

Society Health and Development (SHD), the new Diploma for 14 to 19 year olds

Focusing on Progression

Report on the East of England event held on 22 April 2009 The Trinity Centre Cambridge

Introduction

The conference on 22 April was planned and developed by **Ann Jackson Fowler**, *Director Health and Social Care, MOVE* and **Lesley Thompson**, *Project Director Aimhigher Healthcare Strand in the East of England*.

MOVE works with Universities, Colleges, employers and other organisations across the region to help provide additional, flexible and vocational progression and learning opportunities to meet the needs of a wide range of people who could benefit from Higher Education.

Aimhigher is a national programme which aims to widen participation in higher education (HE) by raising the aspirations and developing the abilities of young people from under-represented communities. The Department of Health, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and HEFCE are jointly funding Aimhigher partnerships to support projects that address access and diversity issues affecting entrants to the healthcare professions. In the East of England, the Area partnerships collaborate over the Healthcare Strand and work at a regional strategic level in addition to supporting locally based activities for young people.

In discussion, it was agreed that a joint event focusing on progression from the SHD diploma would meet both partners' objectives. The Diplomas are a major new educational route with the potential to inspire, engage and motivate a wide range of young people. The existence of appropriate HE progression pathways is critical to their credibility and success.

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Context
- The conference on 22 April 2009
- Specific issues arising out of the conference
- Issues arising for further consideration
- Further learning and recommendations for follow up

A list of consortia with approval to deliver SHD in the region, the programme for the conference and overall comments and feedback can be found at Appendices A, B and C respectively.

Context

14-19 Reforms

Major reform is currently underway within 14-19 education in the UK:

'Technological change and the global economy are leading to a quantitative change in demand for knowledge workers and a broader range of work place competencies and soft skills that compliment academic or technical skills. Education and training in the UK is changing in line with this to ensure that every young person has a high-quality, interesting and useful curriculum that will help them achieve their potential and progress to further and higher education and skilled employment.'

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site.home&sid=42>

Along with reforms to existing A Level and GCSE qualifications, a greater emphasis on Apprenticeships, a focus on functional skills in English, Maths and ICT and the development of a new foundation learning tier, a major element of the reform programme is the introduction of a new suite of qualifications: Diplomas in 17 subject areas at three levels (Foundation, Higher and Advanced) by 2013.

14-19 Diplomas

A Diploma is a new qualification which combines theoretical study with practical experience. All Diplomas will require students to achieve a minimum standard in English, Mathematics and ICT, complete a project and do a minimum of 10 days' work experience. The curriculum for each Diploma has been developed through Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs) led by the relevant Sector Skills Councils who represent the voice of employers. Diplomas in the different subject areas are coming on stream at different stages until 2013 when all 17 should be available to a young person anywhere in the country. The first five Diplomas started to be taught in September 2008 by delivery consortia (schools and colleges with other partners such as employers) who had successfully bid to do this through a DCSF approval process (the Gateway).

One of these first wave Diplomas is Society, Health and Development. The DDP for the development of SHD included Skills for Health, Skills for Care and The Children's Workforce Development Council, Skills for Justice and SkillsActive.

SHD in the East of England

In the East of England there were only two successful consortia which got approval via Gateway 1 to deliver SHD from September 2008: North Herts Strategic Area Partnership Group and South East Herts Strategic Area Partnership Group. A further 13 consortia from across the region gained approval via Gateway 2 to start delivery of SHD from September 2009 or 2010 and eight more consortia were successful in Gateway 3 with approval for delivery from September 2010 or 2011 (depending on the conditions attached). A full list of those consortia in the region with approval for SHD delivery is attached as [Appendix A](#).

The conference on 22 April 2009

The aims of the conference were:

- to raise awareness in the region of 14-19 diplomas and the Society Health and Development (SHD) diploma in particular
- to communicate the educational context and purpose of the introduction of 14-19 diplomas
- to hear about latest developments nationally and regionally
- to learn from experience of early deliverers and from others outside the region
- to review and discuss issues relating to progression to Higher Education from the SHD diploma with a particular focus on the East of England
- to explore key aspects of SHD curriculum and delivery models

The target audience was primarily HE admissions staff together with staff from consortia (primarily from schools and FE) at various stages in the process of planning for the introduction of the SHD diploma. The conference programme is shown in [Appendix B](#).

The conference finished with some sharing of information (including the proposal to develop an SHD resource box and the existence of a virtual and actual regional SHD diploma network for those engaged in delivery and planning www.diploma-support.org) and discussions about issues and next steps in the East of England. It was agreed that the production of a detailed report of the conference would be helpful. Overall comments and feedback can be found at [Appendix C](#).

Specific Issues arising out of the conference

It was clear from the day and the feedback received that this was a timely event as consortia in the region prepare for the implementation of the diplomas. The emphasis to date has been on understanding and working with the awarding bodies and developing familiarity with the requirements associated with delivering the diplomas. However it is clear from the reaction nationally to this new initiative that there are a number of potential hurdles to overcome if they are to be recognised as valid qualifications on a par with others at the same level such as “A” levels. There are many misconceptions about the diplomas and hopefully this conference went some way locally and regionally to addressing some of them and enabling delegates to discuss their impressions, queries and concerns.

The work within the Health and Social Care sector at MOVE in developing progression accords between local consortia in the Eastern region and Universities had noted a number of areas where dialogue and collaboration was needed to assist in furthering understanding and partnership working with the Society Health and Development Diploma. The workshops proposed for the conference developed from this work and focused on the areas of Additional Specialist Learning (ASL), the extended project and work experience. These offer a

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number of opportunities to forge close links between consortia and higher education Institutes in ensuring recognition of the value of the diploma in preparing individuals for higher education pathways. Similarly the admissions panel was designed to give clear information about University admissions policy in relation to the diploma. The information pack prepared for each delegate also contained details of the UCAS entries for each of the Universities in the region about the 14-19 diplomas.

Workshop 1 concerned with **Additional Specialist Learning** (ASL) raised a number of questions from delegates, for example the issues of providing for a wide range of specialisms: would the partnership with HE and practice provide that specialism? Additional Specialist Learning (ASL) is extra. Currently most students opt for an A level but the choice will widen. Most energy to date has been invested in developing the Principal Learning, given the tight timeframe set by Government. There is a transitional position for ASL. At levels 1 and 2, breadth is encouraged most often through GCSE.

However, units of specialist learning have been developed. They were developed by a steering group and 18 are available. Society Health and Development is the only line of learning where a sector endorsed specialist pathway is available. There will be rules of combination, students having to do 4 – 90 guided learning hours each unit. The catalogue for additional learning is currently very wide and contains some irrelevant qualifications. In future there will be rules of overlap, e.g. BTEC Health & Social Care is too similar to the SHD Diploma.

Awarding bodies are also currently working hard on moving vocational qualifications to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). There are seven awarding bodies now working to develop units of specialist learning and sector pathways in collaboration. There will be a Children's and Young People pathway available by September 09, others will follow. The Extended Diplomas are worth 4.5 A Levels and there was some concern expressed as to why these were being developed. The use of units from other lines of learning will offer flexibility but may dilute the specialism. It is clear that one of the benefits of operating within a Consortium is the potential to offer flexibility for learner choice, and address the issue of specialist input

Workshop 2 related to **Employer Engagement** and was led by The Britten Partnership, who run the Health Ambassador programme on behalf of Skills for Health, the Aimhigher Healthcare Strand and the NHS East of England. There is some potential to open up future work experience placements for diploma students. The work experience is mapped to the curriculum to ensure that it meets the requirements. This should ensure that when progressing either into employment or higher education students have confidence and work based knowledge and are able to write better personal statements. The Britten Partnership are successfully using case study and scenarios as part of their work with diploma students

Workshop 3 considered the role of **The extended project** as an opportunity for collaboration between consortia and Higher Education Institutions. A number of factors were considered including easing transition into Higher Education, developing study skills, widening subject knowledge, promoting a sense of enquiry and developing research skills and developing staying power. All these areas would be helpful preparation for study at Higher Education level. Some further suggestions came from the delegates in relating the work undertaken for the project in their personal statement for UCAS and as helpful preparation for the interview

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Workshop 4 described the **Hertfordshire experience** and involved a number of current diploma students. Following a description of what is taking place in Hertfordshire and how the diploma has been received there, participants asked the course leader and the students' questions, some related to the assessment and in particular the internal assessment arrangements. Some examples of work experience were described. The students have done work shadowing of health professionals and work experience across the four sectors involved in this diploma namely Skills for Justice, Skills for Health, Skills for Care and the Children's workforce sector. They all have CRB checks. Schools receive £250 per student and this has been used for this. Skills for Care confirmed that legally there is no requirement for CRB disclosures to be carried out but it is good practice.

There are some practical considerations around delivery. The demands of moderation and assessment have meant that the schools have had to collaborate the timing of the delivery. Transport to other schools or colleges for some options has not so far proved to be a problem although this is often cited as an additional pressure on the development of Diplomas. The scheme of work is shared across the partnership. Positives to date include career choices – students felt that their choices have been strengthened by doing the diploma. They have also made new friends and can share information across schools. They feel more strongly about going to university and felt their aspirations were raised. Being exposed to four sectors (health, adult social care, community justice and children and young people) has widened their options and understanding. It is different for A level studies, where the theory comes first. The diploma is more relaxed, there is an opportunity to change their opinions about issues through research and discussion.

Issues arising for further consideration

- Need for more feedback from Students already undertaking the SHD diploma.
- CRB. Disclosure of juvenile cautions can be a problem. Skills for Care are doing a pilot about ex-offenders. It is currently a barrier to registration as a health professional.
- Range of work experience available and tokenism in relation to this. Collaboration with HEIs could really help here as they have a lot of experience and knowledge about relevant work opportunities.
- Demand – in the Eastern region, 25% of people work in one of the four sectors and there is a need for younger workers to enter these areas because of an ageing workforce and an ageing population.
- More dialogue about ASL needed and information in general about the diploma developments.
- More information requested about the role and benefits of the Health and Social Care Ambassador programme in the Eastern region.
- There were a number of things which emerged from the admissions panel session. It was clear that this could have been a much longer session and, as a result, a plea for something around frequently asked questions and answers was requested in relation to admissions criteria. The admissions panel was viewed as helpful and raised a number of issues in relation to understanding of the diploma on the part of Higher Education establishments, and their willingness or otherwise to consider them as on a par with other qualifications. It is interesting to note that figures published since the conference in relation to this

suggest that the East of England is not very accepting of these new qualifications despite UCAS entries to the contrary.

Further learning and recommendations for follow up

A number of possible action points emerged from the conference evaluations and comments. These included:

- Ensuring that all presentations, including that prepared by Deian Hopkin, are included on the MOVE and Aimhigher websites along with Health Skills East.
- Ensuring that new partnerships are made aware of all the information from the conference.
- Follow up with Skills for Health and the development of a SHD Diploma “tool box” to ensure this work is completed.
- Work with Skills for Care to ensure consortia have equal social care delivery support, including materials from Skills for Care to add to the SHD tool box.
- Further information about the diploma to be made available in the form of a leaflet.
- The MOVE interactive IAG tool to include 14-19 Diplomas.
- Information about the Health and Care Ambassador programme to be made available.
- FAQ sheet for 14-19 diplomas relating to admissions criteria for specific Institutions and pathways to be produced.
- The need to start much earlier than 14 to develop personalized learning programmes for young people and ensure that young people, their parents and carers and others involved in Information Advice and Guidance know the range of qualifications on offer and liaison with HEIs takes place to ensure that young people make the right choices.
- The SHD case study from Skills for Health relating to Hertfordshire and described at the conference is made available to delegates and other interested parties.
- Further consideration to be given to other follow up events, perhaps relating to work experience, developing progression accords and the QCF and diplomas.
- MOVE large poster to be sent to all delegates as requested.
- Delegate list to go to everyone subject to all agreeing.

MOVE and Aimhigher Healthcare Strand will seek to address these recommendations in partnership with others as appropriate.

Appendix A

List of consortia with approval to deliver SHD in the East of England

Local Authority	Consortium Name	Delivery
Gateway 1		
Hertfordshire	North Hertfordshire Strategic Area Partnership Group	Sep 2008
Hertfordshire	South East Hertfordshire Strategic Area Partnership Group	Sep 2008
Gateway 2		
Cambridgeshire	Cambridge Area 14-19 partnership	Sep 2009
Essex	Harlow Education consortium	Sep 2009
Essex	Uttlesford 14-19 consortium	Sep 2009
Hertfordshire	St Albans and Harpenden Strategic Area Partnership Group	Sep 2009
Hertfordshire	Welwyn, Hatfield and East Hertsmere Strategic Area Partnership Group	Sep 2009
Luton	Campus Luton	Sep 2009
Norfolk	Norwich City	Sep 2009
Peterborough	Team Peterborough	Sep 2009
Thurrock	Thurrock 14-19 partnership	Sep 2009
Southend	Southend	Sep 2009
Essex	Basildon, Billericay and Wickford 14-19 Area partnership group	Sep 2010
Norfolk	East consortium	Sep 2010

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Gateway 3		
Cambridgeshire	Fenland Partnership	Sep 2010
Essex	Tendring Diploma Group	Sep 2010
Norfolk	Opportunities West Norfolk	Sep 2010
Suffolk	SWISS partnership	Sep 2010
Suffolk	West Suffolk Consortium	Sep 2010
Bedford Borough	Mid & North Bedfordshire consortium	Sep 2011
Norfolk	Norwich City (Open Opportunity)	Sep 2011
(SCE	Rhine 14-19 partnership	Sep 2011)

Appendix B

Conference programme

There were three plenary sessions at the start of the day:

Setting the scene: a national and regional perspective – *Julie Digby, SHD Lead Trainer, Diploma Support Programme, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust*

Progression routes from the Diploma to HE: The Yorkshire and Humberside Progression Project – *Hilary Wyles, Programme Manager 14-19 Qualifications, Skills for Health*

A practitioner's perspective – *Pippa Frost, Society Health and Development Partnership Curriculum Leader North Hertfordshire SAPG and three current learners undertaking the Advanced SHD Diploma*

These were followed by a question and answer session:

HE Admissions Panel: What are admissions tutors looking for? What are the particular issues associated with the SHD Diploma? *Judy Barker, School of Nursing and Midwifery, UEA, Ian Douglas, Senior Consultant Education Liaison, University of Hertfordshire, Pat Watson, Head of Admissions, Anglia Ruskin University*

There were then two workshop sessions with the following workshops run twice:

1. Additional specialist learning – what it is and how it fits into the Diploma – *Hilary Wyles, Programme Manager 14-19 Qualifications, Skills for Health*

2. Employer Engagement – supporting Progression into Higher Education – *Peter Davis, The Britten Partnership (contractors for the Health Ambassador programme in the East of England)*

3. The Project – Partnership and Collaboration, opportunities for Higher Education Institutions to engage with diploma consortia – *Sarah Burch, Acting Head of Social work and Social Policy Anglia Ruskin University*

4. Case Study: The Hertfordshire Experience – *Pippa Frost, Society Health and Development Partnership Curriculum Leader North Hertfordshire SAPG and Ian Douglas, Senior Consultant Education Liaison, University of Hertfordshire*

There were two further plenary sessions:

Information Advice and Guidance and the new Diplomas: issues and solutions – *Trish Judson, Director of IAG, MOVE*

Presentation: Universities, the Diploma and the 14-19 Reforms prepared by *Deian Hopkin, DCSF HE Diploma Champion, Chair, HE Engagement Board, DCSF* – presented by *Lesley Thompson, Project Director Aimhigher Healthcare Strand in the East of England*

Appendix C

Overall Comments and Feedback

A total of 49 delegates attended the conference, representing 25 different organisations in the region and nationally. These included: 4 Universities, 3 Colleges, 7 schools in the East of England, 1 local hospital trust, 2 Care Brokerages, 1 regional 14-19 team, Health Skills East as well as national representatives from Skills for Health and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. Additionally there were staff members from MOVE and Aimhigher.

The initial planning for the conference included a series of discussions with those involved in delivering education programmes in the area as well as with national leads to look at the impact Diplomas were having and the progress being made more locally. Delegates received a general invitation to the event in early March. This was followed up with a detailed programme later in the month. It was decided to hold the event in Cambridge at a venue with good parking facilities and within easy access of the main road system for the East of England.

All delegates received a pack containing information about the day, along with information from each of the organisations hosting the event. Further information was available at the conference from Skills for Health, Skills for Care, the University of Hertfordshire and Health Skills East.

There was also an evaluation form contained in the pack. This asked delegates to comment on a number of areas:

- The information received prior to the event
- Whether the conference met their expectations
- Was the conference content relevant to them
- Were the materials supplied helpful and relevant
- Comments and ratings were requested for the 2 workshops attended by each delegate
- Delegates were also asked to comment on the admissions panel
- The venue and catering
- Any other general comments

The Evaluation

21 delegates completed the questionnaire and overall a large proportion of the responses to each question were Good or Very Good (80%-90%). A number of general comments were made about the day including

“Good range of delegates and good networking opportunities”

“Well planned and organised interesting and positive for diplomas”

“Thank you so much for attending to my hearing needs. Overall a very informative and enjoyable day”

“I felt more positive about the SHD.I feel I have a better understanding of its workings and implications. It was a very good opportunity to network with other people in similar positions .Thank you everyone”



“Excellent day. So good to meet people”

“Excellent and inspiring”

“Excellent conference from start to finish- I am so pleased I attended. Well done”

The main areas of variance related to the workshops where there was a much wider range of responses.

Question 1

Here one delegate referred to the lack of information received until the week of the conference. This may be the result of some late bookings but nevertheless is a cause for concern when planning future events and trying to ensure that as many interested parties as possible have information in good time.

Questions 2, 3 and 4

These questions related to meeting expectations, the content of the conference and all materials provided either in the delegate pack or provided on the day. All responses here were good or very good

Questions 5 and 6

These questions related to the four workshops which took place in the morning and were then repeated in the afternoon to maximise the opportunities for delegates to have a reasonable range of options. There was some unusable information here as some people had given a rating for the workshops but no indication of which they had attended. The wording of these questions would need reconsideration for a future event.

The next questions related to the 4 workshops and details of comments relating to these are reported next:

Workshop 1 – Additional Specialist Learning

This was generally Good but there were some Average ratings given.

Workshop 2 – Employer Engagement Supporting Progression into Higher Education

There were 3 evaluations here where no grading was given otherwise Good or Very Good ratings given.

Workshop 3 – The Project Partnership and Collaboration

All Good or Very Good apart from one where no grading was given.

Workshop 4 – Case Study: The Hertfordshire Experience

Mostly Good to Very Good with 1 Poor and 1 Average.

Question 7. he Admissions Panel

This was well received and provoked a lot of discussion. It gave delegates the opportunity to find out the views of 3 different universities in the region. This led to a more general discussion about the value of the Society



Health and Development Diploma and to look at some of the criticisms which have appeared in the national press.

Question 8. The venue and catering

The venue and catering arrangements for the day were rated highly by all but 2 of the respondents.