



Insights report and recommendations for future outputs

Collaborative Development Fund 2022: College-Based
HE Network

—

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In partnership with:
University Centre Leeds

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1. Network launch

1.1 Preparation activity

Following a successful bid to the Advance HE Collaborative Development Fund to develop and lead a new College-Based HE (CBHE) Network Group, University Centre Leeds launched the network with its first meeting on 23 March 2022.

Janet Faulkner, Dean of University Centre Leeds, said: “We welcome the opportunity to work and collaborate with other members to draw on their expertise and build stronger links and representation with the wider HE community.

“This is an opportunity for HE providers to share best practice, and devise solutions to meet the specific challenges that the sector faces, as well as implement solutions and new models that will benefit the industry in the future.”

Advance HE supported University Centre Leeds in promoting the CBHE Network Group among Advance HE members from all four home nations and Isle of Man, and collated expressions of interest from CBHE leaders. An Advance HE Connect online space was developed in preparation for the launch of the network and to enable engagement between meetings.

1.2 Expressions of interest

Initial expressions of interest, prior to the launch meeting in March 2022, totalled 62 individual members, with 43 institutions being represented from across all nations and varied institution size.

1.2.1 Earliest insights

Those who expressed interest in the CBHE Network Group provided early insights regarding the challenges of CBHE and the potential work of the Network. When registering interest in being a CBHE Network Group member, respondents identified their reasons for joining the group. These included to:

- + develop a network that supports CBHE and opportunities to discuss contextual scenarios
- + compare and contrast contexts and experiences within and across the nations
- + discuss key shared priorities
- + identify common challenges and opportunities for CBHE / university centres
- + develop solutions
- + develop community of practice – sharing of good practice and learning from each other’s experiences

- + explore collaboration opportunities
- + develop HE cultures in FE settings
- + develop HE in FE professionalism and professional identity
- + enhance staff development, scholarly activity and research
- + improve teaching, learning and assessment
- + increase support, innovation and collegiality
- + explore attainment and progression / destination gaps
- + promote success for widening participation graduates, graduate employability
- + discuss HE policy, regulations and quality assurance
- + consider TEF, APP, Quality Code B3 and the impact of consultation on CBHE
- + develop mechanisms for growing HE within an FE setting
- + increase student recruitment, including internal, external and international
- + discuss themes of sustainability.

Based on these, terms of reference for the group were drafted for agreement and approval at the launch meeting.

1.3 The launch

Thirty-five individual CBHE Network members attended the launch meeting on Wednesday 23 March 2022. It was clear there is a shared vision for the collaborative opportunities for the network. There was a real sense of collaboration and a willingness to work together to create an HE culture, devise solutions and deliver on areas of priority for CBHE.

The network has already demonstrated its potential as a collaborative space for developing HE culture and practice. The six-weekly meetings, supported by an Advance HE Connect online space for ongoing discussions, will generate a co-created space for leaders of CBHE across the UK to come together for discussion and development in areas of focus that really matter and to provide solutions to address these shared challenges.

Advance HE's commitment to providing enhanced support for CBHE members, including funding to support the development of this network, has been welcomed. The vision of the network is echoed by Advance HE and it has offered this opportunity to address key challenges that are specific to CBHE.

1.3.1 Insights from the launch meeting

Being a CBHE provider brings with it tensions and challenges that are not encountered by universities. It is complex, covers a broad range of provision, includes balancing conflicting

demands, and can mean working with multiple regulators and funding bodies. From the expressions of interest and the first meeting, there were a number of common experiences about these tensions and challenges, and a shared goal to develop a community of practice and solutions to priority areas. Areas where members experience challenges, and consider priority areas for developing potential solutions, include:

- + developing HE ethos (culturally and physically) and creating an HE community within FE contexts
 - organisational structure for HE delivery in FE
 - + collaboration opportunities for CPD, research and scholarly activity, and sharing best practice (including higher level apprenticeships)
 - barriers to research (both time and funding)
 - opportunities for collaborative projects
 - HEA Fellowship and Senior Fellowship – practices, processes and support
 - + regulatory bodies and changes
 - APPs
 - navigating relationships with validating bodies
 - impact of consultation and outcomes from the OFS
 - quality and standards in response to OfS consultation
 - non-recognised programmes and the implications of OfS conditions
 - QAA Quality Code – the impact of B3
 - mechanisms to support TEF
 - learning from other bodies such as HEFCW / SFC / the Higher Education Division within the Department for the Economy in NI / Department of Education, Sport and Culture in Isle of Man
 - Foundation Certificate and implications for widening participation
 - micro-credentialing and layers/unpicking of levels and credits etc
 - + data and MIS (eg use of ProSuite and PowerBi) – sharing good practice
 - + marketing
 - internal and external recruitment – FE parts not knowing about HE
 - competition with largely local providers
 - graduate attributes, distinctiveness, currency of skills (pedagogical and vocational)
 - collective campaigns
 - + UCAS vs direct applications
 - + student retention and progression from FE into HE
 - + educational learning gain / value added – sharing good practice and latest thinking
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- + flexible learning, including implementing learning from the Creating Socially Distanced Campuses and Education and Flexible by Design projects
- + student engagement and communication
- + emerging themes.

1.3.2 Member feedback from the launch meeting

Feedback following the launch meeting has been very positive and specific examples from members include:

“The network meeting was very beneficial, and [we] look forward to attending the next one.”

“Thanks for the invitation which is great for our team and a superb network with the organisations involved. It looks like a very good group.”

2. Impact of the Network launch

2.1 Blog

To celebrate the launch of the CBHE Network Group, a blog entitled [The power of networks – a new group for college-based HE providers](#) was published on Advance HE on 4 April 2022, and subsequently featured in the [Wonkhe Daily newsletter](#) on 5 April and circulated among Jisc Mailing List subscribers.

A further five individual members, representing four more Advance HE CBHE providers, have since joined the CBHE Network Group. There are now currently 68 individual CBHE Network Group members, representing 48 CBHE providers.

Other CBHE providers have contacted Advance HE regarding the group and to discuss the benefits of membership to Advance HE.

2.2 Advance HE Connect

A private Advance HE Connect online space, College-Based HE Network, has been launched for continued discussions between meetings. It will allow for the development of sub-working/task and finishing groups on all priority areas and where there is a specific interest from groups of members within the Network.

To date, 51 (including two from Advance HE) members have joined the group. Forums have been created for each priority area identified below in Section 3. Engagement in the space remains low at this stage, potentially due to the high frequency of the Network Group Meetings and the positive outcomes already being achieved through these. Advance HE representatives are exploring the potential to move to an app space, rather than web-based, to explore if increased accessibility encourages greater engagement.

2.3 Feedback from group members

The second of the CBHE Network Group meetings was held on 5 May 2022 and the third on 14 June 2022. The insights and recommendations from these are detailed in the following section. Advance HE representatives have received feedback that the group is a “great” and valuable platform to have conversations with others and speak to people about similar challenges and possible solutions. Feedback continues to be positive and specific examples from members include:

“I just wanted to share with you that yesterday’s session was incredibly beneficial for them [attending team members], I personally can see the enhancement from both of them in having a wider perspective of knowledge.”

“The breakout sessions were informative and they shared key discussion points with the group of assistant heads this morning and it generated fantastic conversation.”

3. Insights

Based on the priority areas identified from the expressions of interest and the launch meeting, it was agreed that there will be three standing priority areas on the agenda, to enable a solutions-focused approach with tangible outputs. Other priority areas will be reviewed via the discussions on Advance HE Connect and from member feedback.

3.1 Creating an HE community in FE settings

One of the greatest challenges for CBHE providers is in creating an HE community within an FE setting. This includes both physical and cultural spaces, and nuanced discussions provided insights into a range of factors that negatively impact such.

3.1.1 Challenges

Network members have collaborated to identify key challenges within this priority theme and include:

- + tensions for staff teaching both FE and HE – including workload tensions and FE priorities
 - + staff recruitment and retention, including competition with HEIs
 - + contractual challenges
 - + misconceptions/lack of internal communications between FE and HE staff
 - + marketing
 - + lack of investment due to percentage income compared to FE
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- + student perceptions of internal progression from FE to HE – lack of progression
- + knowledge and priorities of executive/senior management – including process that are not appropriate for HE, focus on teaching and learning and less on regulations and policy (especially the burden on providers from regulators)
- + physical spaces, especially buildings, feeling like FE and not HE, and HE needing their – including out of hours
- + student experience, engagement and communications
- + regulators not understanding/appreciating the time, resource and capacity restraints on CBHE providers.

3.1.2 Impact

The challenges faced by CBHE providers impact HE staff and growth within colleges in a number of ways. Impact includes:

- + exhaustion due to infrastructure barriers restricting progress/growth
- + lack of scholarly activity and research, and overall HE culture, impacting appropriate time, funding and support
- + struggle to keep staff current and up to date with current HE challenges and policy/regulation updates
- + lack of understanding among FE staff restricting options for HE transition – particularly for mature learners looking at local options
- + lack of, or restrictions to, internal progression
- + HE staff lacking support in recruitment and self-marketing / recruiting
- + lack of funding and space
- + perceptions of HE being treated as less important than FE.

3.2 CPD, scholarly activity and research

As part of creating an HE community, discussions around scholarly activity were pivotal and as such deemed a priority area of its own.

3.2.1 Challenges

This topic has shown that there are some shared challenges, including:

- + lack of staff time and incentives, including a lack of remission in most instances, often as HE staff are on common contracts to FE staff

- + where time / remission is provided, this quickly gets used for meetings, quality processes, prep, marking and supervising students, rather than scholarly activity and research
- + annualised contracted teaching hours can be high (eg 25 hours/week), with additional administrative duties
- + scholarly activity seen as generic CPD across college, and so prescribed across FE and HE staff and not bespoke to HE
- + ensuring research is meaningful, best use of time resource where allocated, and beneficial across the institution
- + resistance from executive / senior management to allow for different HE contracts, and not alienating staff
- + lack of understanding from executive and senior management regarding the impact and requirements in HE
- + lack of understanding of senior management teams in terms of enabling HE staff to remain up to date in their subject area
- + lack of understanding from management on the benefit of research and how that will improve the quality and delivery of HE programmes; this would also benefit FE as well
- + lack of funding, including for remission, attendance at conferences / workshops, and submitting to publications
- + based on good will and motivation of staff in many cases
- + some HE lecturers identify more with an individual FE team/department rather than as a HE lecturer
- + many CBHE lecturers come from FE backgrounds with wide expertise rather than mastery in one area, struggling to identify areas of focus for scholarly activity and research
- + perceived lack of knowledge for/of scholarly activity and 'imposter syndrome'.

3.2.2 Impact

The impact of the challenges for CBHE regarding CPD, scholarly activity and research are largely viewed in relation to staff:

- + staff using their own time to engage in scholarly activity
 - + lack of confidence when teaching staff are 'out of practice' with research activities
 - + complexities in the context of what scholarship or research might mean for individuals – often seen from HEI perspective rather than our context
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- + tensions in meeting the expectations of awarding validating partners in regard to scholarly activity
- + difficulties measuring the real impact of scholarly activity and research
- + can create a divide among teams (FE / HE)
- + where remission is given, some perceived resentment from FE staff
- + difficulties in agreeing staff contracts and offering attractive HE staff recruitment.

3.3 Regulatory bodies and governance

3.3.1 Challenges

There are many tensions within CBHE relating to regulatory bodies and governance, with concerns among Network members that the requirements and needs are not fully understood across the institution. Specific challenges identified are:

- + the lack of understanding / appreciation from the OfS and regulatory bodies relating to staffing structures and limitations in CBHE compared to HEIs
- + managing multiple validating and regulatory bodies, for example Ofsted and OfS, relating to higher/degree apps and some non-prescribed, and the potential conflict that can cause
- + CBHE teams are generally very small, sometimes only one or two key managers, often carrying out multiple roles, and regulatory tasks are burdensome
- + much more focus on the needs of HEIs and not fully appreciating those of CBHE
- + small cohort sizes create challenges in the production of accurate data metrics
- + HESA not fully inclusive of CBHE data comparison with university data, which is similar with other benchmarking and scoring, for example NSS
- + difficulties using FE systems and processes that create challenges, and in places incompatibility, in meeting the expectations and requirements of regulatory bodies, eg student record systems, ProSuite, google classroom/ Microsoft blackboard
- + HE is often a very small element within a college institution, resulting in HE reporting being minimal and not provided the required assurances
- + limitations for growth of HE within FE
- + reluctance from validating bodies to expand opportunities due to the risk involved in working with small CBHE providers.

3.3.2 Impact

It was observed from discussions that the impact of the challenges relating to regulatory bodies and governance are in regard to the burdens put on staff, particularly where there is small resource. Specific impact was identified as:

- + staff time and possible burnout
- + timings of when regulatory requirements are required, and managing these within very busy FE contexts – causing stress, workload/time issues, anxiety
- + staff training requirements
- + possible extra costs if more staffing needed to deal with the new datasets.

3.4 Other priority areas

Further foci for discussion identified in the launch meeting in March have provided framing for Advance HE Connect CBHE Network Group forum, providing a space for group members to continue discussions between meetings. These topic areas have not been widely discussed further at this stage, although elements of some have been identified in relation to the priority areas above.

3.4.1 Data and MIS

Data collection and student record systems have been identified as an area of focus for the Network Group, including the use of ProSuite, PowerBI and others, and the opportunity for sharing of good practice. Challenges appear to be in the use of FE-based systems which do not cater for the needs and requirements of HE regulatory bodies and so are also featured in the priority area(s) above.

3.4.2 Educational learning gain / added value

There has been some discussion relating to educational learning gain and a potential interest for the network group, or a sub-group within, for example, sharing practice, latest thinking and benchmarking.

3.4.3 Flexible learning and modes of study

As the drive for more flexible learning modes of study continues to grow, group members identified the potential opportunities for implementing learning from the Creating Socially Distanced Campuses project and the Flexible by Design project.

3.4.4 Higher and degree apprenticeships

Many group members are providers of higher and degree apprenticeships and have specified that some discussions relating to the priority areas above may warrant additional specific focus on this provision. This was particularly highlighted in relation to collaboration opportunities for CPD, research and scholarly activity, the challenges in delivery, development and recruitment, and sharing of good practice opportunities.

3.4.5 Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)

There was a shared view of the challenges the launch of HTQs has brought about for CBHE providers, specifically curriculum design and development, recruitment and meeting target numbers (particularly given the lack of national awareness and marketing), the HTQ agenda, and the opportunities for collective campaigns.

3.4.6 Marketing and recruitment

Linked to the challenges identified in many of the above, the resulting challenges for marketing of and recruitment to CBHE inevitably feature in discussions. Specific areas of challenge and opportunity consider:

- + internal progression (eg FE not knowing about/promoting HE in the same institution)
- + external recruitment
- + student retention and progression from FE to HE
- + competition with larger local providers
- + graduate attributes, distinctiveness and currency of skills (pedagogical and vocational)
- + collective campaigns.

3.4.7 Student engagement

Network members appear to have varied experiences and approaches to student engagement but some common themes have emerged that may provide foci for further discussion:

- + Student representative schemes
- + Student ambassador schemes
- + representing diversity
- + student voice
- + students as partners
- + communications (particularly the HE messaging from within an FE college).

3.5 Emerging themes

The Network has also provided an opportunity for Advance HE to update CBHE providers of emerging themes including the:

- + Connect Benefits Series focusing on organisational wellbeing
- + development group for a CBHE and SSI suitable Advance HE Race Equality Charter

- + similar review of the Athena Swan space being undertaken.

4. Possible future recommendations

Developmental discussions around solutions to the challenges identified have started, from only the second network meeting, and there is already a good indication of realistic and viable opportunities for the group to consider.

4.1 Creating an HE community in FE settings

4.1.1 Potential solutions

CBHE Network members appear to be at various stages of creating an HE community within their college. Potential solutions identified are already established, or being trialled, in some colleges but not others. Some of the solutions identified may involve support across the network for shared experiences and good practice, while others may be a collaborative effort in launching something new. Some suggestions, although included here, may be restricted by internal infrastructure and financial barriers. The list below will be prioritised into viable and tangible solutions the Network Group can work towards:

- + HE specific environments
 - HE community area, independent library and study space
 - dedicated HE staff for support services, careers, and study skills
 - funded research projects that involve HE students as well as staff
 - community engagement activities and students' union enrichment appropriate to HE and not just FE
 - different coloured lanyards for HE students to physically identify as separate to FE
 - HE welcome sessions, inviting all students to attend and including meeting services available to HE, how to step up to being part of a HE community
- + supporting progression from FE to CBHE
 - incentives for students for L3 to L4 progression
- + provider examples include Chromebooks to support learning as well as an incentive; providing incentives to tutors (ie funds) to help with transitional programmes / information
 - working closely with marketing / communications teams to include permanent sections on HE in bulletins and newsletters
 - emphasising our USPs to FE students and staff (and how they compare to HEIs).

A number of challenges were identified relating to staff / institutional infrastructure issues, again with some variance visible across providers. Some solutions identified may be beyond

the possibilities for the Network Group but sharing of good practice around some of these may be beneficial in supporting business cases and proposals. For example:

- + separate HE Committee structures (where they do not already exist)
- + teaching contact hours should be reduced / contract adjustments' for HE staff, to allow for scholarly activity and networking
- + review of CBHE provider HE contract examples.

The creation of an HE community within FE settings concerning scholarly activity and research, which has become a priority area of its own below. However, there was some overlap in the possible solutions:

- + creating scholarly areas/ physical space
- + developing scholarly activity policy / frameworks for staff, including supporting staff financially with Fellowship
- + HE-specific CPD / staff development days
- + support (finance and time resource) for HE research journals, including both staff and students.

4.1.2 Potential outputs

Work towards tangible outputs is in its infancy. However, suggestions have included sharing good practice events / guides and a collaborative CBHE Research and Scholarly Journal (perhaps via Advance HE Connect).

4.2 CPD, scholarly activity and research

The topic of CPD, scholarly activity and research has been identified as a significant area of interest among CBHE providers, particularly in developing an HE culture and community. Several shared challenges have been highlighted in section 3.2, but it is clear from discussions that CBHE providers are at various stages of the journey in developing an HE research and scholarly activity ethos and framework within institutions.

4.2.1 Potential solutions

Sharing of practice appears to be key to success in developing a way forward, with some providers having no clear strategy of framework for HE scholarly and activity, whereas others are further along in the process, with established process, policies and frameworks in place. Potential solutions for further discussion include:

- + creating a research interest group that collaborates to design and execute research, sharing skills to help the process happen
 - + creating an HE culture / group / ethos of HE for lecturers to network and collaborate
-

- + collaborative research between CBHE providers, including those with more experience supporting those with less experience
- + developing a model or framework that all CBHE can refer to, including what HE scholarly activity and research is, the opportunities, expectations etc
- + central resource for staff to access and add to regarding scholarship, building a virtual community across the organisation to demonstrate that the scholarship and research can be interpreted very widely and applied to their everyday work
- + implementing learning for continuous improvement in teaching and learning, including scholarly research regarding pedagogy and not just subject-based CPD
- + sharing practice and impact of existing HE staff and student support groups, annual research conferences, and research journals
- + support for sourcing of, and applying for, small grant projects and research opportunities
- + sharing practice and impact of existing HE staff support and schemes towards Fellowship
- + developing ways of measuring impact.

4.2.2 Potential outputs

Tangible outputs may be varied and scaled based on the individual providers. However, some early suggestions include:

- + development of a collaborative a model or framework that all CBHE can refer to, including what HE scholarly activity and research is, the opportunities, expectations etc
 - this may include a practical guide supporting staff / CBHE providers through the journey. For instance, ‘where to start’, ‘next steps’, ‘advancing or further development’, etc
- + sharing practice activities for scholarly activity and research practice, developing research-informed curriculum design and delivery, frameworks and Fellowship
- + creation of collaborative research interest groups to network, source and apply for funding, and design and execute research
- + creation of a CBHE Research Journal and online collection of artefacts.

4.3 Regulatory bodies and governance

Several tensions and challenges relating to regulatory bodies and governance have been identified. The practical solutions CBHE providers would hope for are largely out of scope for this Network due to existing institutional structures, for example, but the Network does have the potential to offer a community of practice.

Further exploration of this priority area is needed, with the view to progress this work with focus on each nation. The insights and future recommendations of each nation will include shared learning from each within the Network Group.

4.3.1 Potential solutions

Some providers have described successes they have achieved in relation to institutional governance and so may offer support in sharing practices and experiences relating to developing separate HE Committee structures, including board of governors, and/or ensuring an HE representative governor on the board.

4.3.2 Potential outputs

Potential outputs regarding this area of focus are still in early stages of discussions. However, some initial suggestions include:

- + published content or workshops for institutions to understand the 'regulatory burden' of being/becoming OfS registered
- + more accurate HE in FE sector benchmarking
- + lobbying regulatory bodies for them to understand the HE in FE sector in more detail.

4.4 Other potential solutions and outputs

Although discussions around other foci areas have not advanced yet, a number of early suggestions have been made regarding potential solutions and outputs. These include:

- + sharing good practice
 - data and MIS
 - educational learning gain
 - higher and degree apprenticeships
- + implementing learning from the Creating Socially Distanced Campuses project and the Flexible by Design project
- + surveys
- + collective marketing campaigns, particularly emphasising CBHE graduate attributes, distinctiveness and currency of skills (pedagogical and vocational).

5. Agreed recommendations for future outputs

At the third Network Group meeting on 14 June 2022, members agreed on the initial future outputs in relation to the priority areas of focus, with the aim of some tangible outputs to be achieved by 1 December 2022 for inclusion in the practical guide of 'What Works' and executive summary.

5.1 Creating an HE community in FE settings

Within this priority area several outputs overlapped with the priority area of CPD, scholarly activity and research. Those listed under section 5.1 relate to recommended future outputs in addition to those relating to CPD, scholarly activity and research, which will follow in section 5.2.

5.1.1 Sharing good practice

Many discussions around creating an HE community in FE settings identified areas of focus that vary between individual provider settings. Member institutions have wide-ranging experiences and challenges in terms of creating an HE community in their own institutions and so have agreed that sharing of good practice would enhance their own learning and support them in the development of an evidence base for putting forward proposals within their own institutions.

Members will be invited to present a case study of good practice at Network Group Meetings under the agenda item of Creating an HE community in FE settings, starting with Meeting 4 on 14 July 2022, as well as sharing on the Advance Connect HE space. Case studies will be collated into a portfolio of case studies within the 'What Works' practical guide.

At this stage, it is envisaged that case studies within this priority area may highlight good practice relating to:

- + HE physical/virtual spaces and resources for staff and students
- + developing HE identity (eg different coloured lanyards etc)
- + remission and funding to support HE staff research activity
- + creating open-house visits to share good practice – visiting members of the network colleges to see how HE is done in practice at other institutions.

5.1.2 Collaborative marketing assets/campaigns

Members have expressed an interest in developing a series of marketing assets/campaigns that promote CBHE and may include, for example, the benefits of CBHE, attributes of CBHE graduates, and the graduate employability of CBHE students and graduates.

There is an appreciation that material may already exist, as developed within other existing collaborative partnerships and working groups, as well as support that may follow from, for example, the Department for Education, QAA and OfS.

5.1.3 Students as Partners review

There is recognition of the ongoing discourse and activity relating to students as partners in teaching, learning and assessment. However, there have been tentative expressions of interest for a review of this with a greater specific focus for CBHE providers and students, including sharing of good practice and sector-wide recommendations for process and practice moving forward.

5.2 Creating an HE community in FE settings AND CPD, scholarly activity and research

As identified in section 5.1, several recommended outputs overlap the priority areas of creating an HE community in FE settings and CPD, scholarly activity and research. The consensus is that by creating an HE ethos within institutions for HE-specific CPD, and supporting HE practitioners to engage in research and scholarly activity, particularly in meeting sector expectations, this in turn aids the creating of an HE community.

5.2.1 Sharing good practice

Not surprisingly, needs and current practice vary between individual provider settings, and member institutions have wide-ranging experiences and challenges in terms of developing an HE research and scholarly activity culture. Members agreed that sharing of good practice would enhance their own learning and support the development of an evidence base for future proposals and rationales within their own institutions.

As with the previous priority area, members will be invited to present a case study of good practice at Network Group Meetings under the agenda item of CPD, scholarly activity and research, starting with Meeting 4 on 14 July 2022, as well as sharing on the Advance Connect HE space. Case studies will be collated into a portfolio of case studies within the 'What Works' practical guide.

At this stage, it is envisaged that case studies within this priority area may highlight good practice relating to:

- + implementation and practice of ethics committees
- + embedding research in the curriculum
- + existing Research and Scholarly Activity Frameworks that have been developed and implemented within colleges.

5.2.2 Collaborative research and scholarly activity and dissemination space

Network Group members are particularly passionate about developing a space for the engagement in and promotion of scholarly activity and research among CBHE providers. Advance HE representatives have suggested there may be a possibility of using a sub-group space within the National Teaching Repository, developed in the previously funded Good Practice Projects. Whether through this platform, Advance HE Connect, or another yet to be identified/developed, key activities are to include:

- + sharing of research and publication opportunities
- + collaborative research and scholarly activity projects
- + collaborative HE Research and Scholarly Activity Journal
- + an annual celebratory event showcasing and disseminating research and scholarly activity of CBHE members.

5.2.3 Research and Scholarly Activity Framework

Members have a vast range of experiences in relation to developing and implementing a Research and Scholarly Activity Framework, from absolutely nothing in existence to having a formalised strategy that is being actively implemented and engaged with by staff.

There was unanimous agreement that working collaboratively to develop a sector-wide framework for CBHE providers would be beneficial and should include a practical guide supporting staff / CBHE providers through the journey (for instance, 'where to start', 'next steps', 'advancing or further development', 'supporting staff in applying for Fellowship' etc). There are also calls for this framework to provide a case for reduced teaching contact time in HE contracts to allow HE staff remission for research and scholarly activity, promoting a fair and equitable framework across the sector. The framework should also act to support CBHE providers to measure the impact of the research and scholarly activity undertaken.

In working towards the development of this framework, the Network Group may identify champions/leads of scholarly activity (perhaps comping together as a Task and Finishing Group), and support members to champion and drive participation in research and scholarly activity across all HE staff within their own institutions.

5.3 Regulatory bodies and governance

From the Network Group meetings it was clear that there are common frustrations in relation to regulatory burden and a lack of understanding within governance structures. While members appreciate that some aspects of work are beyond the scope of this group, there was agreement that collaborative work towards raising awareness and understanding of the regulatory expectations would be beneficial.

5.3.1 Published content or workshops for institutions

Members agreed that a shared suite of resources for HE leaders to disseminate within their institutions would provide a potential solution to the identified frustrations. These resources would be particularly designed for members of the board of governors and executive leadership teams, although there is visible benefit for promotion across all departments and shared services within FECs.

The resources will aim to:

- + increase understanding of the 'regulatory burden' of being / becoming OfS registered
- + explain HE governance and regulatory bodies, definitions, requirements, quality assurance processes, data expectations, governance requirements/burden and so on
- + highlight what is to be considered good governance within CBHE settings.

5.3.2 HE in FE sector benchmarking

There is a common agreement that more accurate sector benchmarking is warranted, which would be more effectively applied to and used by CBHE providers. Members are aware that both MEG and HESA are tasked with exploring this further and future outputs will be more specifically determined following updates on their ongoing work.

5.3.3 Lobbying

The Network Group, and relationships with other networks, forums, and professional bodies, may provide support for lobbying of regulatory bodies for them to understand the HE in FE sector in more detail. The initial thoughts are that progress in this area would be limited. However, there may be specific proposals or developments where this would be more appropriate than others.

6. Conclusion

Advance HE's commitment to providing enhanced support for CBHE members, including funding to support the development of this Network Group, has been welcomed. The vision of the network is echoed by Advance HE and it has provided a valuable opportunity to share practice, opportunities and challenges, opening dialogue and offering new insights to the wider sector.

This report, after only four Network Group meetings, has gone some way to identifying the potential for the Network and the possible solutions and output that could be achieved.

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Our strategic goals to enhance confidence and trust in HE, address systemic inequalities and advance education to meet the evolving needs of students and society, support the work of our members and the HE sector. We deliver our support through professional development programmes and events, Fellowships, awards, student surveys and research, providing strategic change and consultancy services and through membership (including accreditation of teaching and learning, equality charters, knowledge and resources).

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