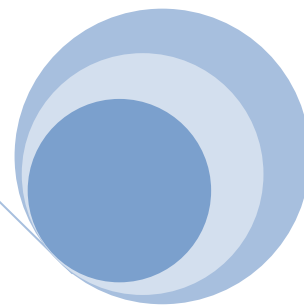


bringing learning together



PCDL Survey Findings

York and North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire Learning
Consortium
March 2009



Introduction

Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) is understood to be a key component of VCS activities. Until now much of the evidence produced has been anecdotal and there is no clear picture of the scope of PCDL activity in the sector in York and North Yorkshire.

The aim of the survey is to get a clearer idea of what PCDL activities are currently delivered by the VCS in York and North Yorkshire, how they are funded and what partnerships currently exist.

The survey (please see Appendix 1) was sent to as many VCS organisations as possible via NYLCs database and York and North Yorkshire infrastructure organisations. Responses were received from 36 organisations of which 34 work in North Yorkshire and 13 work in York.

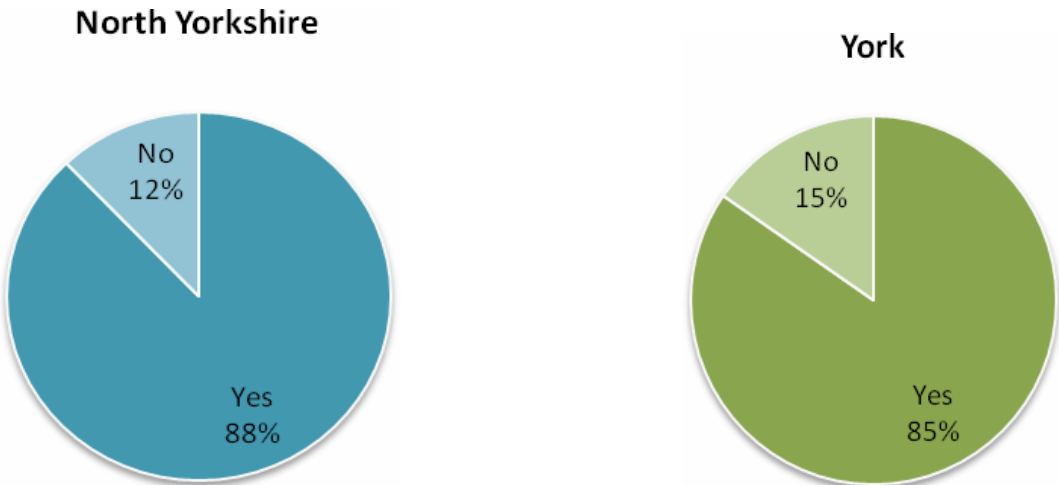
The responses show a good mix of organisations offering both accredited and non-accredited training throughout the sub-region, to all disadvantaged groups.

The LSC definition of PCDL is:

"Learning for personal development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation, and enjoyment. It is also learning developed with local residents and others to build the skills, knowledge and understanding for social and community action. There is no requirement that learners must necessarily progress to other learning or achieve accreditation."

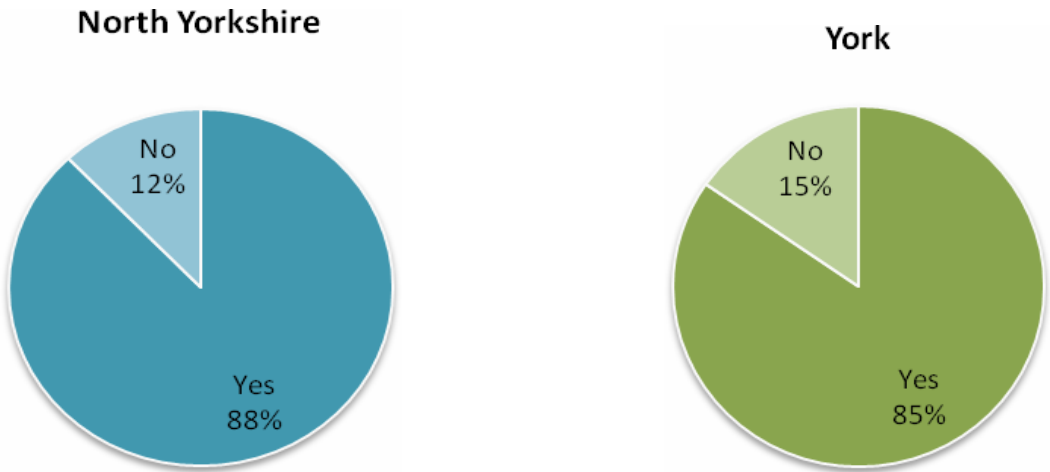
Findings

Q1: Do you deliver PCDL learning?



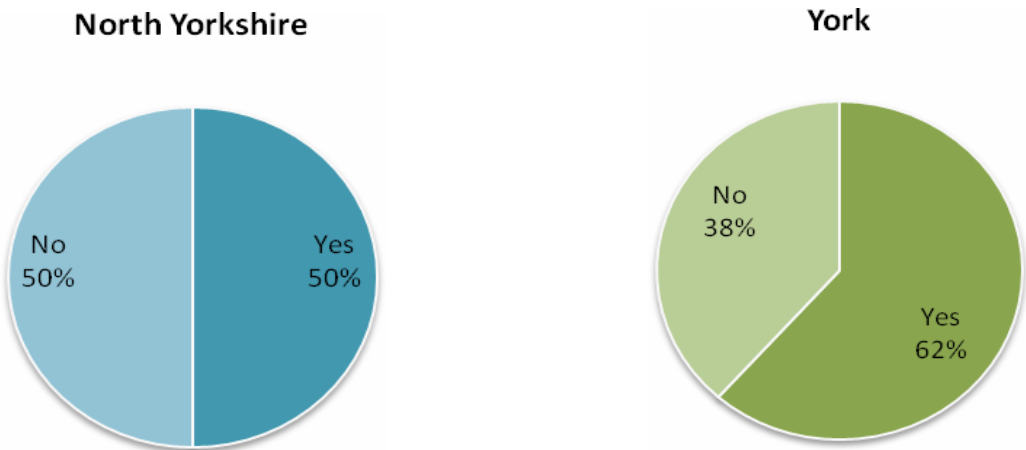
The majority of organisations that responded to the survey currently deliver PCDL. Though the survey was aimed at all VCS organisations and not specifically targeted at PCDL providers, it is likely that only organisations currently delivering or planning to deliver this learning would take the time to respond.

Q1a: Do you deliver informal/non-accredited learning?



The majority of organisations that responded to the survey deliver non-accredited/informal learning. However, it is clear from studying the responses that there has been some confusion as a result of the wording of this question. Two organisations who had claimed to deliver PCDL have answered 'no' to this question. This could be because in-house certificates are awarded for non-accredited learning and the organisations market this learning as 'accredited.' Other feedback received by NYLC indicates that some VCS organisations are not clear about what learning is accredited and what is non-accredited.

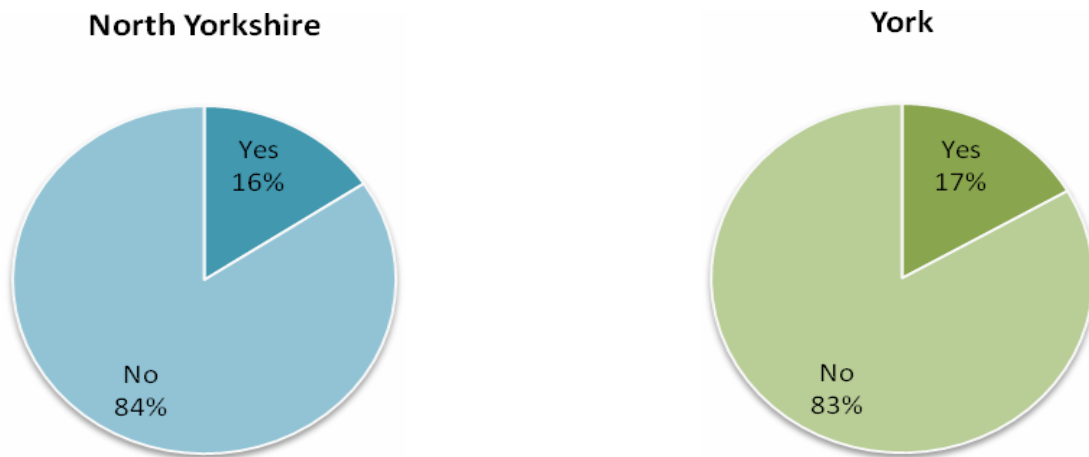
Q1b: Do you deliver accredited



learning?

Half the organisations in North Yorkshire that completed the survey claim to deliver accredited learning and almost two thirds of the organisations in York. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that though many of these organisations facilitate accredited learning for their clients through partnerships with other VCS and FE providers, the number of organisations accredited in their own right is lower than this.

Q2: Are you currently using LSC Personal and Community Development funding?

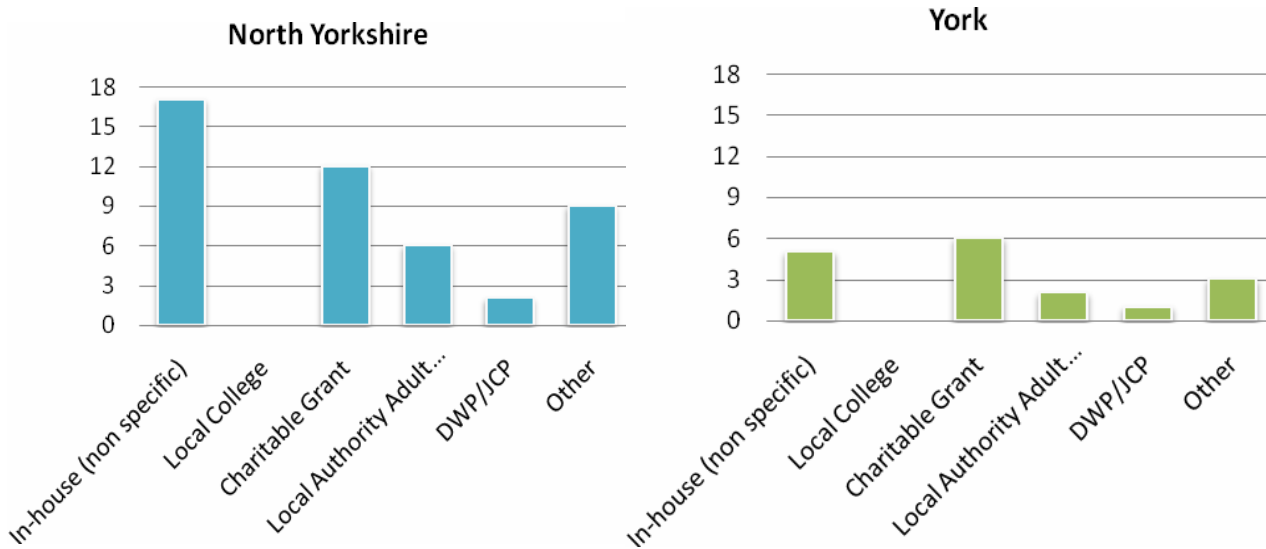


Well over three quarters of recipients noted that they do not currently receive LSC PCDL funding. Each of the 6 organisations that responded 'yes' to this question, received Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC) funding via NYLC in the contract year 07/08. It is possible that there has been some confusion about the difference between these two LSC funding streams.

It is worth noting that the guidance for NLDC in the contract year 08/09 has changed, and this fund is now specifically targeted at working-aged, unemployed adults moving toward further training or employment and cannot be used to fund PCDL-type activities.

Analysis of the data indicates that only one organisation is formally/directly funded via the LSC PCDL funding stream.

Q3: How do you fund your PCDL learning?



Most organisations have indicated that PCDL activities are funded either in-house (i.e. through reserves or unrestricted funds) or from charitable grants. 11 organisations noted that PCDL activities were funded through an 'other' funding stream, which included:

- WEA (other voluntary sector organisation) [2]
- NLDC (in 2007/08 this contract was not specifically geared toward skills for jobs and some organisations used part of this funding for PCDL activities. From 08/09 this is no longer possible) [2]
- Learn Direct mainstream contract [1]
- Revenue generated through commercial sales (social enterprise) [1]
- Aim Higher [1]
- Local Authority Education Services [1]
- Employers [1]
- Higher Education Funding Council for England [1]
- Funding for other projects (possibly should be 'In House') [1]

Q4: What kind of learning do you provide?

Please see Appendix 2 (North Yorkshire) and 3 (York) for a full summary of learning provided

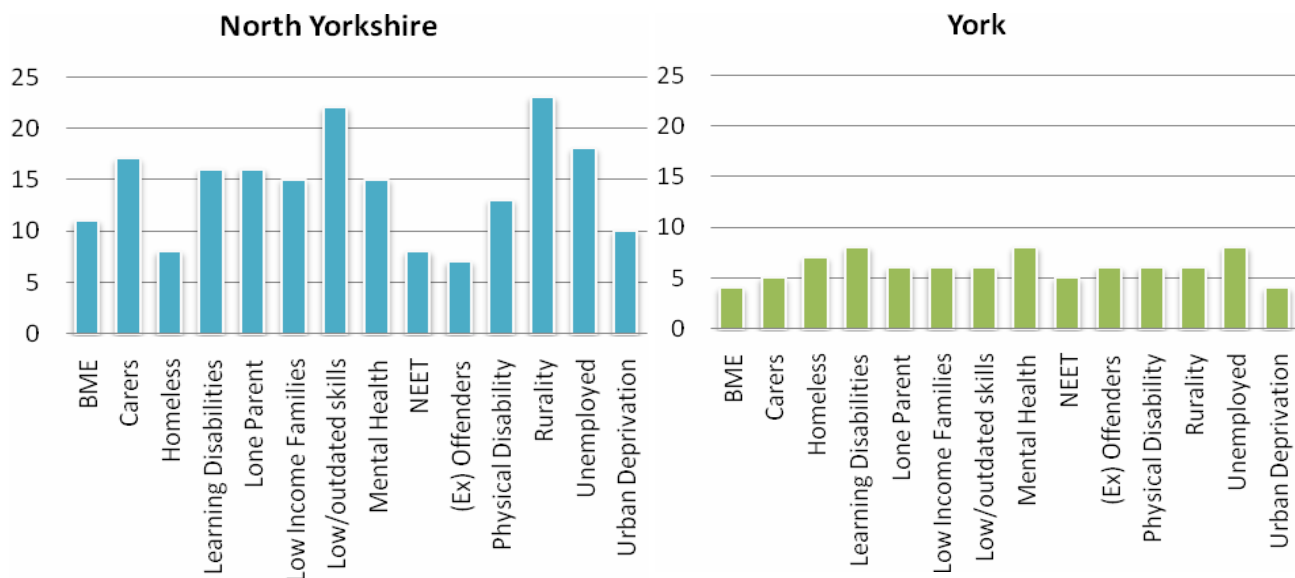
In North Yorkshire, 32 organisations are currently delivering 106 programmes of learning to disadvantaged people. These programmes include accredited and non-accredited courses, of which 51 programmes come within the scope of PCDL.

In York, 13 organisations are currently delivering 28 programmes of learning to disadvantaged people. These programmes include accredited and non-accredited courses, of which 13 programmes come within the scope of PCDL. *(N.B. Many organisations work in both York and North Yorkshire)*

It is clear from the survey that the mix of learning currently provided is more focused upon personal development and intellectual stimulation than primarily for cultural enrichment and enjoyment. Many organisations are delivering ‘stealth learning’ that can be used as an initial step to breaking down barriers to engagement, as well as assertiveness and confidence building courses that can have a significant effect on the life of a client, without necessarily leading to further learning activities.

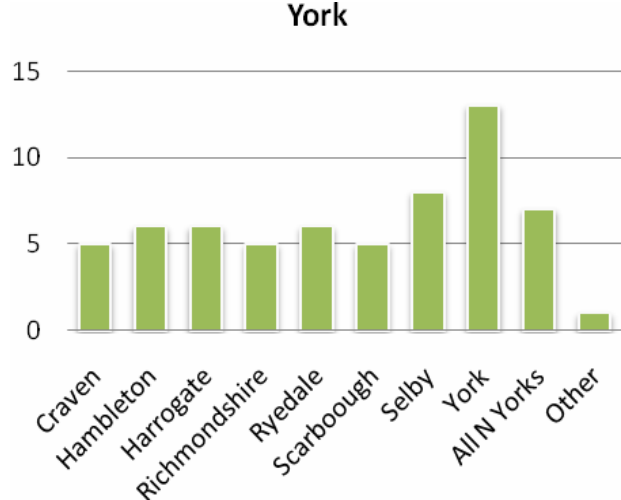
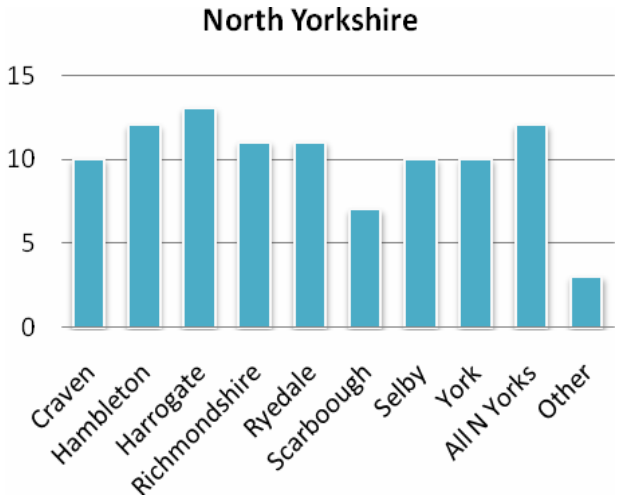
Despite this apparent pattern, NYLC is aware of learning for leisure activities taking place in the VCS across York and North Yorkshire. It is possible that organisations offering leisure activities for community integration and personal interest learning are not on the learning and skills radar and would not consider themselves to be a ‘learning provider’ in the formal sense of the word.

Q5: Which groups do you deliver to?



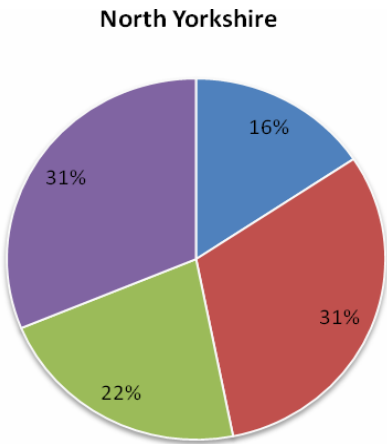
The majority of respondents work with a variety of disadvantaged groups with multiple barriers to engagement. From the survey it is clear that most organisations engage unemployed individuals with low/outdated skills, experiencing issues linked to rurality, in addition to more specific client groups.

Q6: Which geographical area(s) do you cover?

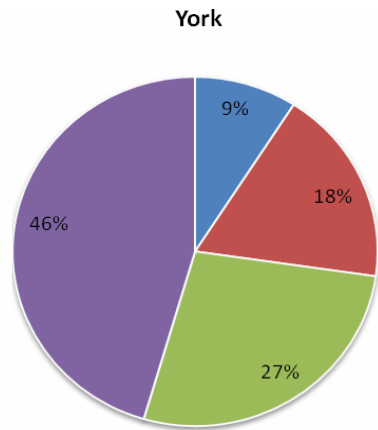


From the results it is clear that VSC organisations are delivering learning across York and North Yorkshire. The findings of this report will be widely circulated at district level through the Employability Skills Partnership (ESP) structure.

Q7: Which sentence best describes your partnership relationships with regard to PCDL learning locally?



- Fully Funded with effective partnerships
- Not Funded with effective partnerships
- Partially funded and involved with partnerships
- Not funded or engaged in partnerships



Overall, two thirds of organisations who responded in North Yorkshire and just over half in York currently work in partnerships to deliver PCDL activities. Less than 15% (5 organisations) of respondents receive full funding for the delivery of this learning. Of these 5 organisations, 4 responded that they do not receive PCDL funding in question 2,

showing that even partnerships that are fully funded are not funded through PCDL itself, and instead rely on other funding streams for this activity.

Over a third of organisations in North Yorkshire and almost half of those that responded in York are delivering services that are not funded and not engaged in partnerships. As a result, provision is likely to be unrecorded and without the quality assurance processes necessary for LSC-funded provision. Though most of the learning is likely to be high quality and responsive, there is no evidence on a sub-regional level to verify this. Without formal partnerships, it is possible that learners may not have access to additional learning opportunities and progression routes if the PCDL inspired them to do more learning.

This contrasts greatly with the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) Fund, which is centrally coordinated throughout York and North Yorkshire, links providers, identifies and fills gaps, avoids duplication, signposts to IAG services and ensures a minimum standard of quality, learner safety and equality and diversity is adhered to. This coordinated approach has also enabled NYLC to collect comprehensive data about NLDC activities via LSC Short Record Forms, case studies, RARPA (Aims and Objectives for non-accredited learning) and Evaluation Forms. This information is then fed into the LSC data collection and measured against LSC priorities. *(Copies of the NLDC Impact Report are available from NYLC on request)*

Q8: Do you envisage any barriers to the learning consortiums working with PCDL funds?

- No [14]
- Don't know [2]
- None other than possible time constraints to enable appropriate levels of communication amongst all concerned [1]
- Don't know enough to comment [1]
- Possible barriers may include the eligibility criteria of learning consortiums and if they compete for this funding with learning providers [1]
- None – it will be a vital source of support and provide some sustainability to our work [1]
- Depends on the types of targets required and if they consider the softer skills as being as valuable as accredited training [1]
- No, as long as there is no conflict of interest, or problems with double funding [1]
- Hope not [1]
- Aims & objectives of partners/consortia not matching individual charity aims/objectives [1]

- The way it might affect our relationship with existing partners i.e. colleges/WEA [1]
- Complicated & over-burdensome paperwork [1]
- It would be useful if there was funding available for childcare and transport as these are barriers to the learners we engage with [1]

Q8a: Do you wish the Learning Consortiums to lobby for greater access for the VCS to PCDL funds?

- Yes [21]
- Definitely [1]
- Yes, funding for PCDL is virtually non-existent and does not begin to match the extent to which PCDL is delivered in the York and North Yorkshire VCS. As a result there is little recognition of the value of PCDL provision in the VCS [1]
- Yes if the criteria is wide enough [1]
- Yes, it would be great! [1]
- I would need to look at all the issues carefully before deciding [1]
- Provided any funding achieved is quickly and smoothly disseminated to the voluntary groups [1]
- Yes. Current Funding expires 31.3.09 - training will cease without a funding source [1]
- Considering the stated definition of PCDL, it would appear to be a fund of money that would cover the work undertaken within the Resettlement Centre, so I wish the consortium to lobby for increased access to this fund [1]

Conclusion

From the survey, it is clear that there is currently a large amount of PCDL activity taking place in the VCS in York and North Yorkshire. These activities cover a broad range of skills and interests including arts, crafts and media, ICT, confidence building and assertiveness, Tai Chi, drama and conversational languages (for a full list please see Appendices 2 & 3).

However, despite the large range of PCDL activities offered by VCS providers, most organisations surveyed do not receive any funding from the LSC PCDL funding stream to deliver this. PCDL activities are currently funded mainly from Charitable Grants or In-House via reserves or unrestricted funds.

The result of this is twofold. Firstly, VCS organisations, responding to identified need by their clients, face a constant struggle to fund these highly valued learning opportunities via other means. Consequently, courses often have to end prematurely when funding runs out, even on courses with high attendance rates and levels of interest.

The second result of uncoordinated, unfunded learning activities is that no formal evidence is collected to monitor the range and quality of provision or the learner information. Though most provision is likely to be high quality and responsive to learner needs, there is no evidence of this collected on a sub-regional level and this information does not feed into LSC data collection and priorities.

Another issue that has been highlighted is that there is still confusion in the sector about the difference between accredited and non-accredited learning (as specified by the LSC). Some organisations offer certificates for non-accredited learning or facilitate accredited learning for their clients via partnership arrangements, without holding accredited-centre status in their own right. Additionally, the difference between PCDL and NLDC is still not completely understood, as shown by a large number of PCDL-type applications received for the NLDC fund that were ineligible.

Analysis of the courses offered has highlighted a prevalence of learning geared toward personal development activities and transferable skills, with less emphasis on special-interest learning and cultural enrichment activities. This could be because community action and learning for leisure are often not perceived as 'learning' and organisations involved in this type of activity do not consider themselves to be learning providers. However, the engagement and support of these organisations is likely to be a key role of the new Cultural Partnership.

The majority of respondents did not envisage any barriers to NYLC working with PCDL funds. Points that were raised to be considered include the importance of recognising 'softer outcomes,' the need for effective communication channels and an assurance that there is no conflict of interest by NYLC competing with VCS organisations for funding. As NYLC does not deliver learning to disadvantaged people and this funding has previously been unavailable to the sector, there is no conflict of interest. Another issue raised was an assurance that NYLC involvement would not compromise existing partnerships. As a consortium with a key aim of creating partnerships, NYLC involvement would only enhance this.

97% of respondents said that they would like NYLC to lobby on their behalf for greater access to PCDL funds. It is worth noting that the one organisation that was undecided on this issue is the only VCS organisation currently in receipt of PCDL funding.

To conclude, the survey has provided NYLC with a clear mandate to lobby for funding for PCDL activities in the VCS. It is clear from the survey that a wide range of learning for personal development and intellectual stimulation is taking place, though much of this is not monitored or recorded in a formal or coordinated way. NYLC aims to use the findings of this survey to ensure that VCS providers are given greater

access to funding to provide PCDL learning opportunities, add-value to learning currently provided, support the development of new learning opportunities and provide evidence of the impact of these valuable activities.

Recommendations

1. The report and findings is circulated widely to LSC colleagues at regional and sub-regional levels
2. The report and findings be presented via the Learning Partnership Managers for York and North Yorkshire to inform activities by the PCDL Sub-groups, ESPs, Lifelong Learning Partnership and other appropriate multi-agency networks and partnerships.
3. The report is used as part of the evidence base to inform other funders in the sub-region, i.e. Leader activities, ESF programmes, Lottery etc
4. The report should be widely circulated via VCS infrastructure organisations to inform their activities regarding learning and skills at a regional, sub-regional and local level.