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Developing the progression of Islington students into further and higher education – through local partnerships.

A report by City University, London for HEFCE

George Olden and Eamon Martin.





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Why Islington?

- 6th most deprived borough in the UK.
- students from disadvantaged backgrounds / ethnic minorities.
- schools have struggled to raise standards
- mobile student population.
- 60% of students – free school meals.
- 1 x FE, 2 x HE
- 2 academies, 8 other LA supported schools.



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How we did the research.

- Consultation with secondary schools
- Interviews with staff at other relevant organisations (Islington Borough Council, London Metropolitan University, etc.)
- Liaison with City & Islington College
- Focus groups with year 9, 10 and 11 students
- Statistical analysis





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Key features/strengths of partnerships in Islington.

- Many small-scale, effective, 'informal' partnerships
- London Metropolitan University
- WP and outreach programmes
- enthusiasm in schools
- Clear evidence of the impact on the student experience
- Arsenal Football Club





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Challenges for effective partnerships in Islington.

- Resources
- Time
- Information
- Staff expertise
- Borough co-ordination
- Lack of consultation with schools
- Cultural barriers between levels
- Communications - between schools and with HE.





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Our conclusions for Islington.

- significant potential for partnerships to be developed
- no 'one size fits all' for partnerships
- universities must be more flexible and innovative
- schools must commit staff time to this area of work
- co-ordination must be appropriate and will differ from area to area
- partnerships should be grown from 'grass-roots' level





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The recommendations.

- Progression framework
- Co-ordinate services
- Reciprocal governance arrangements
- Expand 'subject forums'
- Grow academic links
- More online links/modules
- Involve other organisations
- Identify most successful partnerships as models
- Increase awareness of vocational opportunities
- Increase university links with primary schools



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Taking this forward.

Strengthening the FE-HE partnership in the borough

Pilot projects with secondary schools targeted at very specific social/ethnic groups

Greater interaction and collaboration of services at all levels

More 'bespoke' activities designed in consultation with schools

Initiatives to improve the support and guidance for students on vocational courses

Seek new funding or ways to use resources more efficiently

More initiatives to involve employers and local organisations

