



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE FOR HEALTHY UNIVERSITIES

FINAL REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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OVERVIEW

Developing Leadership and Governance for Healthy Universities has run from 2009 to 2012 with funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Leadership, Governance and Management (LGM) fund – and has been co-ordinated jointly by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).

The aims of the project have been to:

- strengthen the English National Healthy Universities Network
- generate and disseminate web-based guidance tools and case studies
- support further national developments.

The project has been led by a Project Board comprising the Project Co-ordination Team together with representatives from Leeds Trinity University College, Nottingham Trent University, Teesside University and the University of the West of England. It has been overseen a high-level Leadership Advisory Group chaired by Professor Richard Parish, Chief Executive of the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and Ewart Wooldridge CBE, Chief Executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) and comprising senior-level representatives from partner universities and national stakeholder organisations.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS

- **Network Meetings and Development:** The Network has met twice a year between 2009 and 2012, holding six meetings attended by between 25 and 39 people – incorporating updates, networking and interactive thematic workshops. During the lifetime of the project, membership of the Network has increased by around 50 per cent: a further 22 HEIs and 16 stakeholder organisations have joined the Network – which now involves 143 individuals from a total of 69 HEIs (mainly from Student Services, Sports and Physical Activity, Academic Departments and Human Resources) and 26 other agencies.
- **Website and Web-Based Toolkit:** A website www.healthyuniversities.ac.uk was established to provide a virtual communications hub and portal. Phase One provided background and contextual information and Phase Two involved the development of the toolkit www.healthyuniversities.ac.uk/toolkit comprising guidance packages, case studies and a self review tool – with the aim of providing practical guidance and support for individuals, teams and HEIs wishing to pursue the Healthy Universities approach. Google Analytics shows that the website has been widely used – between its launch on 26 April 2010 and 26 June 2012:
 - 4,488 unique visitors made 8,284 visits to the site and viewed 27,839 pages
 - these visits came from 88 different countries – including 78.5% (6507) from the UK, 3.7% (306) from Canada, 3.5% (285) from Australia and 2.2% (184) from the USA.
- **Workshops and Conferences:** Two dissemination workshops (attended by 28 and 47 people respectively) and one celebratory conference (attended by more than 50 people) were held during 2011/12, to showcase the web-based toolkit and introducing the seven guidance packages. Feedback from all events has been overwhelmingly positive.
- **Newsletters:** Four newsletters have been produced during the course of the project – also available to download from the resources section of the website.

- **National Developments:** UCLan and MMU were commissioned in 2009 by RSPH to articulate a model for Healthy Universities and produce recommendations for a National Healthy Universities Framework for England. The report subsequently proved to be influential in securing the inclusion of Healthy Universities within the Coalition Government's 2010 Public Health Strategy – which stated that: "The Healthy Schools, Healthy Further Education and Healthy Universities programmes will continue to be developed by their respective sectors, as voluntary programmes, collaborating where appropriate and exploring partnership working with business and voluntary bodies."
- **Supporting Healthy Universities Beyond England:** Whilst the Network has been focused on English HEIs, it has welcomed involvement from other countries and has served as a catalyst to developments in both Scotland and Wales, to which the Project Co-ordination Team have served as advisors. Furthermore, the project has been an active contributor to wider European developments.
- **Collaborations:** In addition to its core activities and outputs, the project has collaborated with parallel initiatives such as 'Improving Performance through Wellbeing and Engagement' and catalysed a number of collaborative ventures – including the 'AMOSSHE Knowledge Community on Healthy Universities' and 'Preventing and Minimising Gambling-Related Harm in Higher Education Communities'.

PROJECT EVALUATION AND ADDED VALUE

Evaluation of the project has been extremely positive, demonstrating that it has met its overall aims and adding value in numerous ways. In addition to information provided above, a web-based survey revealed high levels of membership satisfaction and engagement. When asked what they have particularly valued about being a member of the Network and which aspects they would like to see retained and/or strengthened, respondents highlighted a range of face-to-face and web-based services. Specifically, 78% of respondents have used both the guidance packages and self review tool; 75% have used the case studies; and the majority of those responding valued the toolkit and felt strongly that it should be retained. The majority of respondents (64%) felt that Network meetings should continue to be held twice a year.

Reflecting on how the project has contributed to parallel agendas, it is clear that a commitment to sustainable development has been integral to the project's content and delivery. It integrated health and sustainability within its conceptual developments and its web-based toolkit and its final conference; and has been run in ways that balance the need for face-to-face interaction with mechanisms that reduced its overall carbon footprint. Similarly, the project and the overarching Healthy Universities approach is values-based and has been underpinned by a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Looking back over the past three years, the project has been enormously challenging: encouraging institutions that do not have health as their *raison d'être* to engage with and commit to health and wellbeing is not an easy task at the best of times, but is even more difficult in a climate of rapid sectoral change and economic contraction. However, the project has more than fulfilled its aims – and, looking to the future, it is fantastic news that a small amount of co-ordination funding from UCLan and MMU – together with the ongoing commitment of Project Board members to continued involvement – provides a positive platform for maintaining the Network and moving forward.