

# **West London Working Confederation Final Evaluation**

Rich Regeneration Ltd

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# Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction – the brief

The West London Working Guidance, Skills and Brokerage Confederation has been in operation since April 2009. It aims to support employment and skills providers by providing opportunities for them to meet within and across Borough boundaries and to support the continued professionalisation of the sector through capacity building. Tony Rich of Rich Regeneration was commissioned to carry out this final evaluation of two of the services provided by the Confederation- the e-bulletins and network events, both delivered by Rocket Science Consultants. The evaluation was required to review the Work Programme (<http://www.westlondonworking.org.uk/index.php?siid=13879>) web page set up on West London Working's website which aimed to provide providers with the latest information, tools and resources, developed by the Confederation, to support them in preparation of the Work Programme. In addition, the evaluation was to include views on how the Confederation might continue to be funded after the current contract ceases at the end of March 2011. This final evaluation follows the interim evaluation published in September 2010 and covers the period until the end of March 2011.

The interim evaluation report can be found in the Evaluation section of the West London Working website ([www.westlondonworking.org.uk](http://www.westlondonworking.org.uk)).

## 2. Aims of the Confederation

The main aims of the Confederation are to:

- Increase the visibility of providers so they are better placed to form strong partnerships and consortiums when new opportunities arise,
- Add value to the existing local and regional networking opportunities
- Support the continued professionalisation of the sector through regular networking and capacity building events as well as through regular e-bulletins; and to
- Support the provider base across West London by giving them a voice to communicate directly with funders and policy makers.

## 3. Confederation activities since the interim evaluation

The Confederation programme from September 2010 has included:

- Growth of the interrogative online database of 701 members comprising mainly employment and skills providers from the West London sub-region from 580 in Sept 2010
- Four capacity building workshops for smaller and niche providers on negotiation, building consortia, developing better relationships, and contracting with Prime Contractors, with an average of 12 providers at each workshop
- A "Meet the Prime Contractors" information and speed dating event bringing together over 100 providers to meet and connect around the Work Programme and ESF Commissioning

- One themed event, attended by 31 providers, featuring expert speakers able to provide up to date policy and practice information, with good opportunities for networking
- A series of monthly as well as ad hoc e-bulletins promoting events and support provided by local partners, funding and tendering opportunities and relevant national news.
- The establishment of a dedicated Work Programme webpage on the West London Working website to provide providers with the latest information, tools and resources to support them in preparation for the Work Programme and ESF Commissioning.

#### 4. Methodology for the final evaluation

The following methodology was used for the final evaluation:

- An assessment against event satisfaction information collected following the events.
- A series of telephone interviews with members of the network that had attended events to review operation of the Confederation.
- A comparison of outputs versus expenditure to establish value for money

The online survey and focus group were not used as these were the least effective research methods in the interim evaluation.

#### 5. Summary of the evaluation results

**Event user satisfaction forms-** The satisfaction level of event attendees overall was high comparing well with other events of this nature

**E-bulletins** – the e-bulletins were seen by respondents as a useful addition to the array of available sources of information. Particular areas of interest were new policy initiatives and funding sources

##### **Work Programme page –**

The webpage has a number of additional resources, namely:

- A guide to the transition fund
- A briefing note on loan finance
- Updated Work Programme Cash Assessment Tool which allows sub-contractors to work out their cash flow based on offers they receive from prime contractors

This is alongside updated information from the WLW team and included presentations and tools from capacity building workshops. This information will remain on the West London Working website, which will be live until 2014.

**One to one interviews** - The interviews confirm that the Confederation is seen to perform a useful role across West London and one which continues to give the sub-region an advantage in relation to other parts of the Capital. There is a view that the Confederation should continue but will need to change its geographic focus given the arrival of the Work Programme.

**Value for money** - in summary, the cost of writing and administering e-bulletins delivered to the membership is seen as acceptable and the cost of Confederation events per delegate is considered to represent good value for money given the level of activity involved. The use of community venues for most events apart from the Meet the Primes event has ensured that a large proportion of the total cost was invested in the local community.

## 6. Conclusions

The following conclusions and recommendations emerged from the evaluation:

### **Confederation as a whole**

The growth in membership of the Confederation from 580 in Sept 2010 to 701 members is an indication of the enduring success of the network in drawing in local providers. The Confederation is seen by participants in the evaluation as playing a useful role in bringing providers together over an area larger than a single borough but small enough to be meaningful in terms of delivery. In particular it is seen as playing a useful role in avoiding the need to establish additional borough-wide networks that would serve to duplicate meetings and administration.

### **e-bulletins**

The e- bulletins are seen by participants in the evaluation as helpful and succinct. They are not the only source of information used by interviewees but they are seen as providing a lot of useful information. The most helpful part of the bulletins is that referring to funding opportunities or new policy developments.

### **Confederation events**

The confederation events are seen as very professionally organised and run. In terms of topics the most useful event has been the 'meet the primes' speed dating event as it gave smaller providers the opportunity to meet with several prime contractors at one time in an informal setting and communicate what their organisation does. The other main role that the events play is to allow organisations to network with each other and ensuring that sufficient time is allocated for this purpose was crucial. Finally, the events have also served a very useful purpose in providing the latest information on funding sources and policy changes. This is particularly useful for smaller organisations that are unlikely to have the staff resources to devote to 'horizon scanning'.

Only two delegates voiced dissatisfaction with an event. This appears to have been for several reasons such as the main speaker overrunning resulting in a lack of networking time and too many people deciding to leave early, and the content of the presentations not delivering the latest information for delegates.

### **Future of the Confederation**

In terms of the future of the Confederation there is definite support for it to continue in some form. One of the key West London's Ask of Prime Contractors, who will be delivering the Work Programme, is that Prime Contractors should build on WLW products and support the Provider Confederation to maintain an informed and healthy supply chain that will deliver the most effective services to West London residents. However, given the emergence of the Work Programme contract areas there is a view that the Confederation will have to expand its coverage to match the larger 'West London' Jobcentre Plus district

taking in the additional boroughs of Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond. There is also a view that the Confederation could investigate becoming more interactive in nature e.g. through use of discussion or bulletin boards or blogs which could allow exchanges of views between meetings. This has been addressed by the provision of a user form and discussion board on the West London Working Directory of Employment Services launched in January 2011.

## **1. Introduction**

This is the final evaluation of the West London Working Provider Confederation, focusing in particular on the events, bulletins and the Work Programme resource page on the West London Working website. An interim evaluation was published in September 2010. The current evaluation includes all events and bulletins from July 2010 to March 2011. It also includes a consideration of the future sustainability of the Confederation.

## **2. Aims of the Confederation**

The original West London Working specification to appoint an organisation to develop the Confederation states that "The Confederation is West London Working's response to a need for provider networks across the sub region. It aims to support the provider base across West London by giving them a voice to communicate directly with funders and policy makers. It offers the opportunity for providers to learn, share and develop together."

In addition, the specification states that the network of providers:

- Adds value to existing networks such as the Brent in2 Work Provider Network.
- Builds on London Employment and Skills Taskforce 2012 Pan London Guidance and Brokerage Confederation "Relay London Jobs".
- Gives providers the opportunity to establish clear referral route ways with agreed protocols.
- Informs the West London Working Investment and Target Group of demand & supply on the ground.
- Forms proactive partnerships fit for purpose to access competitive funding.
- Publishes a capacity building workforce development programme building on what is already available for providers in West London.

The aim of the Confederation e-bulletins and events has been to help build a trusted network of providers of employment services in the sub-region and for bigger providers to work better together. This was in recognition that new commissioning arrangements for employment and skills services in the Prime Contractor model could have the effect of driving out provision from small, specialist and third sector providers.

The Confederation's activities are directed through a small Project Board involving representation from two prime contractors (A4E and Skills Training UK), a local authority (London Borough of Brent) and West London Working. Rocket Science, as the delivery organisation, also attended the Board.

## **3. Summary of the interim evaluation – key lessons**

The following conclusions and recommendations emerged from the interim evaluation published in September 2010:

### **Confederation as a whole**

- The role played by the Confederation in offering a sub-regional perspective on employment and skills provision was seen as giving the sub-region a definite advantage over other areas.
- The delivery of this perspective through targeted information e-bulletins and network and training events was also seen as a strong and well-received programme.
- A healthy 50% of questionnaire respondents indicated that the Confederation had led to improvements in their organisations, particularly as a result of sharing good practice and developing links with other organisations.
- The slim, non-bureaucratic management style of the Confederation through the Project Board was seen as a plus, although representation by prime contractors at network events was something that some respondents felt could be strengthened. While this is seen as an aspiration, it was noted that there had been an increase in attendance and participation by prime contractors over the first year of the programme e.g. through taking part in the 'Dragon's Den' type events.

### **e-bulletins**

- The simple, succinct format of the e-bulletins was received positively by those interviewed as part of the evaluation.
- People often used bulletins as part of a range of information media which they used to keep up to speed. A number of people who received the bulletins passed them onto colleagues.

### **Confederation events**

- Analysis of the evaluation sheets for the Confederation events indicated that overall the events were generally very well received by attendees, with levels of satisfaction comparing well with other similar events.
- Feedback from a focus group facilitated as part of the evaluation indicated that the perspective of employers could usefully feature more prominently at events – perhaps via choice of speakers.

This final evaluation represents an opportunity to review the findings of the interim study given changing circumstances.

## **4. Methodology used for the final evaluation**

For the interim evaluation the methodology included a value for money assessment, an online survey, and a focus group, together with a series of one to one interviews with confederation members and members of the West London Working Implementation Group. Because the response to the online survey and focus group was low, it was decided that for the final evaluation the following approaches would be used:

- An analysis of event satisfaction information collected following the events
- An assessment of web site traffic figures for the Work Programme webpage
- An assessment of average open and click rates for the e-bulletins
- One to one telephone interviews with five members of the Confederation including representatives from prime contractors and smaller providers who have been involved with the Confederation through the Project Board and/or who have

attended the events and a local authority. A list of interviewees is included at appendix 1

- A 'value for money' assessment using cost per service and unit cost

## 5. Results of the evaluation

### 5.1 Confederation Events

#### 5.1.1 Events

Two types of event have been delivered through the Confederation, *Capacity Building Workshops* and *Network Events*.

**Table 1: Number of delegates attending all capacity building and network events from May 2009 – Mar 2011**

Date	Name of event/capacity building workshop	Number of attendees
<b>Capacity Building Workshop</b>		
26/11/09	Negotiation skills	11
10/12/09	Building consortia	11
10/02/10	Cutting a deal	16
24/02/10	Dragons den – presenting your offer	9
10/03/10	Working in consortia	13
30/09/10 am	Preparing for the work programme and ESF commissioning	18
30/09/10 pm	Preparing for the work programme and ESF commissioning	18
23/11/10	Promoting Excellence in Service Delivery for Marginalised Groups	13
02/02/11	Keeping afloat in tough times	16
<b>Networking Events</b>		
14/05/09	Building Your Bid	25
24/09/09	Developing your Unique selling point – how to make your offer stand out	24
28/01/10	Mental health and work	40
25/03/10	Keeping ahead of the game	27
10/06/10	Getting Parents into work and keeping them there	54
05/10/10	Meet the Prime Contractors	83
30/11/10	Meeting the demands of employers	46
22/03/11	Getting ready for the work programme	34
<b>Total Number of attendees</b>		<b>458</b>

#### (i) Capacity Building Workshops

The aim of these workshops has been to help providers develop their capacity, through a range of tools and expertise, and group discussions around particular themes. Places

were limited to a maximum of twenty to allow for group work, practice sharing and individual support, and were targeted at smaller or specialist providers. The events were delivered by experts in procurement, contracting and fundraising within the welfare to work sector. Three capacity building events have been held since the interim evaluation.

**Table 2 Summary of aims and speakers for capacity building events**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
<b>Preparing for the Work Programme 1</b> 30/9/10 Morning	To provide tools and direction to help organisations have productive conversations with Prime Contractors during the bidding process for the Framework in the London region.	Caroline Masundire, Rocket Science  Clare Da Silva, Rocket Science Associate
<b>Preparing for the Work Programme 2</b> 30/9/10 Afternoon	To provide tools and direction to help organisations have productive conversations with Prime Contractors during the bidding process for the Framework in the London region.	Caroline Masundire, Rocket Science  Clare De Silva, Rocket Science associate
<b>Promoting Excellence in Service Delivery for Marginalised Groups</b> 23/11/10	To provide a highly interactive workshop is designed to support providers working with these groups to map their provision, develop new partnerships with other specialist providers and more effectively target funders and Prime Contractors in order to access funding streams.	Caroline Masundire, Rocket Science  Clare De Silva, Associate of Rocket Science
<b>Keeping afloat in tough times</b> 2/2/11	To enable organisations in both the private and the third sectors to re-examine their funding and income package and provide practical tools, insights and strategies for long term sustainability and growth.	Anne Tunnicliffe - The Social Investment Business Caroline Masundire, Rocket Science  Clare De Silva, Rocket Science associate

**Table 3 Summary of aims and speakers for network events**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
<b>Meet the Prime Contractors: Information and Speed dating Event</b>	To provide an information and speed dating event for employment and skills providers across West London to find out more information and connect	Representatives of 13 Prime Contractors: A4E, CDG, Eaga, ESG, FourstaR, G4S, Serco, Skills Training UK, Ingeus, Working Links,

<b>Event</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
5/10/10	with Prime Contractors who will be bidding to deliver services in West London.	Kennedy Scott , Seetec
<b>Meeting the Demands of Employers and Employees</b> 30/11/10	To provide information and allow discussion of likely future employer demand and also how organisations can work with individuals and their employers to develop in-work support and improve work retention	Ian Nichol, Director, West London Alliance Geoffrey Bligh, Employment Services Manager, Ingeus Alka Baines, Airside Corporation Bob Kitchin, Chief Executive, Twining Enterprise Alex Tambourides, National Workplace Lead, Mind
<b>Getting Ready to Deliver the Work Programme</b> 22/3/11	To help providers prepare for delivering their contracts, looking at issues such as compliance around data security, developing frontline advisors and getting contractual and business relationships off to a good start. With opportunities for networking, delegates will get the chance to attend all the interactive workshops, speak to experts and review how prepared they are for delivering Work Programme activities.	Louise Duncan - A4e Linda Hayworth - Duality Training Rob Weaver - Social Media Consultant Hilary Clifford - Welfare to Work Consultant

## **(ii) Networking events**

The half-day themed networking events were aimed at providers at every level in the supply chain and comprised three distinct elements:

- Updates on policy and thinking
- Examples of practice and experience from across West London
- Opportunities to network and create connections

Places were usually limited to 50 and they included plenty of opportunity for networking over lunch, breaks, and in discussion groups. Three network events have been held since the interim evaluation.

All events were followed up by an ebulletin with a full report of the event and links to all the presentations. These are posted on the WLW website.

A collation of the feedback information on the events is included below. The categories used by delegates to evaluate the events were: 'great', 'satisfactory' and 'poor'. An example of an evaluation form is included at appendix 2.

**Table 4 Level of satisfaction of participants in capacity building events**

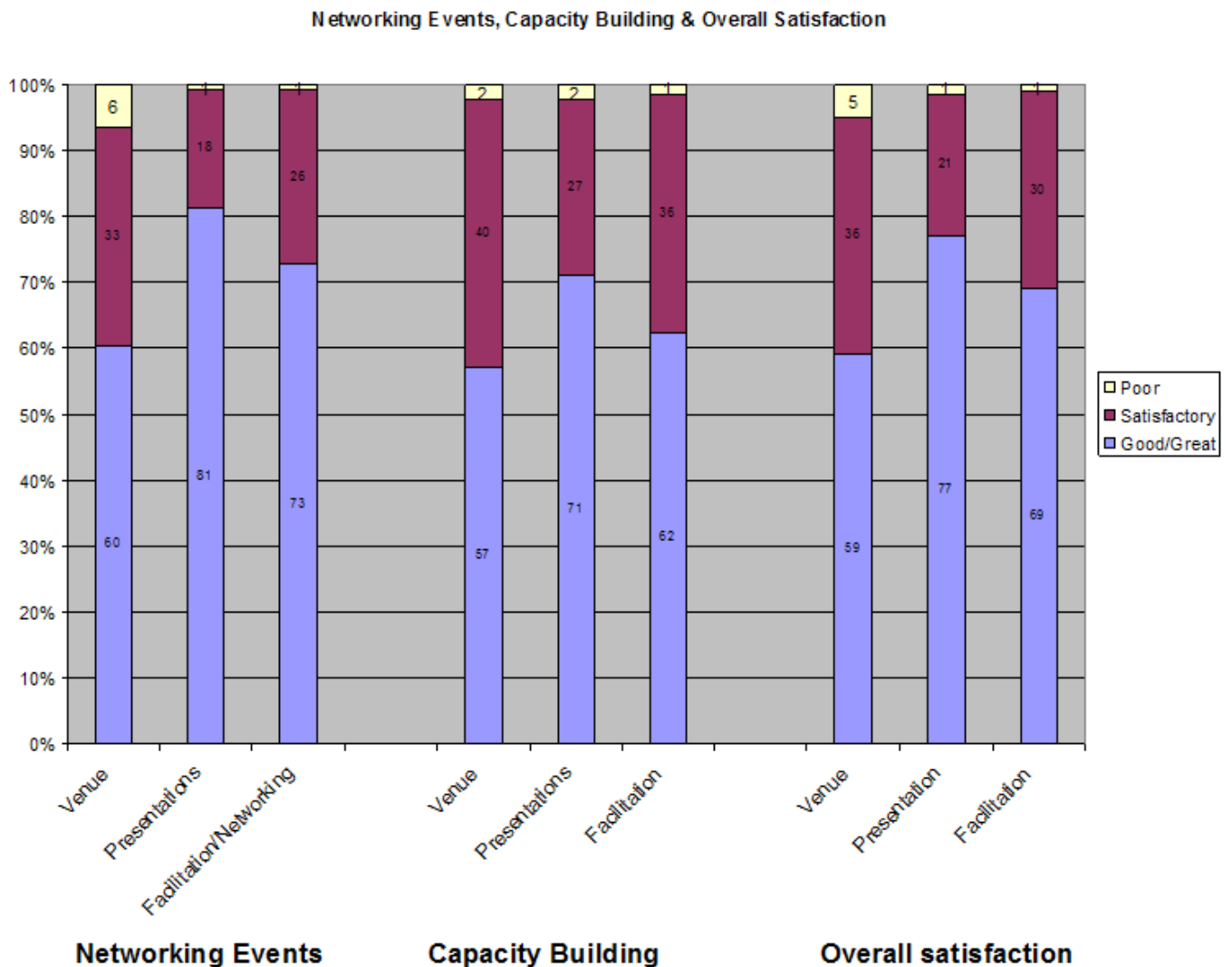
<b>Event</b>	<b>Delegates</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<b>Preparing for the Work Programme 1</b> 30/9/10 Morning	18 registered 18 (100%) attended	<b>Venue:</b> 5/13 (38%) 'Great' 8/13 (62%) 'satisfactory' <b>Presentations:</b> 7/13 (54%) 'Great', 6/13 (46%) 'satisfactory' <b>Facilitation:</b> 8/13 (62%) 'Great' 5/13 (38%) 'satisfactory'
<b>Preparing for the Work Programme 2</b> 30/9/10 Afternoon	18 registered 18 (100%) Attended	<b>Venue:</b> 9/15 (60%) 'Great' 6/15 (40%) 'satisfactory' <b>Presentations:</b> 17/19 (89%) 'Great' 2/19 (11%) 'satisfactory' <b>Facilitation:</b> 10/15 (67%) 'Good' 5/15 (33%) 'satisfactory'
<b>Keeping afloat in tough times</b> 2/2/11	20 registered 16 (80%) attended	<b>Venue</b> 3/9 (33%) 'Great', 6/9 (67%) 'Satisfactory'. <b>Presentations</b> 2/9 (22%) 'Great', 5/9 (56%) 'Satisfactory', 2/9 (22%), Poor, 2/9 (22%) <b>Facilitation</b> 1/9 (11%) 'Great, 7/9 (78%) 'Satisfactory', 1/9 (11%) 'Poor'
<b>Promoting Excellence in Service Delivery for Marginalised Groups</b> 23/11/10	21 registered 13 (62%) Attended	<b>Venue:</b> 10/10 (100%) 'Great' <b>Presentations:</b> 7/10 (70%) 'Great', 3/10 (30%) 'Satisfactory' <b>Facilitation:</b> 8/10 (80%) 'Great', 2/10 (20%) 'satisfactory'

**Table 5 Level of satisfaction of participants in network events**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Delegates</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<b>Meet the Prime Contractors: Information and Speed dating Event</b> 5/10/10	106 registered 83 (78%) attended	<b>Venue</b> 5/5 (100%) 'Great' <b>Presentations</b> 5/5 (100%) 'Great' <b>Networking</b> 5/5 (100%) 'Great'
<b>Meeting the Demands of Employers and Employees</b> 30/11/10	46 registered 31 (67%) attended	<b>Venue</b> 6/24 (25%) 'Great', 18/24 (75%) 'satisfactory' <b>Presentations</b> 19/24 (80%) 'Great', 4/24 (20%) 'satisfactory' <b>Networking</b> 10/24 (42%) 'Great', 12/24 (50%) 'satisfactory', 1/24 (8%) 'poor'

Event	Delegates	Feedback
<b>Getting Ready to Deliver the Work Programme</b>  22/3/11	51 registered 34 (67 %)attended	<b>Venue</b> 5/11 (45 %) 'great', 6/11 (55%) 'satisfactory' <b>Presentations</b> 9/11 (82 %) 'great', 2/11 (18 %) 'satisfactory', <b>Networking</b> 6/11 (55%) 'great' , 5/11 (45%) 'satisfactory'

**5.1.2 Table showing level of delegate satisfaction for all capacity building and network events from May 2009 – Mar 2011**



### 5.1.3 Analysis of event satisfaction

The feedback from participants in the events is broadly similar to that recorded in the interim evaluation, although there are minor differences e.g. the percentage of people who cancelled after registering was slightly lower than in the first wave of events.

#### Delegate comments

*"Overall all a very good day – thanks! Working through a case study is always a great way of consolidating the main learning points. Spreadsheets/ costing tools are generally a nightmare to demonstrate but I'd have liked longer on that. Generally very informative"*  
- a delegate at the capacity building event held on 30<sup>th</sup> September in the afternoon

*"A great insight into and getting up to date with, the current status of the Work Programme"* - delegate at the morning session on 30<sup>th</sup> September

*" This event (Meet the primes) has been really good for making contacts with local providers, its impossible for Prime contractors to get round to every area or for smaller organisations to have the time to come to individual events, but this event has enabled us to connect with potential contractors across West London in a highly effective and efficient way. All areas should be thinking of doing this!"*  
*Matt Coales - Partnership Manager - Business Development, G4S*

#### Learning points

Delegates at events were asked to note any learning points and also to make suggestions for future themes for events. These covered a range of subjects although some clear themes emerged:

#### Collaborative working

- Considering how to work as part of consortium
- Ideas on where to pitch my organisation / look at obtaining more defined outcomes
- Thinking about consortia & networking availabilities

#### Working with primes

- Pitfalls in working with primes
- Where can we add value & make primes look good
- A general appreciation of the issues delivering organisations need to consider before entering into partnership with a prime
- How to pitch to primes – it has given me more clarity on a number of points that I can go away & think about

#### Working in the Work Programme

- Considering our fit with the objectives of the Work Programme
- Clarification of some points / understanding the framework
- Knowing current status of the Work Programme & we could be part of it

### Use of the Cost Assessment Toolkit (CAT)

- Use of the Cost Assessment Toolkit within the Work Programme
- Thinking about selling points / CAT programme interesting
- Context of Work Programme
- Funding rounds timetable & potentially the CAT
- Cash flow assessment tool. The difference between specialist & end to end

### Suggestions for future topics for events

The range of future topics that delegates would like to see covered included:

- Lessons learnt from partnership ventures; from application through to delivery
- Consortium bidding workshops
- Legal aspects to setting up consortia
- What to look for in contracts (legal aspects)
- Discussions & meeting West London primes
- A workshop on effective implementation & running of contracts
- Further networking opportunities
- Information regarding emerging contractors
- More information from Skills Funding Agency on funding
- Very useful to find out what can be done for future business
- Marketing
- More inclusion of the private sector in future events- some of us are small as well!
- Practical examples of in work support
- At this time, effective updates on big contracts / players

Some of these topics such as "Discussions and meeting West London Primes " and "Practical examples of in work support" have been covered in events held in the last few months.

## 5.2 Confederation e-Bulletins

21 bulletins have been sent out since the interim evaluation was carried out (September 2010). Of these 13 were notifications of Confederation events, 7 substantive information bulletins and one was an analysis of the winners and losers in the Work Programme contract bidding process.

**Table 6 e-bulletins since September 2010**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Subjects covered</b>
14 September 2010	Provider bulletin 13	Policy update
16 September 2010	Meet the Primes speed dating event	Details of event on 5/10/10
16 September 2010	Preparing for the work programme and ESF commissioning	Details of event on 30/9/10
24 September 2010	Meet the Primes speed dating event – reminder	Details of event on 5/10/10
24 September 2010	Preparing for the work programme and ESF	Details of event on 30/9/10

	commissioning - reminder	
13 October 2010	Provider bulletin 14	Policy update
5 November 2010	Provider bulletin 15	Policy update
12 November 2010	Promoting excellence in services for marginalised groups	Details of event on 23/11/10
12 November 2010	Meeting the demands of employers and employees	Details of event on 30/11/10
26 November 2010	Analysis of winners and losers on the Work Programme Framework	Analysis of organisations successful and unsuccessful in getting onto the framework to bid for Work Programme contracts
8 December 2010	Provider bulletin 16	Policy update
21 December 2010	Provider bulletin 17	Policy update
18 Jan 2011	Provider bulletin 18	Policy update
21 January 2011	Keeping afloat in tough times	Details of event 2/2/11
27 January 2011	Keeping afloat in tough times - reminder	Details of event 2/2/11
18 February 2011	Provider bulletin 19	Policy update
2 March 2011	Getting ready to deliver the Work Programme	Details of event 22/3/11
3 March 2011	Final annual review and question time	Details of final meeting 28/3/11
9 March 2011	Getting ready to deliver the Work Programme- reminder	Details of event 22/3/11
14 March	Final annual review and question time - reminder	Details of event /3/11
22 March	Getting ready to deliver the Work Programme- reminder	Details of event 22/3/11

Average open and click rates are 25% and 38% respectively, with the highest volume of opens and click rates on the Framework Winners and Losers bulletin at the end of November (35% and 62%), closely followed by the Meeting the Demands of Employers bulletin on the 8<sup>th</sup> December with highest number of clicks through to the West London Alliance presentation.

**Table 7 – Comparison of e-bulletins**

<b>Name of network</b>	<b>Average open rate</b>	<b>Average 'click' rate</b>
<b>City Strategy Pathfinder Network</b>	50%	58%
<b>IDeA Employability bulletins</b>	40%	50%
<b>West London Working</b>	25%	38%

The figures in table 6 above show that the average 'open' and 'click' rates for the WLW e-bulletins are lower than other comparable networks. However, despite the averages being lower, the figures for the highest and lowest percentages above shows that for certain topics, interest was comparable. The low average figures may be a result of the many repeat e-bulletins reminding people of events which they will already have received notification of.

### **5.3 Work Programme Web page**

A web page devoted to the Work Programme was established on the West London Working website in October 2010 as part of phase two of the Confederation. The intention of the Work Programme web page was to provide members of the Confederation with information on the process for organisations wishing to bid to contract on the programme. The Work Programme Page includes:

- West London's 'ask' of Prime Contractors
- Local information on the West London area compiled by West London Working and the six London Boroughs
- A series of documents comprising spatial priorities and opportunity areas
- DWP preferred suppliers for the Framework of Employment Related Services
- Observatory Work Programme Pages
- Provider Contact database
- Work Programme Costing Tool
- Work Programme Financial Modelling Tool
- Top ten tips for working with Prime Contractors
- Guide to Finance

The following table gives the information on the traffic on the site up until January 2011.

**Table 8: Traffic on the Work Programme website October 2010 –January 2011**

	<b>Oct 2010</b>	<b>Nov 2010</b>	<b>Dec 2010</b>	<b>Jan 2011</b>
<b>Total WLW website traffic</b>	2687	2214	1758	1954
<b>Work Programme Page views</b>	360	215	284	152
<b>% of total WLW website traffic</b>	13	10	16	8

## Analysis

An analysis of the traffic on the site shows that numbers declined on a monthly basis for the first three months before climbing slightly. This may reflect that visitors to the site gained the knowledge they needed to early on and then felt less need to return to the site on a regular basis. The variation in the traffic on the site broadly relates to the timetable of events for tendering for the Work Programme e.g. the release of information on the tendering process in October 2010 matches a rise in views.

## 5.4 Qualitative analysis since the interim evaluation

### 5.4.1 Interviews

Five telephone interviews were carried out with members of the Confederation that have attended network events. The intention was to capture views of Confederation members of the network as a whole, as well as the events and bulletins in particular. In addition, it was hoped that we would be able to record stories illustrating the benefits that smaller providers had experienced from membership of the confederation. Finally the issue of how the confederation might be sustained beyond the current deadline of the end of March 2011 was also explored with interviewees.

#### (i) Views on the Confederation as a whole

The Confederation was seen by interviewees as definitely playing a very useful role and as something they were keen to be involved in. For smaller organisations, the Confederation helped them to make contact with Prime Contractors and other sub-contractors and gain knowledge on sources of funding and new policy direction. One interviewee felt that the Confederation had 'missed a trick' at the beginning in that he felt it did not fully involve the prime contractors enough but felt that this has since been rectified. One Prime Contractor commented that his organisation had been received by the Confederation "enthusiastically and positively". He also commented that the Confederation had been organised "very professionally". One local authority interviewee commented that "...the Confederation is unique as there is nothing else that performs this role".

The very professional approach taken by the event organisers, Rocket Science and the West London Working management team is praised by all interviewees.

#### (ii) Views on the events

The events were seen by all interviewed as very well organised and well worth attending. In terms of the benefits the small providers interviewed referred to the benefits of the opportunity to meet with a number of prime contractors at one time through the Meet the Prime event and promote their organisations outside of a formal application process. The local authorities mentioned that the events (and the Confederation overall) gave them an opportunity to help build the supply chain in their boroughs.

In terms of the role of the Confederation events for small providers, one interviewee referred to the difficulties small providers are sometimes faced with having to fit into a 'one size fits all' process. As a result they can easily lose out. Being able to approach prime contractors and make a case for involvement on the basis of their specialist

knowledge and approach can be very beneficial as illustrated in the case study of Action Dog Community Interest Company (CIC) below.

### **Case study 1 – Action Dog CIC as a sub-contractor**

As a result of attending the 'Meet the Primes' WLW event a small provider Action Dog, a Community Interest Company which trains young people on creative media, was able to join up in a number of partnerships with prime contractors to bid under the Work Programme. The direct contact with the prime contractor was crucial in that it enabled Action Dog to put specific questions to them and discover that despite the generic nature of the processes that the prime contractor used, the 'offer' of the provider was likely to be useful to them and they should submit a proposal.

Another role of the events has been to provide a forum for prime and sub-contractors to meet with representatives of local authorities. One Prime Contractor interviewee stressed that the events must be seen as the start of a process of network building – see case study of ADC College below.

### **Case study 2 – ADC College**

As a result of attending two events (and especially the 'Meet the Primes' speed dating event) a representative of ADC College had been able to form bidding partnerships with six different Prime Contractors. While this is seen as a success, the point was made that this is really just the start of a process and that the 'product' of this activity was still awaited.

### **Case study 3 – Skills Training UK**

The WLW events were very useful in that they enabled Prime Contractor Skills Training UK to establish good relations with the local authorities in the sub-region and also for them to meet with a number of smaller sub-contractors. As a result of taking part in a WLW event for 18-24 yr olds (Playing to Win) which included a motivational speaker the organisation was able to give placements to two young people.

#### **(iii) Views on the e-bulletins**

The e-bulletins are seen as useful as one of a number of sources of information that interviewees used. Others included 'Funding Central', 'Local Gov' and 'Yes Minister'. One or two interviewees confessed to having insufficient time to read the bulletins properly. The most useful aspects of the bulletins referred to by interviewees were information on new funding opportunities and updates on policy.

#### **(iv) Future of the confederation**

There is a general view that the Confederation is a 'good thing' and should continue. One of the key West London's Ask of Prime Contractors, who will be delivering the Work Programme, is that Prime Contractors should build on WLW products and support the Provider Confederation to maintain an informed and healthy supply chain that will deliver

the most effective services to West London residents. There is a prevailing view that change will be needed in order to take account of the new boundary of the Work Programme delivery areas and new Jobcentre Plus districts. There was also a view that there could be a review of the operation of the Confederation to try to make it more interactive and draw in views of its members using online forums etc. However, this has been partly addressed through the establishment of a user forum and discussion board on the WLW Directory of Employment services.

In terms of who funds the Confederation post March 2011 the interviewees set out a few possible solutions: via the three prime contractors who will be selected to deliver the Work Programme in West London only, the prime contractors and local authorities in the area, or one of these plus a small subscription fee to confederation members. There is a general view that the local authorities would need to be involved to avoid the issue of duplication of their own networks.

## 5.5 Costs and value for money

The cost of providing each element of the Confederation services from September 2010 to end of March 2011 is set out in tables 6 and 7 below. The largest proportion in terms of cost relates organising and facilitating the 7 network and capacity building events which were attended by 213 people in total. 21 e-bulletins were issued in all over the period covered by the evaluation although of these 14 were invitations to events, 6 information or policy bulletins and one an analysis of Work Programme winners and losers.

**Table 9 –WLW Confederation Costs**

Element	Cost (£s)	Percentage
e-communications (21)	3,825	10%
Events* (7)	25,325	65%
1-2-1 capacity building support	3,000	8%
Options for sustainability	3,750	10%
Evaluation	2,650	7%
<b>Total**</b>	<b>38,550</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*includes event hire and maintenance of database

\*\* NB excludes VAT

### Analysis

In terms of proportion of spend, the division between the various elements i.e. events, e-communication, online capacity building, devising options for future sustainability of the Confederation and the evaluation is seen as acceptable.

**Table 10 –Unit cost of the WLW Confederation Services**

Element	Cost per unit (£s)	Cost per person (£s)	Total (in £s)
Bulletins (21)	182	N/A	3,825
Events (7)	3,618	119	25,325
<b>Total</b>			<b>29,150</b>

\*\*NB excludes VAT

## **Analysis**

Using this simple measure of cost per unit the value for money of the e-bulletins is good and comparable to that recorded in the interim evaluation. The cost per delegate of the events is also acceptable. As the event venues chosen are community premises where possible there is an aim to direct funding to smaller civil society organisations where possible.

## **6. Conclusions**

### **6.1 Confederation as a whole**

The Confederation is seen as playing a useful role in bringing providers together over an area larger than a single borough but small enough to be meaningful in terms of delivery.

### **6.2 e-bulletins**

The e- bulletins are seen as helpful and succinct. They are not the only source of information used by interviewees but they are seen as providing a lot of useful information. The most helpful part of the bulletins is that referring to funding opportunities or new policy developments.

### **6.3 Confederation events**

The confederation events are seen as very professionally organised and run. The most useful were those where links and relationships could be built between smaller providers and prime contractors, for example, the 'meet the primes' one as they have given smaller providers the opportunity to meet with several prime contractors at one time in an informal setting and communicate what their organisation does. The other main role that the events play is to allow organisations to network with each other and the fact that sufficient time was allocated for this purpose was crucial. Finally, the events have also served a very useful purpose in providing the latest information on funding sources and policy changes. This is particularly useful for smaller organisations that are unlikely to have the staff resources to devote to 'horizon scanning'.

There was a view taken by two interviewees that the events are geared towards voluntary and community organisations and have tended to neglect other small organisations e.g. small or micro private sector organisations. It is the case that a larger proportion of the small organisations at events were from the third sector than the private sector. However this may reflect the make up of organisations sub-contracting on employment and skills programmes. Another interviewee stated that this apparent bias had been rectified in later events. A list of suggestions for topic to be covered by future events which was made by delegates is included at 5.2.2 above. There is a clear desire for practical topics such as the legal aspects of forming consortia, effective marketing, contracting with partners, etc.

### **6.4 Work Programme web page**

The addition of a web page devoted to the Work Programme was seen by respondents as a good way for the Confederation to respond to the interests and needs of its members. Views of the page have understandably fluctuated with the timetable for information becoming available on the processes for bidding for contracts.

## 6.5 Future of the Confederation

There is definite support among interviewees for the Confederation to continue in some form. However, given the emergence of the Work Programme contract areas there is a view that the Confederation will have to expand its coverage to match the larger 'West London' area.

One interviewee argued that the Confederation could aim to be more interactive in the future e.g. through use of discussion forums, blogs or bulletin boards, etc. However, this has been partly addressed through the establishment of a user forum and discussion board on the WLW Directory of Employment services but this could be something that is built on should funding be secured to continue the administration of the Confederation post March.

In terms of the future financial sustainability of the Confederation, the view of interviewees is that the Prime Contractors that are awarded the contract to deliver the Work Programme in the West London area would be the logical organisations to take on the funding of the administration of the Confederation, whatever its boundary. There is also a view expressed that the local authorities need to be somehow linked into the governance of the Confederation partly because they will continue to represent major players in the area, but also to link in to Boroughs' existing networks.

## **Appendix i**

### **List of interviewees**

Gursharn Rait – London Borough of Brent

Graham Clarke – Skills Training UK

Rob Mesrie –Goals UK

Tim Barklem –Action Dog

Geraldine Allen – ADC College

**Appendix ii**

**Sample event evaluation form**

**Preparing for the Work Programme Framework and  
 ESF Commissioning in London**

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

**Evaluation - PM**

Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation form. Your comments will contribute both to the assessment of the effectiveness of this event and help to determine our development of future workshops.

Please score / comment on the following:

<b>Key</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Great</b>
<b>1. Venue</b>			
Comment: .....			
<b>2. Food / refreshments</b>			
Comment: .....			
<b>3. Administration of the day</b>			
Comment: .....			
<b>4. Session 1</b>			
Comment: ..... <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: -10px;"></div>			
<b>5. Session 2</b>			
Comment: .....			
<b>6. Session 3</b>			

Comment: .....

**7. Facilitation of the workshop**



Comment: .....

**8. What would you say was your biggest learning point today that will make a difference to your work/thinking?**

Comment: .....

.....

.....

**9. What would you like to see in future WLW events and workshop?**

Comment: .....

.....

.....

Any other comments: .....

Your name: (optional) .....

**Thank You!**