

Annual Report Yorkshire and North East Hub 2009

Co-ordinator: Dr Tony Bromley
Hub Manager: Dr Vicky Willett
Hub Administrator: Kay Sedgwick

HEIs involved with the Hub: University of Bradford
University of Durham
University of Huddersfield
University of Hull
University of Leeds
Leeds Metropolitan University
University of Newcastle
University of Northumbria
University of Sheffield
Sheffield Hallam University
University of Sunderland
University of Teesside
University of York

2009 has seen the YNE hub putting significant effort into supporting Vitae programmes at the regional level such as the effective researcher, the part time researcher programmes and the careers in academia. The hub has continued to expand its contacts to include those who support research staff and to focus more on research staff issues in line with the broadened remit of Vitae.

Participation from the region has continued to be good, however a slight decline in figures attending events designed for staff supporting researchers has been noted in 2009, while figures for researchers attending specific events has increased. This has led us to speculate that while the outlook for researcher development funding is uncertain institutions are concentrating more internally. However, there is still a demand for region wide direct provision which the hub is doing its best to facilitate without actively providing.

Changes in the hub in 2009 have included the return of Dr Vicky Willett (the Hub Manager) from maternity leave and the departure of Suzi Ibbotson (Hub Manager maternity leave cover). The Hub Manager hours were reduced to 80% as of 30th March 2009 and in order to pick up some of the workload and additional administration that the Hub undertakes, a Hub Administrator position was advertised and recruited for during July 2009. Therefore the Hub welcomes Kay Sedgwick as the new Hub Administrator. Kay works 40% for the Hub and started in post on 10th August 2009. Kay is employed to administer the hub events and help develop the hubs expanding contacts on the CARE database.

2. Review of Progress against the YNE Hub Terms of Reference

The Hub exists to:

- 1. Build and engage a regional network of stakeholders in the vision and aims of the Programme, acting as a conduit for dialogue between regional and national groups, providing mechanisms to share practice, and disseminating information.**

The Hub holds regular steering group meetings (3 times a year) which provide a forum and conduit for dialogue between the regional universities and the national Vitae programme. We monitor attendance at these meetings and invite all the regions universities to put forward up to 2 representatives to sit on the steering group. Additionally a Basecamp working group for the steering group has also been set up to aid and encourage the flow of information. This 'Virtual' steering group contains further membership. The sharing of practice on a regional basis is primarily achieved through the Trainer and Developers' Forums which are held up to 3 times a year, this used to be achieved by the Good Practice Workshop however this has been superseded by these more focused workshops while the good practice workshop has taken on more of a strategic role and conference model which seems to be well received.

- 2. Identify specific needs of regional stakeholders, facilitating activities and access to resources to respond to those needs.**

The Hub strategy was developed in close collaboration with steering group members, identifying regional needs. The strategy document for the Hub outlines the requirement to monitor progress against specific objectives and to review and monitor the Hubs strategy document in the March steering group meeting on an annual basis. This allows the Hub to look at specific regional needs for the [academic] year ahead and to schedule them into the Hubs calendar of events or to take them forward to the national strategic meetings of the Vitae programme. Identified needs in 2009 have included more support for arts and humanities postgraduates, and more support for research staff at a regional level.

- 3. Lead and stimulate (regional) thinking on how we provide effective support for postgraduate researchers and research staff.**

In addition to point 2 above the Hub organises and runs an annual good practice event which allows all those from the region (and beyond) to learn and contribute to specific strategic areas which the steering group have highlighted as important. This year's event focussed on the changing Skills Agenda, with specific reference to how it is funded and how institutions can best manage the changing funding pattern.

- 4. Act as a catalyst for debate, ideas and innovation, enabling regional network members to engage with appropriate areas of the Programme.**

E mail bulletins are sent out on a monthly basis keeping not only steering group members up to date on all areas of the programme but all those who have opted to receive the bulletins. For steering group members the working group on Basecamp provides an additional tool of dissemination and discussion between regional members and the hub. The hub events also act as a catalyst for debate and ideas within the region.

- 5. Contribute to meeting the overall aims of the national Programme, supporting national and network activities, publications and innovations by facilitating partnerships and raising awareness.**

All national and network activities are advertised and disseminated in the quarterly newsletters and monthly e mail bulletins. Publications are disseminated throughout the regional network and partnerships are forged and facilitated at a regional and national level at conferences and at the policy forum and regional meetings such as at the Trainer and Developers' Forums. The YNE Hub is also privileged to have several members of the

steering group sit on the Rugby Team and also have a representative of ResDAG, this allows the YNE Hub to contribute nationally to the impact and evaluation agenda and to the research staff development agenda outside of the usual national strategic and operational meetings. The Hub has also continued to focus on supporting the implementation of the new Concordat by distributing the briefing packs and presenting at several different events.

6. Contribute to measuring the impact of the Programme, particularly on a regional basis.

All events are recorded and numbers of attendees noted. New attendees are given the option of being added to the Vitae contacts database (CARE) which will then provide a record of their attendance at future events.

2. Review of Specific Objectives

Progress against 2008 objectives

- Overall RD programme
- *Gather and disseminate news and information related to the aims of Vitae to the regional network, including quarterly newsletters*

In 2009 the YNE hub sent out 6 events news bulletins and 4 Newsletters

Events News	Numbers	YNE Newsletters	Numbers
February	1077	Winter 09	1100
March	1033	Spring 09	1020
July	1021	Summer 09	1013
August	1020	Christmas 09	1008
Sep	1022		
Oct/Nov	1023		

More strategic consultations were circulated via the Bascamp mailing group to the steering group representatives.

- *Expand the regional network of individuals interested in the aims of Vitae*

The Hub has held and contributed to several events within 2009 to expand the network of individuals involved and interested in the aims of Vitae. The Hub manager has presented at several workshops on the role of Vitae in promoting the Skills Agenda while the Hub Coordinator has also spoken at several events on the topic of impact and evaluation (see activity report for specifics).

The Hub also tries to engage new individuals with the Poster Competition which is annually held in April and includes employers and non HEI representatives as Judges. This year the Hub engaged several new individuals to judge the poster competition including representatives from the Leeds City Museum, the BBC Big Screens, Opera North and the Northern Ballet Theatre.

Finally the Hub also held a 'Careers in Academia' training workshop on 11th December specifically for the arts and humanities which was well received and attended by 36 postgraduate researchers, this event not only publicised Vitae to the participants but also forged new relationships with early career academics who presented at the event.

- *Develop a broad knowledge of key related organisations in the region; contribute to decisions on how Vitae should relate to and engage with these organisations; build appropriate relationships.*

The Hub has collaborated with the SRHE by co hosting a launch event for the 'Evaluating Training and Development Programmes for Postgraduate and Newer Researchers' publication.

The Hub has also sought to work with the Public engagement Beacon by attending the Beacons meeting in December.

The Hub also routinely works alongside the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies, for example by publicising their events at the Careers in academia session in December and through their participation at hub events.

In terms of other non HEI organisations the Yorkshire and North East region is covered by 2 Regional development agencies; One North East and Yorkshire Forward. So far the YNE Hub has made contact with Yorkshire Forward with limited success; however we hope to forge links with One North East in 2010 with the Public Engagement Competition which is scheduled to be held in Newcastle in April.

- *Support the development of online tools to help meet needs of the regional network, including maintaining and developing hub specific web pages to engage and support regional networks*

The Hub strives to maintain up to date web pages with online booking forms for all the events we hold. The Hub also has responsibility for uploading the Rugby team Impact updates onto the policy pages of the Vitae web site.

The Hub also uses Basecamp to encourage all steering group members to participate in consultations and communicate important policy and strategy information.

- **Championing the development and implementation of effective policy**
- *Ensure the regional network is informed on all relevant policy initiatives and how these impact local practice*

The Hub plays an active role in advertising all Vitae consultations and keeping its regional network informed through Basecamp. For example the Hub advertised and encouraged all its institutions to take part in the CROS survey, the Innovate grant and the RDF consultation.

- *Feed into the development of Vitae campaigns or initiatives related to policy development and implementation. Lead regional thinking, facilitating agreed campaigns. This includes the Concordat implementation campaign and Rugby team projects.*

The YNE Hub has supported Vitae campaigns, specifically with the distribution of the Concordat Engaging Stakeholder Groups briefing packs, which the hub distributed throughout the region to key contacts. The hub has also led regional thinking by co-hosting the SRHE launch of the 'Evaluating Training and Development Programmes for postgraduate and Newer Researchers' guide. The Hub Coordinator and Manager

have also presented at several regional and national events on the Rugby Team impact framework.

Enhance provision by sharing practice and experience

- *Provide opportunities for the regional network both to discuss provision of effective support for researchers and to share practice, including opportunities for face to face engagement.*

The YNE Hub regularly holds Trainer and Developers' Forums for the region at least 3 times a year where interested parties can share practice and consider ways in which to work collaboratively together with the Hub. In 2009 the Trainer and Developers' Forums included, Engaging research staff, Engaging the Part time researcher and Sharing induction practice (See Activity report for specific details). These sessions provide staff who support researchers with an opportunity to share practice and discuss provision in a face to face situation. Topics for these sessions are suggested by the Steering group and are flexible depending on the regional need of specific topics.

- *Engage in Vitae campaigns related to areas of practice leading regional thinking in the context of regional need.*

In 2009 the YNE hub has focused on the Concordat and the training and development of research staff by holding a Trainer and Developers' Forum (TDF) on engaging research staff.

We also supported the launch of the Vitae Part Time Researcher Programme by holding another TDF on supporting part time researchers. The hub has subsequently set up collaboration with the Midlands hub to facilitate the Part Time Researcher Programme across both regions.

- *Provide active support and encouragement for collaboration between network members in the region and with the programme as a whole, promoting contributions to sharing of expertise through a variety of measures such as contribution to online databases and spotting opportunities to make links between regional ideas/initiatives and Vitae.*

The Hub advertised and encouraged the region to enter bids into the Vitae Innovate Awards and was part of a successful bid "Building Impact into Social science Research" submitted by the University of Leeds. The Hub will facilitate the delivery of a regional two day postgraduate training workshop before the training materials are packaged and made available through the Leeds University business School and Vitae nationally.

- *Develop a working knowledge of the systems, people and programmes by which HEI's deliver effective research support and skills development (at least top 30 HEI's) for the benefit of the programme.*

The Hub holds personnel information from all its regional institutions for the purposes of mailing important strategic communications and Vitae publications. The Hub is currently in the process of transferring this data on to CARE and hopes to have this key contact information fully up to date by the end of February 2010.

- **Providing access to development opportunities and resources**

- *Raise awareness of and engagement in opportunities, resources, pilot projects and research initiatives arising through the programme, with regional network members.*

The Hub has advertised all the Vitae opportunities, resources and pilot projects within its events news bulletin and newsletters. These include advertising the National GRADSchools, the Staff Supporting Researchers Masterclasses, Broadening Horizons resources, the Part Time Researcher Programme, The Vitae National Conference, Researcher Careers and the Recession, Careers in Academia Programmes, Survey on Employer Practice, Research Staff Blog, Research Staff Conference and the Vitae Innovate Awards to name just a few.

- *Ensure effective promotion and distribution of Vitae publications to regional HEI's as agreed.*

The Hub has actively promoted and distributed the following publications: Engaging Stakeholder Groups packs and briefing sheets, What do Researchers do (careers profiles and graduates by subject), Overview, Balanced researcher and Creative researcher booklets, the Vitae PhD planner, CROS reports, Recruiting researchers and the Vitae employer briefing. The publication distributions are currently being updated on CARE and all publication distributions will be logged by end of February 2010.

- *Extend the reach of the programme, its activities and resources within regional institutions, including establishing appropriate website links with HEI sites. Work with key regional network members to achieve this.*

The Hub asked all the representatives of the steering group to update their web links to the Vitae site at the March Steering group meeting in Huddersfield and then followed this up with support from the Vitae National Web team.

- **Building an evidence base to support the agenda**

- *Collect data (management information, measures) and contribute for the region to specific reviews in order to understand and evidence the impact of Vitae*

As mentioned previously the YNE Hub is currently updating the CARE database of contacts to include mailing information and new key contacts. This operation would usually be carried out during the summer months however was delayed this year due to the start of the new YNE Hub administrator and the resultant training that was required.

- *Facilitate engagement of regional network members with evidence building initiatives related to programme aims such as CROS and PRES.*

Both CROS and PRES were advertised in the Events bulletins and the Hub Newsletter. CROS was also followed up with a writeboard on Basecamp asking about benchmarking groups.

2. Current activity and anticipated regional priorities and needs

Activity Report: 2009

January

- 7th-8th Policy Forum, Manchester, HM attended & Coordinator presentation
- 21st CMS Training, Leeds, HM participating
- 26th Effective researcher taster session, Manchester, HM attended
- 29th 'Enhancing Graduate Employability' invited workshop 7th Annual Postgraduate Conference, London, Coordinator invited presentation

February

- 18th Conference Call, Leeds, HM participating

March

- 2nd Poster Competition application deadline, Leeds, HM managing
- 12th YNE Hub Steering group meeting, Huddersfield, Coordinator & HM chairing & minute taking
- 17th Annual Review meeting with National Vitae, Leeds, Coordinator & HM
- 18-19th Operational Meeting, Cambridge, HM attending
- 24th YNE Hub Trainer and Developers' Forum Sharing induction practice, HM & Coordinator organised

April

- 3rd Cross cultural issues with Chinese postgraduate researcher supervision, Leeds, HM & Coordinator organised
- 8th Deadline for electronic posters for the poster competition, Leeds, HM managing
- 22nd Communicating your Research to the Public Poster Competition, HM presenting and organising coordinator managing judges
- 27th Hub Managers away day, Manchester, HM only attended day one
- 30th 'Evaluating the Impact of Newer Researcher Training and Development: Which Direction Forward?' joint SRHE/Vitae event, Leeds, Coordinator presented & co-organised.

May

- 6th Local GRADschool Tutor Training, Bristol, HM attended
- 12th Vitae North West Hub Good Practice Workshop, Manchester, Coordinator key note presentation 'An Overview of Evaluating Researcher Training and Development Activity'
- 19th Vitae Part Time Researcher Launch, Birmingham, HM attended

June

- 15th YNE Hub Trainer and Developers' Forum, Engaging the Part Time Researcher, Newcastle, HM organised & Coordinator attended
- 17th Vitae CMS training, Leeds, HM participating
- 18th YNE Hub steering group, Durham, Coordinator & HM chairing & minute taking
- 24th National Strategic meeting & WDRD publication launch, London, HM & Coordinator attending
- 25th National Operational meeting, London, HM attending

July

- 2nd WRISS pre course session, Leeds, HM presentation
- 9th WRISS part 1, Leeds, HM managed & presentation, Coordinator Director
- 10th YNE Hub Administrator interviews, Leeds, HM & Coordinator interviewing
- 14-15th WRISS part 2, Harrogate, HM managed, Coordinator Director
- 21st Vitae East of England Hub Good Practice Workshop, University of Hertfordshire, Coordinator invited presentation 'An Overview of Evaluating Researcher Training and Development Activity'
- 27th 'Measuring the Impact of the Roberts' agenda and funding in Scotland', University of Dundee, Coordinator invited presentation 'The Rugby Team Impact Framework'
- 28th Conference call, Leeds, HM attended

August

- 10th New YNE Hub Administrator starts, Leeds, HM & Coordinator induction
- 11th Meeting with the Head of the Graduate School University of Bradford, Bradford, HM attended
- 18th Meeting with the White Rose Collaboration regarding WRISS, Leeds, HM attended

September

- 8-9th National Vitae Conference, Warwick, HM attended, Coordinator presented workshop
- 16th Effective Researcher meeting, Leeds, HM attended
- 22nd Durham University Graduate School annual meeting, Durham, Coordinator invited presentation 'The Vitae Programme Realising the Potential of Researchers and Building the Evidence Base'
- 28th Conference call, Leeds, HM attended
- 29-30th CARE Training, Cambridge, HM & HA attended

October

- 9th Annual Graduate Conference on Social Sciences and Management, Bradford, HM & HA attended and manned Vitae stand
- 13th YNE Hub Steering group, Sunderland, Coordinator & HM chairing & minute taking
- 15th Postgraduate skills and training workshop, Hull, HM invited presentation 'The Vitae programme – The role of promoting and supporting the skills agenda'
- 20th Research staff induction, Leeds, HM contribution to induction workshop
- 23rd Strategies for Busy Researchers workshop, Manchester, HM attended
- 26-28th First Aid in the workplace, Leeds, HM attended and completed

November

- 4th UK polar network, Cryospheric sciences workshop, Sheffield, HM invited presentation 'how to make the most of your time as a postgrad'
- 11th 'Staff supporting researchers masterclass – evaluation and feedback' Manchester, Coordinator invited workshop
- 19th AHRC Regional Event – Northern England, Northern Ireland & Scotland, Bodington Hall Leeds, HA Vitae showcase stand
- 19th Vitae Connexions, London, HM attended
- 19th International Journal for Researcher Development Editorial Board meeting, Cambridge, Coordinator attended

- 19th Invited seminar to the University of Cambridge researcher training and development staff, Cambridge, Coordinator presentation
- 27th YNE Hub Trainer and Developers' Forum Engaging Research Staff, Sheffield, HM & Coordinator organised

December

- 2nd National Vitae Strategic Meeting, London, Coordinator attended
- 2-3rd National Vitae Operational Meeting & Public Engagement Beacons Meeting, London, HM attended
- 9th YNE Hub Good Practice Workshop, Bradford, HM organised & Coordinator presentation 'What has the Roberts agenda achieved? Institutional case study evidence from the Rugby Team Impact Framework (RTIF) '
- 10th London and SE England Hub Good Practice workshop 'Evaluating the Impact of Researcher Development' London, coordinator invited presentation.
- 11th YNE Careers in Academia for the Arts and Humanities, Durham, HM organised & presented

Hub activities going forward in 2010

January

- 6-7th Roberts Policy Forum
- 11th Cross Cultural Issues in Postgraduate Researcher Supervision, Newcastle
- 18th Broadening Horizons Taster Session, Sunderland
- 19th UK RSA meeting in London HM attending as Hub representative

February

- 22-23rd Vitae Tutor Training hosted by the YNE Hub, Leeds

March

- 5th YNE & Midlands Part time researcher programme session, Leeds
- 9-10th Operational meeting and training hosted by the YNE Hub, Leeds
- 15th YNE Hub Steering group Leeds
- 23rd YNE TDF Ethics and Governance, Teesside

April

- 21st Vitae YNE Hub annual review?
- 26th Public Engagement Competition, Great north Museum, Newcastle

June

- 21st WRISS Part 1

July

- 13th-14th WRISS part 2

Events TBC

- Broadening Horizons for research staff residential course planned for May
- Careers in academia within the Social Sciences planned for June
- Steering group Meeting, June
- Steering group Meeting, November
- Good practice workshop December

Anticipated Regional Priorities and Needs

Since the beginning of the new contract in 2008 the YNE Hub has developed its strategy to reflect Vitae's aims and objectives. These have been reviewed along with the steering groups priorities and the following regional needs have been identified:

- To continue to deliver face to face workshops and events for researchers and staff supporting researchers, in the form of the Trainer and Developers' Forums, Careers in Academia sessions and the YNE Hub Public Engagement Competition.
- To run a regional Broadening Horizons session for research staff which will help promote and facilitate the uptake of new Vitae materials (2010 Objective) and will also train up a core of active broadening horizons facilitators who can help to facilitate collaborations within the region (2010 Objective)
- To support the development of local research staff support by creating a regional network of research staff associations which can feed into the UK RSA.
- To support the local provision of research staff activities through the sharing and packaging of online materials
- To support local coaching and mentoring schemes for research staff within the region
- To encourage more cross regional engagement in Vitae Hub activities and institutional collaborations.

5. Reporting against agreed KPI's and metrics

Attendance figures at major Hub events in 2008

1. Trainer and developers' forum – Sharing induction practice
 - a. 14 staff supporting researchers
2. Cross Cultural Issues in Chinese postgraduate research supervision
 - a. 13 staff supporting researchers
3. Evaluating the Impact of newer Researcher Training & Development: Which direction Forward?
 - a. 21 staff supporting
 - b. 3 Academic staff
4. Communicating to the Public Poster Competition
 - a. 75 Postgraduate Researchers
 - b. 20 Research Staff
 - c. 8 Staff Supporting researchers
 - d. 5 Supervisors
 - e. 8 Non HEI
5. Trainer and developers' forum – Engaging the part time researcher
 - a. 14 staff supporting researchers
6. Trainer and developers' forum – Engaging Research Staff
 - a. 10 staff supporting researchers
 - b. 2 research staff
7. YNE Hub Good Practice Workshop – What is the Roberts Agenda Now? Impact and Sustainability
 - a. 30 Staff Supporting researchers
 - b. 1 Postgraduate researcher

8. YNE Hub Careers in Academia for the Arts and Humanities
 - a. 5 Staff Supporting researchers
 - b. 36 Postgraduate researchers
 - c. 4 Research staff
 - d. 1 Senior Academics