



Shaping the Community Scorecard

We are pleased to invite you to take part in a small action research project to shape the development of the community scorecard for the learning and skills sector.

The idea of the community scorecard was first introduced by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills last autumn as a way to balance the introduction of published information about the performance of providers with 'evidence of the economic, social and labour market characteristics of the local catchment area', and to allow 'for the recognition of "post-code" effects and "distance travelled"'.

LSIS is committed to supporting colleges and providers to develop a strategic role in contributing to their local communities and has agreed to work with the UK Commission on the development of the community scorecard, through an approach which enables sector providers to shape it from the beginning.

Project Details

We are therefore keen to establish a small action research project to explore and establish the purpose of the scorecard, what it might look like, and how it might be used. We are clear that the scorecard must recognise the diversity of institutional, administrative arrangements and socio-economic characteristics in different localities, and avoid any prescriptive design. To this end, we are inviting proposals to join the action research project to reflect the following range:

1. Colleges, independent work based learning providers, specialist colleges, and adult and community learning providers;
2. Providers based in unitary and 2-tier local authority areas, spread across the 9 English regions;
3. Providers based in urban and rural contexts, of different sizes, with different socio-economic, demographic, and labour market profiles.

We are aiming to involve nine or ten providers in this initial action research phase, between September and January. There will be a small amount of resource – approx £3,000 – to support each institution's involvement. But we hope that the motivation to take part will stem more from an interest in how to secure legitimacy for

your organisation's position as a strategic partner within your local community, and the opportunity to shape this important area of work about how to strengthen local accountability, both in the learning and skills sector and across public services.

You will, of course, have access to the resources and materials that have already been developed to support providers in thinking about their contribution to local community life, including:

- LSIS publications on the new duty on colleges to promote economic and social wellbeing in their localities, and lessons from the involvement of colleges in the Total Place pilots last year;
- Reports of the LSIS policy seminars, in particular *The Importance of Being Local*, and the current series '*Changing public services – Changing professional practices*';
- The website resource on safe colleges and communities, developed by LSIS and the sector, which offers support on the issues of guns, gangs and knives and preventing violent extremism.

In addition, the action research will be supported by LSIS associates who will be available to work alongside your organisation to test out aspects of the scorecard and to help reflect on and capture the learning from the project. There will also be two structured opportunities to meet with others in the project – once at the inaugural seminar which will be on **Thursday 9 September**, and again for a progress review in December. We will be asking each project to prepare a final report by mid January to inform a summative report on the project overall by the end of January.

More information about the background to the community scorecard, and the aims, methodology and timescales for the action research project is in the attached paper.

Links to other LSIS community development activity

This community scorecard project is part of a suite of work that LSIS is currently commissioning to support the sector to develop institutional approaches to community development and to inform a community development strategy for the sector. In particular, it sits alongside:

- an invitation to the Peer Review and Development groups to access funding to carry out reviews of their members' contributions to the development of local communities. Details of this opportunity are available at <http://www.lsis.org.uk/WorkingWithLSIS/Opportunities/funding-Opportunities/Pages/default.aspx>. The closing date for this is Monday 2 August 2010.

- a forthcoming opportunity to bid for funding to develop approaches to community development. Look out for this in August.

The focus of the community scorecard project is on developing approaches to strengthening providers' accountability to their local community. We are interested in supporting providers to develop approaches to articulating and enhancing their value to citizens and partners in their local area. For this first stage, we want to explore how individual providers might do this, though at a later stage it may be useful to explore how groups of providers might work co-operatively on this agenda.

Proposals and next steps

If you would like to take part in the community scorecard action research, please write to us by Monday 26 July outlining:

1. The name and type of your organisation.
The name and type of the local authority/ies you work with.
2. Why you would like to take part in the community scorecard action research project.
3. What experience of community development and local partnership working you would draw on to inform your approach to developing a community scorecard for your organisation.
4. What your organisation hopes to get out of your involvement in the action research.
5. How you would involve your trustees in the project.
6. Which dimensions of the overall range of the action research project you would contribute to. These were described above, but for ease of reference are repeated here. We are keen to ensure the action research reflects the following range:
 - Colleges, independent work based learning providers, specialist colleges, and adult and community learning providers;
 - Providers based in unitary and 2-tier local authority areas, spread across the 9 English regions;
 - Providers based in urban and rural contexts, of different sizes, with different socio-economic, demographic, and labour market profiles.
7. The lead contact for the project in your organisation.
8. Please also confirm that you are able to commit to:

- Two representatives from your organisation attending the two project seminars (the first on Thursday 9 September, the second in early December – date to be confirmed)
- Developing and trialling aspects of the community scorecard in your organisation during the autumn term (following discussion at the September seminar)
- Providing a progress report on activity to the December seminar and preparing a final report on your organisation’s project by mid January.

Please send your proposal, confirming the support of your Principal/Chief Executive, to paula.hector@lsis.org.uk by **midday on Monday 26 July** or earlier if possible.

Selection

Depending on the number of responses we receive, a selection panel comprising representatives from LSIS and UK Commission will meet in w/c 16 August to review the applications. As described above, we are looking for nine or ten organisations at this first stage to reflect the range of institutional arrangements and contexts the scorecard needs to cover. We will confirm the outcome of the selection process by Thursday 26 August.

We do hope you will be keen to be involved in this exciting new piece of work. If you have any queries, please do contact Jenny Williams, Head of Policy at LSIS (0207 929 8713 or jenny.williams@lsis.org.uk) who will be managing the project.

Yours sincerely




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