



Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum

Transitions

***Annual Review of the Pre-Access
Communities Project***

June 2005-June 2006

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***Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum
Transitions***

***Annual Review of the Pre-Access Communities Project, June
2005- June 2006***

Lead Institution: University of Dundee

1. *Introduction*

- 1.1 The first year of the Pre-Access Communities Project (PACP) has seen significant progress; increasing pre-access provision through partnership working across Fife and Tayside. Considerable energy has been invested in developing effective regional collaboration and establishing an administrative framework to enable the smooth running of the project. Course delivery targets have been exceeded in the first year laying a sound foundation for future expansion, although the practicalities of such growth needs concentrated attention. There are, however, also a number of aspects that might be improved upon in 2006-2007 and the purpose of this review is to highlight the achievements and explore some of the issues related to the project that will become features over the coming year.

2. *Background*

- 2.1 Prior to June 2005 consultation among partners interested in community and outreach work led to the development of the PACP. Based on their knowledge and experience of the local area partners identified a gap in pre-access provision and agreed that a partnership approach would be the most effective method of developing future plans. A proposal was put forward to the Forum Executive based on these two key principles, and was approved in June 2005.

It was widely supported by Forum members, and collectively representatives from each institution/organisation formed a steering group to oversee the project delivery. In addition steering group members agreed to employ a part-time development officer to co-ordinate activities and Ann Petrie was appointed in July 2005.

3. *PACP Objectives*

- 3.1 The objective of the PACP is to develop and deliver collaborative pre-access provision for Forum targeted groups (see below) across Fife and Tayside.
- 3.2 More specifically the PACP steering group aimed to deliver five courses in the first year.

4. *Operation of PACP*

- 4.1 Proposals to offer pre-access provision are developed by partners, supported by the pre-access development officer and then submitted as a formal bid to the pre-access steering group for approval of funding. Bid guidelines, a bid checklist and a bid template have been created to ease this process. In addition a PACP development officer course co-ordination procedure has been established, and an end of course report form has set up a uniform approach to reporting as requested by partners.¹ (See Appendix 1)
- 4.2 Since the start of the PACP the generation of course proposals' have been made on an 'ad hoc' basis, which has resulted in significant effects from external influences. For example, the rapid turn-around from proposal to delivery created practical difficulties in implementation – in some cases impacting on the time given over to consideration of recruitment strategies; tutoring staff were less easily secured at short notice and it generated a climate where bursts of activity were the norm rather than a coherent, sustained and pro-active arrangement where PACP activities could be built in to longer term local plans.

5. *Project Issues Raised*

- 5.1 There were two principle issues raised in the first year that necessitated agreement among partners in order to progress the project. The first concerned what level of pre-access activity the project would concentrate on and the second was which Forum targeted groups would be prioritised.
- 5.2 The development officer's initial consultations with partners highlighted the variety of interpretations of the term 'pre-access'. There was general consensus, however, that it described any type of educational provision that raised aspirations; encouraged an individual to participate in more

¹ PACP steering group minutes, 1/11/2005

advanced formal education or prepared them for that process. The emphasis of partners on each of these aspects, however, created points of divergence that were worth clarifying. Consequently two working definitions were established. (See Appendix 2)

Partners agreed that pre-access opportunities offered by the PACP should have the potential to lead on to more advanced courses of study and that in this context progression routes should be identified during the development of the proposal stage prior to bidding.² This was built into the bid guidelines for the project, and as a result although there is nothing to prevent partners incorporating activities from the first definition in their proposal partners have tended to concentrate on the latter definition of pre-access as described in Appendix 2.

5.3 The strategic objective of the Forum is to address under-representation in higher education by promoting fair access, and enhancing subsequent achievement, for three groups in the region. The PACP aims to contribute towards the facilitation of the Scottish Executive Measure 2 - Increase in numbers of adults from Deprivation Zone (DZ) 5 progressing towards higher education. In the Forum strategy this is identified as 'adult returners to education from the social and business communities.'³ Since the Forum strategy was circulated in 2004 this group has been more particularly identified as:

- 5.3.1 Adults living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) DZ 5
- 5.3.2 People living in local community plan regeneration areas
- 5.3.3 Unemployed adults
- 5.3.4 People with disabilities
- 5.3.5 Black and ethnic minorities
- 5.3.6 People excluded by location (specifically those affected by rural isolation)

5.4 The PACP partners agreed to be advised by the Community, Learning and Development Partnerships as to where there was most need.⁴ Based on the four local regeneration outcome agreements (ROA's), these areas are: -

5.4.1 *Perth & Kinross*

² PACP steering group minutes, 29/6/2005

³ F&TWAF Strategy, 2004-2008

⁴ PACP steering group minutes, 29/6/2005

- 5.4.1.1 Muirton and Fairfield, both in North Perth
- 5.4.1.2 New Rattray in Eastern Perthshire
- 5.4.1.3 Letham/Hillyland area of North Perth
- 5.4.2 *Angus*
 - 5.4.2.1 Demondale and Cliffburn in North Arbroath
Arbroath Harbour area
 - 5.4.2.2 Drumachlie in Brechin
- 5.4.3 *Dundee*

Five 'cluster' areas have been prioritised: -

 - 5.4.3.1 Menzieshill (part)/Charleston/Lochee and Beechwood in the Northwest
 - 5.4.3.2 St Mary's/Ardler and Kirkton to the North-Northwest
 - 5.4.3.3 Hilltown/Stobswell and Fairmuir in the Centre/East
 - 5.4.3.4. Mill O Mains/Fintry (part) and Whitfield (part) in the North
 - 5.4.3.5 Mid Craigie/Linlathen and Douglas in the East
- 5.4.4 *Fife*

Five 'cluster' areas have been prioritised: -

 - 5.4.4.1 Levenmouth (includes parts of Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, Kirkland and Kennoway)
 - 5.4.4.2 Kirkcaldy (includes parts of Linktown, Smeaton, Sinclairtown, Templehall, Gallatown, Hayfield, Forth Park and Dysart)
 - 5.4.4.3 Dunfermline (includes parts of Abbeyview, Inverkeithing and Kingseathill)
 - 5.4.4.4 Central Fife (includes parts of Lochgelly, Crosshill and Lochore, Kelty and Ballingry)
 - 5.4.4.5 West Fife (includes parts of Oakley and High Valleyfield)

These areas have been identified in the ROA's largely in accordance with the SIMD zones, but also take account of natural community boundaries. Relevant common statistical characteristics of these localities include high unemployment, low educational attainment, low percentages of working age adults with qualifications and low percentages of school-leavers entering full time higher/further education or training.⁵

⁵ For more detail see Perth & Kinross Community Planning Partnership –Regeneration Outcome Agreement, June 2005; Angus Community Planning Partnership – Regeneration Outcome Agreement, June 2005; Dundee Community Planning Partnership – Regeneration Outcome Agreement, June 2005;

- 5.5 6 of the PACP courses run in the first year have been targeted at these localities. The other 2 were informed by local knowledge of micro-deprivation and have focused on areas of rural isolation.
- 5.6 To date no projects have specifically targeted 'unemployed adults', 'black and ethnic minorities' or 'people with disabilities.'

6. Achievements

- 6.1 Substantial progress has been made on the PACP in the first year, including: -
- 6.1.1 The development of an administrative framework approved by the steering group
 - 6.1.2 Provision achieved in three local authority areas through 8 different pre-access opportunities increasing the range of second chance routes into tertiary education
 - 6.1.3 An energised network of practitioners meeting more frequently across the region to widen participation
 - 6.1.4 In most cases the delivery of pre-access opportunities was done so with effective collaboration between partners within a discrete local authority area, although there has also been cross-regional partnership from the HE sector
 - 6.1.5 Progress towards the cultivation of a portfolio of best practice in pre-access provision as recommended in the national Scottish Funding Council's review of widening participation report, *Learning For All*⁶
 - 6.1.6 Increased participation among disadvantaged groups in pre-access activities has begun to build a foundation for strengthening the business case for pre-access provision

7. Pre-Access Courses Delivered

- 7.1 This section will summarise the pre-access activities delivered through the PACP and statistical impact of these courses in the first year:

- 7.2 8 courses have been delivered across Fife and Tayside (3 in Dundee, 3 in Angus and 2 in Fife), rather than the 5 originally planned exceeding the PACP objectives in the first year.⁷
- 7.3 In total, 104 learners have enrolled in these pre-access opportunities across the region, and where the statistical evidence is available 59 individuals out of 72 completed the course
- 7.4 Of these 33 out of 96 where the statistical evidence is available have been identified through postcode analysis as deriving from the PACP target areas
- 7.5 14 out of 72 where the statistical evidence is available have progressed to other educational opportunities and a further 33 have either continued to participate in other Forum sponsored pre-access activities or have expressed a wish to continue to other educational opportunities in the future
- 7.6 The courses delivered in the last year include: -
- 7.6.1 **'Ready Study Go', August 10-16, 2005**
(Partners: Elmwood College, Fife Council)
- 7.6.2 **'Forensic Science and the Psychology of Crime', August 24-November 30, 2005**
(Partners: Dundee College, University of Dundee and Dundee City Council) – Proposal approved as a single bid, but delivered as two courses
- 7.6.3 **'Getting to Know Brechin' and 'The World of Children', February 22 – March 29, 2006**
(Partners: Angus College, University of Dundee, Angus Council and Careers Scotland) – Proposal approved as a single bid, but delivered as two courses
- 7.6.4 **'The World of Children: Play, an introduction', April 19, – June 21, 2006**
(Partners: Angus College, Angus Council and Careers Scotland)
- 7.6.5 **'Criminal Psychology', April 19, 2006 – June 7, 2006**
(Partners: University of Dundee and Dundee City Council)
- 7.6.6 **'Ready Study Go', May 10-16, 2006**
(Partners: Elmwood College and Fife Council)

⁷ Two of the courses counted in the eight were submitted as single bids, but in practice ran as four separate initiatives. See 7.6, (ii) and (iii)

More detail on these courses can be provided if you contact Ann Petrie, Transitions Development Officer, a.petrie@dundee.ac.uk

8. *Models of Good Practice*

- 8.1 All courses have been developed from the outset with a generic guidance element. The feedback from partners based on their experience has been that 'impartiality' should be a key component of such support. It has been suggested that local authorities (Ready Study Go) and Careers Scotland (Getting to Know Brechin and The World of Children) are best placed to provide this service. University and college partners have also been available to discuss progression options at the exit point
- 8.2 Providing a focus on the learners' aspirations and expectations, in conjunction with confidence building exercises has been appreciated by learners where it has been included as an integral part of the course (Ready Study Go and The World of Children)
- 8.3 Learners' evaluation forms reported that although taster courses provided through the PACP offered a valuable 'first step' opportunity they did not feel ready to move into more mainstream educational provision. Partners responded by offering more in-depth follow-up courses in the same subject area and this two-tier approach was received well by participants (Forensic Science and the Psychology of Crime and The World of Children).
- 8.4 Where courses have offered a range of subject-area tasters it has been advised that an additional single course contact person in direct contact with the class throughout its duration is vital to providing stability and allaying participant's fears and that the local authority community worker is best placed to provide this support (Ready Study Go and The World of Children)

9. *Delivery Issues Raised*

- 9.1 On a number of occasions some confusion has arisen regarding partner (and Forum) roles and responsibilities
- 9.2 It is recognised that there has been a long tradition of partnership working across the region in various localities. At this very early stage of development, however, the fully integrated and collaborative objective of the PACP has not yet

been realised. This is particularly the case where colleges and HEI's have formed partnerships, which has in some cases resulted in practice in complementary rather than fully integrated provision being offered. The original aim was to give individuals tasters of university and college provision on each course in their locality

- 9.3 There is currently no uniform approach to either enrolment or evaluation. This has had the benefit of enabling partners to work flexibly within their own activities taking account of institutions' particular needs and requirements. However, concerns have been expressed regarding the amounts of enrolment data required for relatively short and informal courses and different approaches to quality assessment of course delivery makes qualitative comparison across forum funded courses difficult
- 9.4 Six courses were planned by partners that did not run for a variety of reasons: -
- 9.4.1 **Tourism**
(Partners: Perth College, Perth & Kinross Council)
Cancelled due to difficulties in securing subject-specific teaching staff
- 9.4.2 **Bowhill Social Science Taster**
(Partners: Adam Smith College, University of Dundee and Fife Council) Cancelled due to apparent lack of learner interest and staff shortages
- 9.4.3 **Extension course to 'Getting to Know Brechin'**
(Partners: University of Dundee, and Angus Council)
Postponed at the request of learners who wanted a longer gap between courses
- 9.4.4 **Rattray 'You and Your Environment'**
(Partners: University of Dundee, Perth & Kinross Council and Perth College) Cancelled due to apparent lack of learner interest
- 9.4.5 **Occupational Health, Child Development and Care**
(Partners: Dundee College and Dundee City Council)
Postponed due to apparent lack of learner interest
- 9.4.6 **'Study Buddy'**
(Partners: Lauder College, Fife Council and St Andrews University) Postponed due to apparent lack of learner interest, and rapid turnaround between proposal and delivery
- 9.5 It is recognised that the success of the PACP relies on the importance of effective local promotion of these opportunities

and that the support and active involvement of locally based community workers is crucial

- 9.6 Where statistical evidence is available it should be noted that 59 out of 64 enrolled individuals were female and only 5 were male
- 9.7 The PACP steering group commissioned a scoping exercise to be conducted by the pre-access development officer of current pre-access activities across the region. Other commitments have meant that progress in this regard has been slower than anticipated

10. Significant Changes

- 10.1 In February 2006 a number of new community-based projects were approved by the Forum Executive and the PACP was absorbed into the wider theme of 'Transitions'. Transitions is now the theme under which all post-compulsory Forum activities will be taken forward. (See Appendix 3)

As the steering group originally conceived to oversee the PACP encompassed most partners involved in Transitions activities its remit and membership was widened to co-ordinate Transitions, and is now called the Transitions Management Group. In addition Ann Petrie's post was expanded to full-time and she now has responsibility for co-ordinating all Transitions Projects.

11. Future Development of the PACP and Suggestions

- 11.1 Consultation with partners as to how to take the project forward in the next year will be conducted between June and August 2006. The recommendation will be to develop a more pro-active approach to PACP activities by developing bids as a programme of activities (rather than single course bids) for the next academic year in its entirety. This would lessen the pressure on time between proposal and delivery; create a less labour intensive operational procedure; and allow partners to build in forum sponsored pre-access activities into local plans
- 11.3 While the first year has proved successful it would be beneficial to expand the PACP delivery output in order to maximise the best use of the resources available to provide sustainable opportunities and enhance the qualitative impact upon local communities

- 11.4 Maintaining the commitment and momentum of partners to work in partnership is vital to the success of the project and forum staff should engage more closely with existing partnerships and networks to avoid duplication
- 11.5 More precise targeting may increase the number of participants coming from the SIMD DZ 5, and reach other forum specified target groups highlighted in 5.3.1-5.3.6 of this review. In addition young men who have been identified as a national priority group in the Scottish Funding Council's widening participation review *Learning For All*, have also been under-represented on PACP opportunities and an increase in the number of men engaged would be desirable
- 11.6 In the course development stage, in order for guidance activities to be given a more equal emphasis, time should be designated to deliver this kind of provision throughout the course. This will enable a more effective referral system among partners and the additional support will enable participants on their first steps back into education to make more informed choices. It would also benefit participants if they were given the option to receive one-to-one guidance advice and support
- 11.7 The development officer's scoping exercise should be prioritised in 2006/2007
- 11.8 It may be beneficial to consider concisely clarifying at the outset of any proposed course all roles and responsibilities. This would avoid confusion and result in a more integrated approach to collaborative delivery of provision. In addition although initially partners agreed that the profile of the Forum should be kept to a minimum, the Transitions management group may wish to take this opportunity to review this circumstance in order to present a more clearly defined partnership identity

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 Considerable progress and success has been accomplished by partners in the first year of this project, although its experimental and innovative nature has raised some interesting challenges. A solid foundation of work has been created upon which the project can build in the next year.

Appendix 1: Administrative Framework Developed in Year 1 (2005/2006) of the Pre-Access Communities Project

Draft Guidelines for Approval of Funding for Pre-access Provision in Communities

1. Minimum of two partners one of which must be an HEI or FEC. Preference given to bids which include partners from communities, FEIs and HEIs.
2. Priority will be given to projects targeted at areas within the lowest 20% on the SIMD. Other areas will be considered where bids clearly reflect local priorities in areas with low participation/progression rates to higher education.
3. Bids will be welcomed that target particular groups e.g. disabled, ethnic minorities etc.
4. Funds are limited and bids exceeding £1500 to £2000 are less likely to be successful.
5. Funding will not normally be given for childcare, travel, venues and internal administration.
6. In-kind contributions should be identified.
7. Appropriate costs include teaching time, staff travel, publicity, course materials and handouts, awards ceremony and need to be broken down within the bid.
8. Guidance must be available to participants before, during and after the course and likely progression routes must be identified prior to course commencement with partners.
9. Partners must agree to take part in appropriate evaluation and tracking.
10. Bids must clearly show additionality. Funding will not be approved for provision that would have taken place anyway.

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Pre-access Communities Project Bid Template

Project Name.....

Lead partner.....

Other partners.....
.....

Background (I.e. does this project build on community consultations; previous educational provision or is it based on practitioners identification of need)

Proposal (I.e. the location of course; the proposed subject area; details of the guidance element and/or any special activities)

Does this project reach a Forum targeted group (I.e. Does it reach a priority targeted area within the lowest 20% SIMD or reflect a local priority with low participation/ progression rates to higher education)

Schedule and Structure

Any Other Relevant Information

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Draft Checklist for Pre-Access Provision in Communities Proposals

	Yes	No
1. Is at least one partner an HEI or FEC?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are there two or more partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the project target an area within the lowest 20% on the SIMD?		
OR		
Does the bid reflect a local priority where there is evidence of low participation or progression rates to Higher Education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have in-kind contributions been identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have all costs been identified and broken down?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is guidance built into the proposal so that it is available to participants before, during and after the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have progression routes been identified in conjunction with other Forum partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Does the bid clearly demonstrate additionality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED NO TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS PLEASE REVIEW YOUR PROJECT PROPOSAL, AS YOU HAVE NOT MET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR STEERING GROUP APPROVAL OF FUNDS.

Yes No

9. Does your bid cost £2000 or less?

If the answer is No can a reason for the cost exceeding £2000 be justified?

10. Have you confirmed a start date for provision?

11. Can you demonstrate that community consultation has taken place regarding the type of provision to be offered?

Pre-access Communities Project Course Co-Ordination Procedure

The Pre-access Development Officer will be available to support partners at all stages of the bidding and course delivery process.

Before the Course Starts

1. Bids should be agreed between partners, a proposal drafted and sent to the Pre-access Development Officer for circulation around the whole Transitions Steering Group for their consideration at least a week in advance of their next meeting. Funding approval will be given by the main Transition Steering Group or if a bid is submitted in the interval between meetings (which are held quarterly) this decision will be delegated to a sub group* which can gather at shorter notice to consider proposals
2. Following a successful bid partners will be contacted by the Pre-access Development Officer to arrange a meeting to confirm the roles and responsibilities of each partner
3. Partner's involved will be intermittently contacted by the Pre-access Development Officer to make sure that courses are developing smoothly

During the Course

1. The Pre-access Development Officer will attend (where possible) each first session
2. The Pre-access Development Officer will attend each last session to gather informal feedback from students. A small internal report will be based on this information

After the Course Ends

1. The end of course report form should be filled in by partners
2. Partners will be asked to report back to Steering Group

* The Pre-access Communities Project Sub-group will comprise of the Forum Manager, Pre-access Development Officer and at least three other members of the main Transitions Management Group. The three co-opted members will rotate quarterly following the Transitions Management Group Meetings

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**Pre-access Communities
Project End of Course Report
Form**

Project.....

Partner.....

Summary of recruitment and course structure in practice:

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Difficulties faced in constructing/recruiting/running the course (any other comments on 'difficulties' are also welcomed):

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.....

Synopsis of student evaluation forms: (if possible can originals also be attached)

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Number of learners enrolled: Male...../Female.....

Number (and gender ratio) of learners progressing to other educational opportunities:

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Number (and gender ratio) of learners expressing an intention to progress to other educational opportunities at a later date:

.....
.....
.....

Number of learners completing the course: Male...../Female.....

Issues arising from the project and future suggestions:

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.....

Postcodes of participating learners:

Financial Report:

Staffing Costs	
Non-staffing Costs	
Total Expenditure	

Please attach promotional literature

Appendix 2: Defining 'Pre-Access'

There appears to be two main categories of 'pre-access': -

1. In the first instance pre-access encompasses very low-level (SCQF levels 1-3) informal educational provision with the aim of raising the confidence/aspiration of the individual concerned. It is likely that this will be the first time involvement in learning for the learner on a non-compulsory basis, and is geared towards providing first-step opportunities that enable the learner to move forward in their lives.

The type of activities that deliver this provision includes: open days; guidance sessions; personal and skill development activities; and literacy and numeracy support. It may also comprise short non-accredited subject-based taster courses, which may or may not have vertical or even horizontal progression routes.

Engaging people in learning is the priority at this level, although its value is generally not measured with a progression criterion in mind. Service providers of these types of activities perceive the qualitative impact on communities as constructive in its own right, and the benefits to individuals and the wider society may evolve over short or much longer time frames. The primary service providers are local authorities, but not exclusively, and in recent years due to the development of partnership working it is much more likely that college/university or enterprise organisation will work in conjunction with the local authority to deliver provision.

2. At the opposite end of the scale 'pre-access' is perceived in relation to 'access' courses designed to gain entry for study at an HEI; is more formally structured and encompasses a higher level (SCQF level 3-6) of educational provision with the aim of opening up progression routes to learners. It may also, however, raise awareness of the choices available, and is undertaken as a first-step in non-compulsory education for learners who have perhaps not had the opportunity to participate in higher education previously.

The type of activities that deliver this provision includes: formally structured non-accredited subject-based or skills-based taster/introductory courses; informally structured (i.e. delivered in an informal way, such as, through distance learning) non-accredited subject-based or skills-based taster/introductory courses. A guidance element is generally built in.

Engaging people in learning is a priority at this level, but its value is often measured with a progression criterion in mind.

Appendix 3: The PACP within the Transitions Management Group Structure

