lifelong learning and WP, but many focus more on further education than higher education. Another course that may be of use to WP practitioners, although not aimed specifically at them is the Postgraduate Certificate in Partnership Working at the University of Bournemouth, which can be combined with another masters level module available there on Widening Participation Support Studies.

The third, more general group of postgraduate courses are those which are strong on providing academic sociological and philosophical debates, theories and policy analyses, however these rarely have modules related to WP and most are not specifically focused at the post-compulsory part of the sector. Examples include the MSc in Education at University of Edinburgh; and the MA in Educational Studies at the University of Glamorgan. These provide a more academic and less practical, experience based masters level education.

Training Programmes

There are many providers of training, but much of it is not aimed specifically at WP practitioners; for example, most employers will offer equality and diversity training to their employees, but often not at the level of sophistication required by those working in WP. Excluding employers, the main providers of training opportunities are Aimhigher networks, nationally, regionally and at area and local levels; and LLN networks which are developing new training provision available both for their own staff and practitioners working in related disciplines, including WP. All information in this section was found from searches of websites and therefore there is no guarantee that all planned training has been carried out, or that it was effectively targeted at the practitioners who could benefit most from it.

Little training is organised by Aimhigher nationally, although the Achieve Ability programme (relating to students with specific learning difficulties) has a national disability awareness programme for Aimhigher staff. The degree of activity at a regional level within Aimhigher seems to vary widely. The East of England region has records of an extensive training programme, with workshops for practitioners in their region on a range of topics including: event management; press, publications and advertising; disability; mentoring; vocational pathways from apprentice to HE; engaging with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs); foundation degrees; working with schools; working with communities; sustainability of WP projects; and aspiration raising. This extensive list of training was larger than any other region providing information on the websites, although other areas providing some training courses included the North East, the North West, the South West, the West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber regions. All these provided details of training and often many other resources on their practitioner websites. Other regions appear not to provide regional level training programmes, but work more at an area or local level to provide training to Aimhigher staff and others.

Despite the extensive training at a regional (East of England) level, Aimhigher Hertfordshire also appears to run some specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses as well as having a dedicated practitioner site for resource sharing. In London, the ASPIRE group (South East London Aimhigher) has a series of academic and training courses based around the universities involved in the network, some of which are not organised by the network, but which are promoted extensively by them. Aimhigher Greater Merseyside offers a range of practitioner resources on the website, but most training advertised is that offered by the North West Region rather than the Merseyside area. A number of area organisations including Kent and Medway, Sussex and the West Midlands region have password protected sites containing resources for their practitioners. They may also contain other information on training opportunities, but this has not been possible to ascertain in the available time.

It is therefore clear from this search of all Aimhigher websites that there is great variability between different regions and areas in terms of the training available to Aimhigher staff and associates. Whilst much of what goes on is very valuable, it would be useful to have a national or regional overview of training opportunities for all practitioners engaged in WP whether employed by Aimhigher or not. There is little evidence at the moment of training being provided by the LLNs, however as these develop, many have created budgets for providing training and an integration of this with existing Aimhigher training, where appropriate, would allow greater benefits for all practitioners in WP and in LLNs. There has also been an LLN practitioner group established, which is intended to act as a forum for sharing good practice and policy developments across the country, although again this is in the early stages of development.

Informal Learning Opportunities

WP practitioners often have access to many informal learning activities in their working practice. These can include informal and *ad hoc* on-the-job training and information sharing to attending conferences and workshops that are not

accredited or recognised. A number of different conference-type events have been identified throughout the year that offer learning opportunities for WP practitioners. Some are academic in focus, such as the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) annual conference and the Action on Access annual conference and some are more practical, sharing best practice and providing policy updates such as the Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA) Annual Conference; the Foundation Degree Forward (FDF) Annual Conference and other local and regional Aimhigher based annual conferences.

This review of learning and training opportunities has shown that there are a number of existing opportunities available for WP practitioners, however the accessibility of these varies geographically and the availability of information on the options available is very mixed. In developing more opportunities for WP practitioners' CPD it will be important to provide more unified information sources either at a regional or national level on both the training and academic learning opportunities available, because it is currently very difficult to find information on all the opportunities available.

Online Survey of Widening Participation Practitioners

Aims

The survey aimed to investigate the type of training that WP practitioners had already received in terms of delivery and content, find out about their previous education levels and any current learning they are undertaking. From this, the survey asked about the sorts of additional skills, knowledge and learning that WP practitioners required, and investigated their responses to the idea of providing accreditation opportunities and training through various flexible learning routes. The survey also investigated the extent to which WP practitioners felt that their work was recognised, and whether felt they were integrated into and supported by the institutions they worked for. Following a brief outline of the methods used, this section will present the survey findings in three sections: firstly providing an overview of who the respondents were; secondly their previous education, learning and training experiences; and then thirdly the learning and training that they would like to receive in the future. The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 2.

Methodology

Given the limited timescale to undertake the scoping study it was decided to administer the survey online. The questionnaire was advertised electronically in a number of ways: emails were sent initially to Aimhigher Area and Regional contacts through the Action on Access email lists alerting them to the survey and asking these key gatekeepers to recommend the survey to their contacts. This was followed up by an email sent out on both the Aimhigher and Action on Access JISC mail lists, which together contain just fewer than 1200 members. Over the period of five weeks from 07/08/06 to 11/09/06 when the survey was live, the project team continued to send weekly reminder emails to these two main email lists. In addition, information was sent to the Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA) mailing list and was posted on the websites of the Higher Education Academy, Continuum, Action on Access, Aimhigher Practitioner website, Aimhigher Southwest website, and the FACE website; information was also placed in the Action on Access monthly bulletin and the Aimhigher practitioner newsletter. This extensive electronic advertising produced a total of 276 responses from the population, estimated from available information to be approximately 1400 people, meaning this survey had an estimated response rate of approximately 20%. As this survey was conducted during August and September the response rate from certain groups may have been lower due to the summer holidays.

Survey Respondents

This section will present a profile of the 276 respondents to the online questionnaire, to breakdown their demographic characteristics and details of their current and previous employment to illuminate the background of respondents before discussing their professional development; training and learning experiences and needs. All data comes from the online survey, with quotations taken from the answers to several open, textual questions.

Table 1 divides the respondents into 3 categories roughly according to their managerial responsibilities, based on job titles and key responsibilities provided in answers to questions one and two.

Table 1. Managerial Level of Responsibility		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Non-Management	119	43
Middle Management	117	42
Senior Management	38	14
Other	2	1
Total	**276**	**100**

It is clear that there are roughly equal numbers of non-managers and middle managers, with relatively smaller numbers of senior managers. Some respondents who are managed by people who do not work in WP consider the small number of senior managers in WP a problem:

> *'Most academics see the role as inferior to their own and yet feel that they know as much as us about WP'*

> *'I am currently being line managed by someone who has no idea what Aimhigher is all about even after explaining several times at away days and team meetings… One lives in hope she will understand soon.'*

However others are quite happy with their managerial responsibilities and the independence it gives them:

> *'As a middle manager with my own budgets I have a great degree of control over what I do…'*

The age profile of respondents (table 2) is skewed towards the younger end of the age spectrum, and when this is cross-tabulated with managerial responsibilities there is a direct correlation with younger respondents holding less managerial responsibilities, although there are some respondents in the oldest categories working in non-managerial positions, many as part time or retirement jobs. This population age structure seems fairly typical of the WP population as a whole but is not typical of the higher education (HE) sector, which is more dominated by the older age groups. Age of practitioners is also clearly correlated to their inclination to do further training as the following quotations illustrate, older respondents feel less inclined to invest in further training:

> *…I am 52 anyway and having only just done my Masters would not see the advantage of doing further higher level accredited study.'*

Table 2. How old are you?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
21-35	118	43
36-50	97	35
Over 50	60	22
Information withheld	1	0
Total	**276**	**100**

The gender of respondents (table 3) is predominantly female (78%). This reflects the distribution of people working in support roles in universities and colleges. A cross-tabulation of gender and job title emphasises this, with the only job group with equal numbers of men and women being the academic category. However this is better than the sector percentage as a whole, where academics are only 41% female (HESA, 2005). Some respondents recognised this in their comments:

> *'The education sector is quite sexist, many of my colleagues in other universities are women, but as soon as I meet their bosses they are often men.'*

Table 3. Are you male or female?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Male	57	21
Female	216	78
Information withheld	3	1
Total	**276**	**100**

Table 4 shows that the vast majority of respondents are also from the first generation in their family to attend HE (72%). Therefore we can suggest that many people working in WP fit the profile of the target populations for WP activity. When cross-tabulated with age, it is also clear that the younger generation of WP practitioners are more likely to have parents with experience of HE, suggesting the success of widening access to HE over the last 40 years.

Table 4. Did either or both your parents/ guardians attend higher education?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Yes	74	27
No	199	72
Information withheld	3	1
Total	**276**	**100**

Table 5 shows that 8% of respondents have a disability, this is likely to be higher than the sector average, and again reflects that people from groups who do not traditionally attend HE often work in the WP field.

Table 5. Do you have a disability		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Yes	22	8
No	246	89
Information withheld	8	3
Total	**276**	**100**

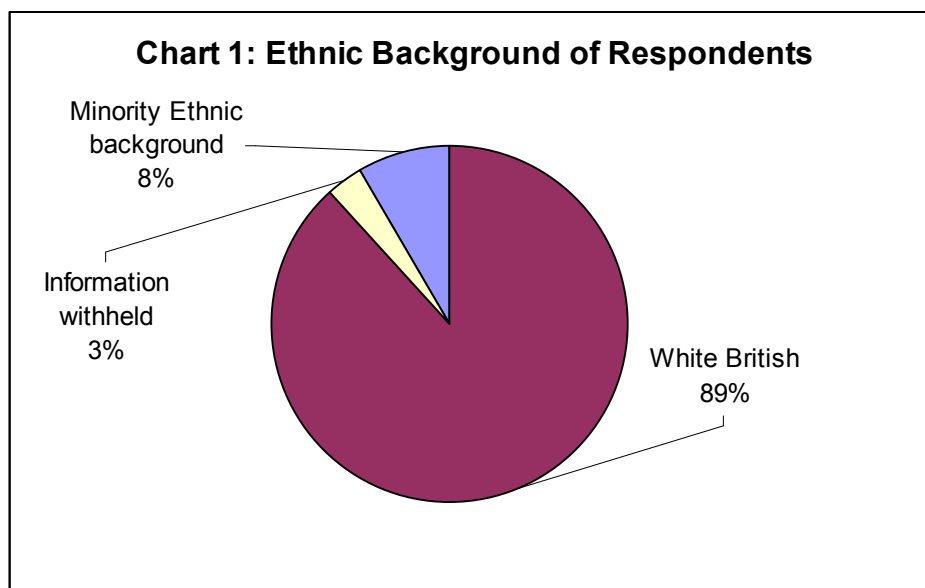**Chart 1: Ethnic Background of Respondents**

Chart 1 shows that 8% of respondents are from minority ethnic (ME) groups. These three statistics on 1st generation HE participation, disability and ethnic background suggest that many people working in WP are likely to have benefited from WP initiatives (or their predecessors) themselves and have come from non-traditional backgrounds into HE. This may provide an example for other parts of the HE sector, where the recruitment of staff from minority groups often proves difficult.

Table 6 shows that most people have been in their job for between one and five years. This is partly a function of the length of time that Aimhigher funding has existed and the relatively short term contracts that many WP practitioners operate on, but could also be a function of the relatively young age of respondents, as the time in the job is directly correlated to the age of the respondent.

Table 6. How long have you been in your current job?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Less than 6 months	23	8
6 months to 1 year	28	10
1 to 2 years	80	29
2 to 5 years	101	37
More than 5 years	44	16
Total	**276**	**100**

The type of employment contract (table 7) that a practitioner is on can affect the way they feel about their employer and their future in the job. Just under half (43%) of respondents are not on a permanent contract, which may reflect the current uncertainty in the sector regarding the continuation of Aimhigher funding. This could make respondents very unwilling to invest time and effort through learning and training in an uncertain future. There is also a clear relationship between age and type of employment contract. Those aged below 35 and over 55 are significantly more likely to be on a fixed or temporary contract.

Table 7. What kind of contract are you on?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Permanent	153	56
Fixed Term	111	40
Temporary	9	3
Other	2	1
Total	**275**	**100**

Many respondents expressed a concern about the number of fixed term and temporary contracts within Aimhigher and the WP sector as a whole; they linked this to the funding system and the degree to which Aimhigher is dependent upon political support. They also felt that the lack of permanent contracts discouraged people from investing in their own learning and personal development:

> *'My biggest concern, with this and previous employers, has been the number of WP positions which are fixed term based on funding which runs out. This is bad for me professionally, but also bad for me as a practitioner, as I cannot deliver a sustainable service.'*

> *'Since the post I am in is fixed term it is difficult to predict what I will be doing in 2 years time, should I stay here that long. I have investigated the opportunity of enrolling for an MPhil in Education which I had thought of funding myself, but there may be opportunities for funding from within the department, however I am not sure I have the commitment to work at this level since the post is not permanent.'*

> *'It is difficult to make a long-term commitment to further training and development when on a relatively short fixed-term contract'*

> *'I think it's tricky. It's very fluid with large turnover of staff, very short term (i.e. funding for posts) and needs embedding and taking seriously by HEIs by committing to permanent posts.'*

The vast majority of respondents were employed by an HE institution (see table 8), and only 20% were employed outside the HE sector. The distribution between pre and post 1992 institutions is almost equal, showing that WP is now being worked on throughout the sector.

Table 8. Please select the type of organisation that employs you		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Post 1992 HE Institution	118	43
Pre 1992 HE Institution	104	38
LEA or Equivalent	22	8
FE College or School	16	6
Aimhigher (directly)	5	2
Connexions	5	2
Other	6	2
Total	**276**	**100**

Table 9. Did you work in the area of WP in your previous job?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	20
Partly	86	31
No	134	49
Total	**276**	**100**

Respondents' employment histories (table 9) will affect the training and learning requirements that they have, and whilst half had a previous job outside the WP sector, the other half of respondents had worked either directly or partly in roles associated with WP. This suggests that those with significant experience in the sector will have different training and learning needs to those coming from outside WP; however some respondents felt that their employers did not value their experience from previous jobs:

> *'There is little acceptance of the skills of others. I am also a lecturer, child protection specialist and active researcher and yet most relevant training work goes "outside" to people who don't understand the context'*

Chart 2: Do you feel integrated into your institution?
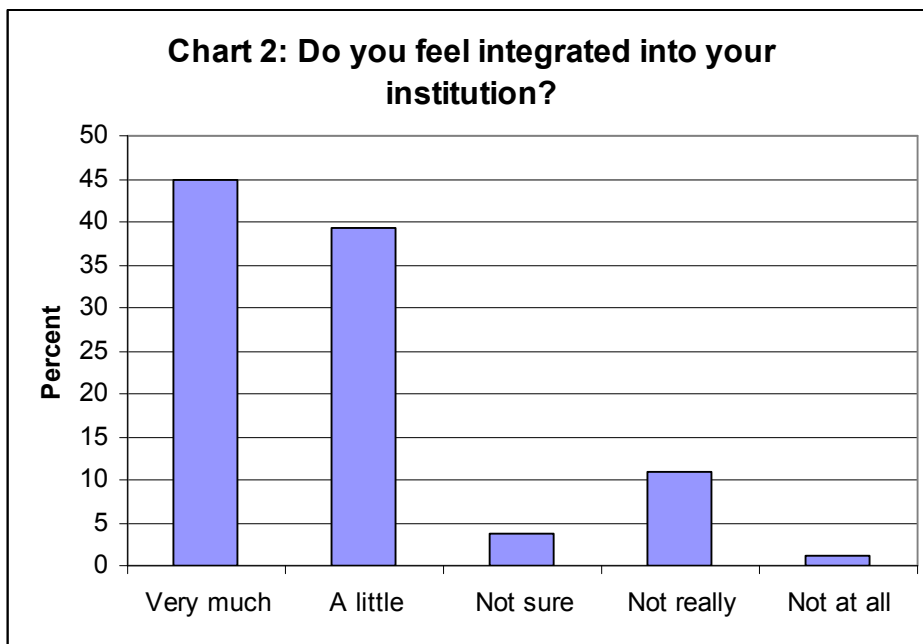
Respondents were asked about the degree to which they felt integrated into their institutions and the degree to which they felt their work was recognised as an important part of the work of the HEI. The vast majority of respondents felt that their work was recognised and that they were integrated either a little or very much as shown in charts 2 and 3. They also made this clear in their comments:

> *'I am very well supported and recognised at this university and am encouraged to take opportunities.'*

> *'My employer is supportive and values the personal development of individuals.'*

Chart 3: Does your institution recognise your work in WP as an important part of the work of the institution?
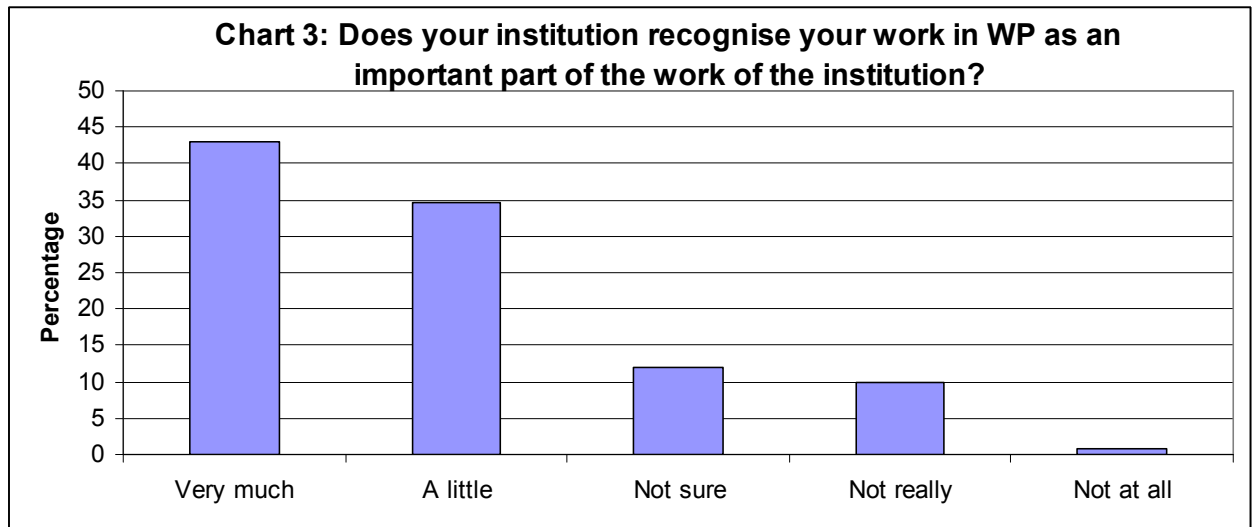
However over 10% of respondents did not feel either recognised or integrated into their institutions, and these were very vocal in their comments, making the up the vast majority of people commenting on their recognition and integration:

> *'I don't feel that WP is valued by my institution and strongly believe that their commitment is mainly lip service from the higher levels at the University. As a result I don't feel that this is a long term career although I would like it to be. My best case scenario would be that WP becomes integral to education and that training is offered so that people can make a career of it.'*

> *'Whilst our work is recognised, the section I work in is not regarded as part of teaching and learning. At present [we are] in discussion with senior management [about the] position of section. Although on a permanent contract, funding annually gives a feeling of insecurity and a lack of recognition.'*

> *'Recognition of the work I do... is low.'*

> *'I would like the university to recognise us more.'*

> *'It would be good to have recognition of the impact of the work we do here on the wider university community'*

This section has made it clear that the respondents to our survey are a diverse group of people who have come from different backgrounds and experiences to work in WP. Some may have benefited from a WP agenda themselves in accessing HE, and from their comments, many demonstrate a passionate commitment to the aims and objectives of WP. It is also clear from the comments above, however, that some do not feel integrated into, or recognised by the institutions that they work for. This may prevent practitioners from investing in further training and personal development work.

Previous Education, Learning and Training

This section will consider the education levels of respondents, their current learning and study activities and the training and other learning opportunities that have had in the past, as well as those that they have not gone to.

As table 10 indicates, the vast majority of respondents have achieved at least an undergraduate degree, and 57% of respondents have some form of postgraduate qualification ranging from a postgraduate diploma to a doctorate. This indicates that in planning further training and learning opportunities, it may be necessary to provide them at postgraduate level, to allow staff to progress educationally.

Table 10. What is the highest level of qualification that you have achieved?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
'A' level or level 3 equivalent	10	4
Undergraduate Degree or level 4 equivalent	109	39
Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma	58	21
Masters level or level 5 equivalent	71	26
PhD or Professional Doctorate	28	10
Total	**276**	**100**

25% of respondents are currently engaging in some form of further study, tables 11 and 12 indicate the levels and subjects being studied. Table 11 shows that of those who are engaged in further study, 51% are studying for a qualification at postgraduate certificate, diploma or masters level; a further 25% are studying at undergraduate level and 9% for a doctorate. Cross-tabulations show that those people who are currently studying feel they are more likely to undertake further study opportunities in the future and to look for accreditation for these opportunities. They are also more likely to envisage themselves working in WP in 3 years time than other groups.

Table 11. Level of further study being pursued		
	Count	**Percent**
GCSE level or level 2 equivalent	1	1
'A' level or level 3 equivalent	2	3
Undergraduate Degree or level 4 equivalent	17	25
Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma	12	17
Masters level or level 5 equivalent	23	33
PhD or Professional Doctorate	6	9
Other	6	9
Level Unspecified	4	6
Total	**71**	**103**

Table 12 clearly shows that whilst only 7% of respondents who are studying at the moment are taking courses directly relevant to WP activities, approximately 50% are studying in the area of education or management generally, which can be considered to be generally relevant to their jobs in WP. Some felt that the courses they were studying were relevant to their job:

> *'As an HEI employee I was given access to funded place on Master programme and given time off to attend the part-time learning. This was a brilliant opportunity and I was able to focus on WP as part of my*

degree in social sciences as I placed the learning in the context of social policy and sociology of education.'

Table 12. Subject of further study being undertaken		
	Count	Percent
WP Related	5	7
Information, Advice and Guidance	5	7
PGCE/ Teaching qualification	3	4
Education generally	11	16
Management related	11	16
Research methods	3	4
Other subjects	18	26
Subject unspecified	15	22
Total	**71**	**103**

However, others felt that their learning would be more useful for their professional development if they could find subjects closer to the WP area in which they worked:

'My employer has been flexible in allowing me to continue with my part time degree which I commenced prior to taking up employment in WP. However I do not know how or where to identify WP/education specific training and everyone I work with has years of experience in education so does not need it.'

'Having completed the first third of my MA in Education I am keen to complete the full award, however, I want to make the modules most applicable to the work I do and I can't find any based on WP/access work'

Chart 4 gives details of the types of training that respondents had attended or not from a pre-prepared list offered on the survey. It is clear that most people had attended training on equality and diversity, disability, health and safety and child protection; however fewer people had had the opportunity to attend courses on event management or project funding and sustainability.
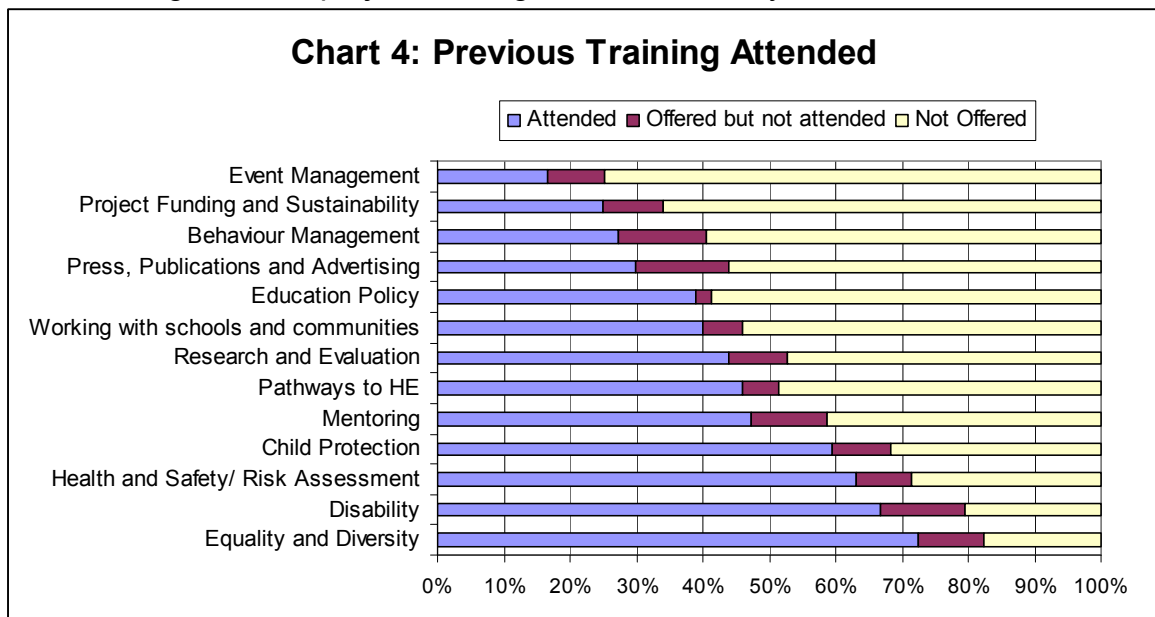

Chart 4: Previous Training Attended

Table 13 shows other training that people had attended. These were mainly around generic management skills.

Table 13. Previous Training Attended		
	Frequency	**% of Respondents to Each Item**
Management and Project Management	47	39
Skills and Workplace Practice Training	46	38
Teacher Training and People Skills	35	29
IT	31	26
Evaluation and Information Sharing	30	25
Mentoring and IAG	18	15
Finances and Marketing	10	8
Disability, Equal Opportunities, and ME training	7	6

Many respondents commented that they felt that the training that was available was the wrong kind of training, or not aimed specifically at WP practitioners:

> *'I feel that the training I receive from the University is motivated towards keeping up to date with developments in the sector overall and training me to work in University administration in general. There does not seem to be much provision at the level of specific skills for specifically WP work.'*

> *'I think it is important to strike the balance between gaining a deeper understanding of the local area in which you work, and the key priorities of that area and the bigger widening participation agenda in order to work effectively. Some of the training offered is too general. It would be interesting to offer schemes where similar authorities / areas work together to share good practice.'*

Table 14 shows the providers of additional training that respondents have attended.

Table 14. Providers of Training		
	Frequency	**% of Respondents to Each Item**
Employer	61	63.5
External Provider	30	31.3
University	18	18.8
Aimhigher	10	10.4
Charities/ Voluntary Organisations	10	10.4
Membership Organisations	9	9.4
Government education bodies	9	9.4
Bodies representing institutions	7	7.3
Connexions and careers related	5	5.2
Action on Access	3	3.1
Other	3	3.1

Other training was mostly by employers and external providers with Aimhigher providing training on disability, pathways to HE, working with schools and communities, child protection, and research and evaluation to more than 15% of those taking the training. From the comments, it was clear that practitioners considered Aimhigher to be an important source of training:

> *'There is a strong culture of personal and professional development within the Aimhigher network. I am coming to the end of my career but there are good opportunities for those staff (younger) who want to work in widening participation.'*

Table 15 shows that in the last year practitioners updated themselves through a number of different activities. Most respondents had attended a conference or a workshop or seminar over this period, as well as reading journal articles, which shows the importance of all these activities as sites of informal learning.

Table 15: Have you engaged in the following forms of learning activity at least once in the last year?		
	Frequency	**% of Respondents to Each Item**
Attending conferences	255	92
Attending seminars and workshops	242	88
Reading journal articles	222	80
Other learning activities	52	19

On-the-job training, both given and received, consisted mostly of specific skill training, informal or ad hoc training or new staff induction processes. 64% of respondents had been offered training courses but not attended them; table 16 shows the reasons for not attending. Over half of the respondents to this question cited being "too busy" as a reason for not attending training courses offered by their employer.

Table 16. Why did you not attend the courses offered to you?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Too busy	95	54.9
Not useful	45	26.0
Other (non-work) commitments prevented me	14	8.1
All answers apply	7	4.0
Cost	4	2.3
Distance to travel	2	1.2
Not interesting	2	1.2
Previously attended	2	1.2
Not allowed/ encouraged by employer	2	1.2
Total	**173**	**100**

60% of respondents said that they were unable to attend all professional development opportunities they wanted to. Table 17 shows the two main reasons for not attending to be pressure of work (60%) and cost (40%) amongst the respondents who had not been able to attend all the professional development opportunities they had wanted to. Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who selected each item, as some respondents selected multiple explanations.

Table 17. Reasons for not attending all the opportunities you want to		
	Count	**% of Respondents to Each Item**
Pressure of work	98	60.5
Cost of training	65	40.1
Lack of support from employer	22	13.6
Personal commitments	21	13
Lack of suitable training	10	6.2
Clash of events or wrong timing	5	3.1
Distance to event	2	1.2
Don't know where to find them	2	1.2
Courses over-subscribed	1	0.6
Total	**226**	**139.5**

Respondents' comments give a clear impression that there are also problems identifying suitable training and travelling to it:

> *'The way the Aimhigher project operates in my area does not offer the support structure that is available to an employee who is based in and is working for an institution. Although my project team are very supportive this survey has made me think that we need to be clearer about what training is available for practitioners in my area and what will be supported.'*

> *'There has been no time at all in the last 3 years, since Aimhigher, to focus on my own personal professional development. This is now a priority for me, but it is really difficult to allocate time and energy. I would be interested in contributing to the delivery of training to others.'*

> *'Would like to be able to attend the conferences that are held at the other universities but distance and cost is always a barrier!'*

This section on the previous education, learning and training of respondents has demonstrated that many WP practitioners are actively engaging in education and training, but that they feel that the training is not always what they want and that they face many different barriers in accessing it.

Future Training Requirements

This section will identify the perceived training needs of respondents; their preferred methods of delivery and assessment for learning; barriers that might prevent them from undertaking or completing further learning and training, as well as the time (number of hours) they could devote to study and finally their preferred time of year for learning opportunities and events.

Table 18 shows the types of training that respondents identified that they would like, many respondents selected several types of training, and the percentages represent the percentage of the 276 respondents who selected each item. Many of these requests for training were prefaced with remarks about the need to make training more in-depth and focused on WP practitioners' requirements rather than generic training in topics such as equality and diversity and disability.

Table 18. What additional skills, training or learning do you think would help you to perform better in your job?		
	Count	% of Respondents to Each Item
Education policy	152	55
Research and evaluation	122	44
Event management	108	39
Press, publications and advertising	96	35
Pathways to HE	94	34
Working with schools and communities	94	34
Behaviour management	77	28
Health and Safety/ Risk Assessment	65	24
Child Protection	65	24
Equality and Diversity	59	21
Disability	59	21
Mentoring	51	19
Engaging with groups/ partnership working	11	4
Management and project management	11	4
Coaching/ IAG	5	2
Finance/ funding/ bid writing	8	3
Presentation skills	3	1
Other	4	1
None	11	4
Total	1095	397

Some respondents also commented that for many practitioners, it was a need for recognition and support, rather than more training that they saw as a priority:

> *'WP can be isolating especially when working with partnerships, with all the political tensions that ensue. More support, and more acknowledgement of those issues would be welcome.'*

When asked whether they would like their additional training or learning to count as credit for a module that could accumulate into a professional or academic qualification, 61% of respondents wanted this, with a further 18% not knowing whether they wanted it or not. A respondent commented, reflecting views expressed by others, that:

> *'All the training I have identified has been attendance at conferences but I would like to see more focused training opportunities available with opportunities for accreditation.'*

Table 19 shows how respondents would like this training to be delivered and assessed (they were able to tick as many as applied, therefore percentages are of respondents ticking each option); it shows that most would prefer to learn by attending seminars and workshops (69%). Nearly half (44%) wanted to engage in work based learning. Traditional Master's level courses (15%), Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (22%) and modular courses (25%) were seen to be less attractive.

Table 19. How would you like the learning to be delivered and assessed?	Count	% of Respondents to Each Item
Seminars and Workshops	185	69.5
Work based learning	116	43.6
By distance learning	111	41.7
Conferences	108	40.6
e-learning	102	38.3
Lectures	86	32.3
Mixed mode	77	28.9
Modular courses	67	25.2
Assessment of Prior (Experiential) Learning	59	22.2
Traditional masters route (full or part time)	40	15
Negotiated Learning Contracts	23	8.6
Other	4	1.5
Total	978	367.7

When asked about how likely they were to do some future learning or training relevant to their work, 81% of respondents said they were either fairly likely or highly likely to do some. They were also asked how important they felt further learning and training was to their work and career, and 92% responded that it was either very important or quite important. Therefore it seems likely that most practitioners would be keen to take up some further learning and accreditation opportunity if it was provided, although when asking people about intentions for future actions in questionnaires, methodologists have established that people are often over optimistic about the chances of engaging in the future activity (Fowler, 2002).

Table 20 shows the barriers that respondents felt they will face in taking up some further learning or training. Again the majority of respondents (78%) perceived time pressures from work to be the most likely barrier they would face, distinct from time pressures due to personal commitments (37%). Nearly half of the respondents (48%) perceived cost to be a barrier to further learning or training.

Table 20. What barriers are you likely to face in completing further learning or training?	Count	% of Respondents to Each Item
Time pressures from work	214	78.1
Cost of training	131	47.8
Time pressures due to personal commitment	102	37.2
No support from employer	33	12
Lack of personal motivation	22	8
None	13	4.7
Availability of relevant courses	7	2.6
Don't know how to find learning/ training	3	1.1
Distance	2	0.7
Don't want any more learning/ training	1	0.4
Total	**528**	**192.7**

These were the barriers selected from those available in a closed question, however in free text responses, practitioners commented that the lack of clear career progression routes made it very hard to motivate them to engage in further learning:

> *'No clear progression from the lower level jobs to the higher level ones, seem to need experience from another sector to get the top jobs.'*

77% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to study in their own time, whilst a further 9% indicated that their employer would give them time to study. Table 21 denotes the length of time that respondents would be willing to spend studying each week; it shows that the majority of respondents (60%) would not be willing to spend on average more than 6 hours per week studying. This compares with 36% of respondents who would be willing to spend 6 to 12 hours per week studying.

Table 21. How much time would you be willing to spend studying on average per week?		
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Less than 6 hours	157	60.2
6 to 12 hours	94	36.0
12 to 24 hours	7	2.7
More than 24 hours	3	1.1
Total	**261**	**100**

Respondents were asked about the best time of year for holding learning events. As the vast majority indicated (see table 22) the best time is throughout the year, commenting that holding several of the same events in one year at different times, to allow the largest number of people to attend, would be the best solution to the problem of events clashing with other responsibilities. However cross-tabulations show that the less senior the position a respondent holds and the younger they are, the more willing they are to have events held during the summer holidays. In fact, those aged under 35 preferred to have training events during the summer holidays rather than throughout the year.

Table 22. What time of year would be best for holding learning events?		
	Count	**Percentage of Respondents**
Throughout the year	138	52
Autumn Term	42	16
Spring Term	35	13
Summer Term	44	17
Summer Holidays	91	34
Other	11	4
Total	**361**	**135**

To assess the extent to which people felt whether their future career was in WP or not, respondents were asked to indicate where they thought they would be working in 3 years time (after the end of current Aimhigher funding in 2008). Table 23 indicates the responses to this question and shows that only 19% of respondents think they will be working in WP in 3 years time; this suggests that they may find general education related professional development opportunities more useful than specific accredited courses related to WP.

Table 23. Where do you think you will be working in 3 years time?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
In WP or Access areas	52	18.8
In HE administration	14	5.1
In HE sector	83	30.1
In education sector generally	72	26.1
Outside the sector	24	8.7
Self employed (education sector)	4	1.4
Retired	9	3.3
Don't know	18	6.5
Total	**276**	**100**

The comments from practitioners made it very clear that the perceived lack of career progression opportunities and the uncertain political and funding environment made it very difficult to say where they were going to be in 3 years time:

> *'WP is largely dependant on short-term funding and so job security is not guaranteed. You can move from allied WP projects in different sectors because the skills and knowledge acquired are transferable but I don't think that there are long-term career prospects in HE, particularly if government policy changes.'*

> *'Funding is uncertain from government and HEI funding relates to admissions. If I want a more senior role in the HEI I would need to move out of WP.'*

> *'I don't know – There are a lot of people doing widening participation -- all in very similar ways. It is an excellent area to learn skills as a recent graduate but career progression is less clear.'*

> *'Time-limited funding of posts result in insecurities about job status, and therefore WP practitioners seek work elsewhere or branch off and work in recruitment and admissions. I am leaving as my fixed term contract comes to an end and have since got a job as a careers advisor.'*

Practitioners were also asked whether they felt it was possible to have a career in WP; 52% of respondents said it was, with 20% saying it wasn't possible, and a further 27% not knowing. This suggests that just under half of practitioners will feel unsure about their future in WP and therefore may be less inclined to invest their time and energies in learning and training associated specifically with WP.

Respondents were asked to comment on why they felt that it was not possible to have a career in WP and their responses can be divided into roughly eight different categories. As seen in table 24 (below) those who felt it was not possible to have a career felt that the political climate, the lack of funding security and the indistinct career progression routes were their main concerns:

> *'Because its continuation as a major policy depends upon the colour and inclination of Government'*

> *'Lots of Indians and few chiefs. The game is going to move on from WP and head into other areas soon.'*

Table 24. Why do you not feel it is possible to have a career in WP?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Politics and changing agendas	27	23
No career progression	26	23
Funding instability/ short-term contracts	24	21
WP not valued within HEIs	13	11
Not yet embedded into HEIs enough	11	10
Employment conditions	9	8
Geographical Isolation	3	3
Other	2	2
Total	**115**	**100**

'There isn't a clear structure. There is a big leap from officer to manager and then not much else.'

'Funding is limited; the value is not placed on WP but on "bums on seats".'

The data from the online questionnaire of WP practitioners therefore makes it clear that despite the current uncertainty around the continuation of funding, there is a demand for increased learning and training opportunities amongst the respondents to this survey. However some respondents also felt unhappy investing too much of their personal time in specific WP related learning activities when they feel that the sector is not sustainable and there are limited opportunities for progression.

Stakeholder Workshop

Aims & Objectives

The purpose of the invited workshop was to engage with a small group of invited stakeholders and practitioners on the issue of support and recognition for WP practitioners in general and the interim findings of the online survey in particular. Working in breakout groups, participants were asked to address specific issues raised the scoping study and agree a set of proposals as to how the scoping study could be developed and taken forward.

Workshop Organisation

Participation at the workshop was by invitation to ensure that, as far as practicable, all stakeholders: funders, providers and users, were represented.

The workshop opened with a series of brief presentations: on the background to the scoping study (Helen May, Higher Education Academy); policy context (Chris Leonard, HEFCE); and an overview of the findings of the online survey (Claire Pooley & Tony Hudson, Continuum).

Participants were organised into three breakout groups, each addressing a separate theme: delivery and content; support and recognition; and accreditation.

Summary and Emergent Themes

Professionalisation and career development

Concerns were raised by workshop participants around professionalisation and career development for practitioners. This was acknowledged to be challenging in an employment context where, due principally to funding, many practitioners are employed on temporary or fixed term contracts. In supporting and developing staff working in widening participation, workshop participants recognised the need to consider whether the aim is to allow people to develop a career in WP or to develop as individuals who may or may not remain in the sector.

Nature of professional education

Participants questioned the notion of what is meant by professional education for widening participation practitioners and the balance between training in specific skills and more general education. Concerns were also raised not only about flexible delivery but ensuring that delivery was at an appropriate level.

Practical issues

Workshop participants were supportive of establishing a limited number of pilot projects which could evaluate various forms of learning, ranging from formal to informal; in terms of both content and delivery. Adequate funding would need to be secured to evaluate the pilot sites as well as developing an appropriate credit framework. Participants stressed the importance of recognising that the community of practice is not confined to HE and that practitioners working in other settings need to be recognised and involved.

Comments and Proposals

The purpose of this report has been to describe and discuss the scoping study commissioned by the Higher Education Academy. The scoping study, with limited resources, could not produce an exhaustive list of resources or explore unmet recognition and accreditation needs in great depth. What it has done is to identify gaps in provision; highlight key issues for the support and development of WP practitioners; and finally to make a number of proposals and suggestions for approaches that merit further development and evaluation through pilot work.

Comment

The scoping study identified a number of training and learning opportunities which are available to practitioners. A sub-text of the report is the subtle differences between formal and informal learning and we recognise the challenges of collecting data on informal learning. Not all provision is widely advertised or promoted and web based searches failed to identify provision in a number of regions. A further issue for practitioners is the availability of courses in terms of geographical coverage, with some areas enjoying relatively high provision compared to other more isolated areas. Some of these problems have been overcome by flexible forms of delivery and distance learning.

Proposal to agencies with a staff development remit and funders
Establish a single unified web based directory of training and learning opportunities for widening participation practitioners, which could be updated by providers.

Comment

The scoping study identified a demand from practitioners for further training and development; and whilst many engage in training, they raise a number of concerns regarding content and delivery. In terms of content, practitioners want training to be more in-depth and focussed on their particular requirements and in terms of delivery wanted them to be delivered at informal sites of learning, such as workshops and seminars.

Proposal to funders, learning providers and practitioners
Develop a limited number of pilot sites that would provide learning and training opportunities for practitioners. Where possible the pilots would be based on existing sites of formal and informal learning. The pilot sites will be informed by the concerns raised by practitioners in terms of content and delivery as well as seeking to overcome barriers to learning.

Comment

Over half of the respondents indicated that they would like to have the learning and training accredited so that they could accumulate credit, leading to a professional or academic qualification.

Proposal to accreditation bodies, funders and learning providers
Use the pilot sites to identify examples of effective credit practice that could be transferable to other sites. Work with accreditation bodies to establish an appropriate credit framework for widening participation practitioners.

Comment

The issues addressed within the survey clearly resonated with practitioners. This is evidenced not only by the response rate to the survey but also the rich and considered responses to the open (free text) questions in the questionnaire and the follow up enquiries received by the research team. The importance of supporting and recognising widening participation practitioners was further confirmed by the wide range of stakeholders who attended the workshop. There is a strong demand for the issues raised by the study to be taken forward in a coherent and timely way.

Proposal to funders and researchers
Identify potential funders and funding streams to support an evaluation of the pilot sites and work on developing a suitable credit framework.

Appendix 1 – Directory of courses / learning provision

A

Institution: Anglia Ruskin University
Course Title: BA Educational Studies
Mode: F/T Duration: 3 years
Aimed at: Students wanting to enter a career in Education

B

Institution: Birkbeck, University of London
Course Title: MA/ Postgraduate Diploma in Lifelong Learning
Mode: P/T **Duration:** MA: 2 years; PgDip: 1 year
Aimed at: Those wanting to investigate critical debates and theoretical perspectives in Lifelong Learning

Institution: Birkbeck, University of London
Course Title: MSc/ Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching in Lifelong Learning.
Mode: P/T Duration: 2-3 years
Note: Contains modules on Widening Participation and Social Inclusion and on Action Research: Professional Development.

Institution: Birkbeck, University of London
Course Title: MPhil/ PhD in Lifelong Learning.
Mode: P/T **Duration:** 3 years minimum
Note: Opportunities to conduct own research into any area of Lifelong Learning

Institution: University of Bradford
Course Title: Postgraduate Programme in Education Studies (available at Masters, Certificate or Diploma Level)
Mode: P/T Duration: 2 years
Note: Contains flexible routes for people working in different areas of post-compulsory education to develop their interests

C

Institution: University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)
Course Title: BA Race & Ethnic Studies and Education (Combined Honours)
Mode: F/T Duration: 3 years
Notes: Undergraduate level based on issues such as social exclusion etc

Institution: University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)
Course Title: PgDip in Professional Development (Higher Education Disability Services)
Mode: P/T Duration: 2 years
Notes: Specifically aimed at those working in Disability services in HE in response to DDA and other recent initiatives.

Institution: Chester University
Course Title: BA Education Studies.
Mode: F/T Duration: 3 years
Note: No Specific WP course but theories and sociology of education included

Institution: City University
Course Title: MSc/ Diploma/ Certificate in Post Graduate Certificate in Education, Training and Development of Adults.
Mode and Duration: varies
Note: One module on Education, Equality and Diversity, but aimed at people involved actively in teaching

Institution: Coventry University
Course Title: MA Learner Support
Mode: P/T Duration: 2 years
Note: Aimed at higher level practitioners with experience of education management and organisation

D

Institution: De Montford University
Course Title: BA Educational Studies.
Mode: F/T, **Duration:** 3 Years; **Mode:** P/T, **Duration:** Up to 6 Years
Note: Not specifically HE focused but containing theory and sociologies of education

Institution: University of Dundee
Course Title: BA in Community Education
Mode: F/T, **Duration:** 3-4 Years
Note: Available in standard or work-based modes in which practitioners are already involved in some community education work. This course is aimed at a wide range of different practitioners not at HE lecturers.

Institution: University of Dundee
Course Title: PgDip in Community Education
Mode: P/T; **Duration:** 18 months **Mode:** F/T; **Duration:** 12 months
Note: Very similar to BA (see details above)

E

Institution: University of Edinburgh
Course Title: MSc in Education.
Mode: F/T or P/T, **Duration:** 1 year or 2-3 years
Note: Academic sociological and philosophical debates, theories and policy analysis, but with no specific focus on HE and no specific modules relating to WP

F

G

Institution: University of Glamorgan
Course Title: MA/ PgDip/ PgCert in Educational Studies
Mode: P/T **Duration:** 2 to 4 years
Note: Academic sociological and philosophical debates, theories and policy analysis, but with no specific focus on HE and no specific modules relating to WP

Institution: University of Glasgow
Course Title: MSc/ PgDip in Adult and Continuing Education.
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 12 – 24 months
Notes: Academic sociological and philosophical debates, theories and policy analysis, with specific focus on adult education but no specific modules relating to WP

Institution: Goldsmiths College, University of London
Course Title: BA Education, Culture and Society
Mode: F/T Duration: 3 years
Note: Contains general introduction to education field but with no specific focus at any level.

Institution: Goldsmiths College, University of London
Course Title: MA in Education: Culture, Language and Identity
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 1 – 5 years
Notes: Strong focus on issues of identity and belonging with close links into WP although not specifically focused on HE environment

H

I

Institution: Institute of Education, University of London
Course Title: MA: Higher and Professional Education
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 1 – 4 years (flexible start dates)
Note: Specifically aimed at WP practitioners, with module on WP policy and practice.

Institution: Institute of Education, University of London
Course Title: MA: Lifelong Learning
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 1 – 4 years
Note: Aimed at people in a management, development or policy role within broad area of LLL

Institution: Institute of Education, University of London
Course Title: MBA in Higher Education Management
Mode: P/T Duration: 2 years
Note: for people with management responsibilities in HE

J

K

L

Institution: Leeds University
Course Title: MA: Lifelong Learning
Mode: F/T and P/T **Duration:** 1 Year or 2 Years
Notes: Optional courses allow some focus on areas around WP

M

N

O

Institution: Open University
Course Title: Supporting Lifelong Learning (Postgraduate level module)
Mode: P/T Duration: 9 months
Note: This is one module that can be combined with others for a qualification such as a Masters in Education or a postgraduate certificate or diploma in Professional Studies in Education.

P

Q

R

S

Institution: University of Stirling
Course Title: MSc/ Postgraduate Diploma/ Certificate in Lifelong Learning
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 1 to 5 years
Note: This is a distance learning programme only delivered via the internet

Institution: University of Sussex
Course Title: MA or PgDip in Management of Change
Mode: P/T **Duration:** 4 to 6 terms
Note: This course is taught jointly between education and social work and social care. It is taught 1 evening per week.

Institution: University of Sussex
Course Title: MA or PgDip in Education Studies
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 1 to 5 years
Note: A flexible course taught in evenings and weekends that can be tailored to fit interests of students. The centre has a strong interest in inclusion and WP activities

Institution: Swansea University
Course Title: MA/ PgDip/ PgCert in Lifelong learning
Mode: P/T **Duration:** 3 to 5 years
Notes: A flexible and distance learning programme covering many areas of lifelong learning.

T

U

Institution: University of Ulster
Course Title: MSc/ PgCert/ PgDip in Lifelong Learning
Mode: F/T or P/T **Duration:** 1 or more years
Notes: a variety of different routes through this course depending on background and interests.

V

W

X

Y

Z

Appendix 2 – Online Survey Professional Development for Staff Working in Widening Participation

Since the survey was administered online, this paper copy is not a good representation of the format and layout of the original version; however it does contain details of all the questions asked and the response categories.

SECTION 1: YOUR WORK

1. Which of these roles most closely matches your job title?

Aimhigher Administrator
Aimhigher Coordinator
Aimhigher Development Officer
Aimhigher Manager
Aimhigher Schools Coordinator
Area Manager
Communications Manager
Communications Officer
Project Development
Projects Manager
Projects Officer
Regional Manager
Schools Liaison Officer
Student Services Manager
Widening Participation Assistant
Widening Participation Coordinator
Widening Participation Officer
Widening Participation Project Manager
Other (please specify)

2. What sort if work does your job involve?

Outreach to schools and FE colleges
Organising Open Days
Organising Summer Schools
Admissions
Mentoring
Outreach to communities
Outreach to families and carers
Outreach to individuals
Student retention activities
Study skills for students
Careers or employability advice
Disability advice
Providing support for WP practitioners
Other (please specify)

3. How long have you been in your current job?

Less than 6 months
6 months to 1 year
1 to 2 years
2 to 5 years
More than 5 years

4. What kind of contract are you on?

Permanent
Fixed Term
Temporary
Other (please specify)

5. Please select the type of organisation that employs you:

FE College or School
Pre 1992 HE institution
Post 1992 institution
Local Education Authority (or equivalent)
Other (please specify)

5.a Please write the name of the institution that employs you.

6. Did you work in the area of Widening Participation in your previous job?

Yes, in WP
Partly in WP
No, outside WP

6.a "If Yes or Partly", how long have you worked in the area of Widening Participation?

Less than 1 year
1 to 2 years
2 to 5 years
5 to 10 years
More than 10 years

6.b And what were your previous role(s)?

6.c "If No", What area did you previously work in?

7. Do you feel integrated into your institution?

Very much
A little
Not sure
Not really
Not at all

8. Does your institution recognise your work in widening participation as an important part of the work of the institution?

Very Much
A little
Not sure
Not really
Not at all

SECTION 2: YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

9. What is the highest level of qualification that you have achieved?

GSCE level or vocational equivalent at level 2
'A' level or vocational equivalent at level 3
Undergraduate degree level (or level 4 equivalent)
Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma
Masters level (or level 5 equivalent)
PhD/ Professional Doctorate
Other (please specify)

10. Are you currently studying?

Yes
No

10a.   If "yes" What qualification are you studying for?

SECTION 3: COURSES ATTENDED

11. Please identify the types of training that you have received in the last 5 years:

11.a   Equality and Diversity

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11b.   Disability

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11c.   Mentoring

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11d.   Pathways to HE

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11e.   Working with Schools and communities

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11f.   Behaviour management

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11g.   Press, publications and advertising

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11h.   Event management

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11i.   Health and Safety/ Risk Assessment

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11j.   Child protection

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11k.   Research and Evaluation

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11l.   Education and Policy

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

11m. Project funding and sustainability

Provided by Employer
Provided by Aimhigher
Provided by Outside Organisation
Offered but not Attended
Not Offered

12. Please identify any other training or learning opportunities that you have received through your work, including details of the provider.

13. Please identify how often, in the last year, you have engaged in other kinds of learning that are relevant to your job.

13.a   Attending conferences

Once
2 to 3 times
4 to 5 times
More than 5 times
Other (please specify)

13.b   Reading Journals

Once
2 to 3 times
4 to 5 times
More than 5 times
Other (please specify)

13.c   Attending Seminars or Workshops

Once
2 to 3 times
4 to 5 times
More than 5 times
Other (please specify)

13.d   Other Learning Activity (please specify)

Once
2 to 3 times
4 to 5 times
More than 5 times
Other (please specify)

14. Have you received any on-the-job training from colleagues?

Yes
No
Don't know

14a.   "If Yes" please give a brief description.

15. Have you given any on-the-job training to colleagues?

Yes
No
Don't know

15.a "If Yes" please give a brief description.

16. Have you been offered training courses but not attended them?

Yes
No

16.a "If Yes" why did you not attend?

Too busy
Not interesting
Not useful
Other (non-work) commitments prevented me
Other (please specify)

17. Are you able to attend all the training and professional development opportunities that you want to?

Yes
No

17a. "If No" why not?

Pressure of work
Lack of support from employer
Cost of training
Personal commitments
Others (please specify)

SECTION 4: LEARNING NEEDS

18. What additional skills, knowledge or learning do you think would help you to perform better in your job?

Equality and Diversity
Disability
Mentoring
Pathways to HE
Working with schools and communities
Behaviour management
Press, publications and advertising
Event Management
Health and Safety/ Risk Assessment
Child Protection
Research and Evaluation
Education Policy
None
Other (please specify)

19. Would you like these learning opportunities to count as credit for a module, which could accumulate to become a professional or academic qualification?

Yes
No
Don't know

20. How would you like the learning to be delivered and assessed?

By distance learning
Lectures
Conferences
Seminars and workshops
E-learning
Work based learning
Assessment of prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)
Negotiated Learning Contracts
Modular courses
Traditional Masters route (full or part time)
Mixed Mode
Other (please specify)

SECTION 5: FUTURE LEARNING PLANS

21. How likely are you to do some further learning or training relevant to your work?

Highly likely
Fairly likely
Don't know
Fairly unlikely
Highly unlikely
Already studying

22. How important do you think some further learning or training is to your work or career?

Very important
Quite important
Neither important or unimportant
Quite unimportant
Very unimportant
Don't know

23. What barriers are you likely to face in completing further learning or training?

None
Time pressures from work
No support from employers
Time pressures fie to personal commitments
Lack of personal motivation
Other (please specify)

24. Would you be willing to study in your own time?

Yes
No
Not necessary – my employer will give me study time
Not interested in studying

25. How much time would you be willing to spend studying on average per week?

Less than 6 hours
6 to 12 hours
12 to 24 hours
more than 24 hours
Other (please specify)

26. What time of year would be best for holding learning events?

Throughout the year
Autumn Term
Spring Term
Summer Term
Summer Holidays
Other (please specify)

27. Where do you think you will be working in 3 years time?

In widening participation
In higher education administration
In higher education sector
In the education sector generally
Outside the sector
Other (please specify)

28. Do you feel that it is possible to have a career in widening participation?

Yes
No
Don't know

28.a   "If No" why not?

29. Please add any further comments or information you may have about the recognition you receive, or the professional development, training and learning opportunities that you have or would like access to.

SECTION 6: ABOUT YOU

30. How old are you?

Under 20
21-25
26-30
31-35
36-40
41-45
46-50
51-55
56-60
Over 60
Information withheld

31. Are you male or female?

Male
Female
Information withheld

32. Did either or both your parents/ guardians attend higher education?

Yes
No
Information withheld

33. Do you have a disability?

Yes
No
Information withheld

33a. If Yes, are you registered disabled?

Yes
No
Information withheld

34. Please identify your ethnic background:

Asian British
Asian Indian
Asian Pakistani
Asian Bangladeshi
Other Asian background
Black British
Black Caribbean
Black African
Other Black background
Chinese
Mixed White and Black Caribbean
Mixed White and Black African
Mixed White and Asian
Other Mixed background
White British
White Irish
Other White background
Information withheld
Other (please specify)

Appendix 3 – List of Participants: Stakeholder Workshop

25th September 2006 at HEFCE, London.

Name	Organisation
Bert Clough	Research & Strategy Manager - Union Learn
Rob Copeland	Policy Officer - University & College Union
Fay Croft	Director - Aimhigher Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire
Carole Ebsworth	Head - Widening Participation Office, University of Reading
Peter Harris	Project Officer - Regulation & Standards, QCA
Sue Hatt	Regional Manager - Aimhigher South West
Avril Harrison	Finance & Administration Manager - Bournemouth University
Tony Hudson	Research Manager - Continuum, University of East London
Chris Leonard	Policy Officer - HEFCE
Jan Martin	Head - Regional Development Unit, Buckingham & Chiltern University College
Helen May	Acting Senior Advisor for WP & Qualitative Research - Higher Education Academy
Claire Pooley	Research Assistant - Continuum, University of East London
Professor Robin Smith	Director - Arethusa Projects
Jenny Shaw	Aimhigher Coordinator - York St John University College
Professor John Storan	Director - Continuum, University of East London
Lawrie Taylor	Director - Aimhigher South East
Anne Qualter	Head of Educational Development - University of Liverpool
Jo Wiggans	Director - Aimhigher, Greater Manchester
Charlie Woodcock	Director of Business Development - University of Chester

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