

Financing and investment



Overview of actions

Planning centred on building a realistic, costed budget using LSIP funds, supported by partner contributions and in kind support. A single project lead co-ordinated resources, reusable assets increased efficiency, and sustainability was strengthened through a repeatable framework, rotating host areas and exploring small provider deposits to reduce dropouts.

Funding the event

Funding for The Care Connection festival was planned to ensure the event could run at scale, support student participation and deliver a high quality experience for both learners and providers.

- **Define and cost the event budget** – A clear cost model covering venue, audio visual, marketing, refreshments and filming enabled planners to prioritise essential elements and ensure funds supported a professional, well structured event.
- **Use LSIP funding for core delivery** – LSIP resources covered mandatory costs, allowing the festival to remain free for students and providers while ensuring delivery quality was not compromised by financial constraints.
- **Integrate partner funded enhancements and in kind support** – Foundations and providers contributed speakers, incentives and staff time, helping extend the offer and reduce pressure on LSIP budgets.
- **Remove access barriers for students** – Transport support and inclusive planning ensured colleges could participate regardless of financial constraints, widening participation and improving overall representation at the festival.



Resourcing support

The festival depended on a co-ordinated blend of people, organisational capacity and practical resources to deliver an event of this scale.

- **Provide dedicated project co-ordination** – A single co-ordinating lead managed communication, timelines and planning activity across stakeholders, reducing duplication and ensuring smooth, consistent organisation.
- **Use consistent event marketing resources** – Shared templates, branding and materials helped present a unified identity, making communications clearer and reducing time spent designing individual promotional assets.
- **Engage colleges and providers as active contributors** – Colleges prepared students effectively, while providers created hands on activities, helping ensure engagement felt interactive, relevant and aligned with real career possibilities.

Sustaining the approach

Long-term sustainability was considered from the outset to ensure the festival model could be repeated and expanded.

- **Adopt a repeatable planning framework** – Establishing a clear cycle from early year planning to autumn delivery supported consistency and helped embed learning into future iterations.
- **Develop a mixed funding model** – Introducing modest provider contributions or deposits would have helped to reduce late withdrawals, while maintaining accessibility. This would support longer-term financial sustainability.
- **Reuse event assets and templates** – Communication materials, brand assets and structural documents were designed for reuse, saving preparation time and improving consistency between events.
- **Rotate delivery across areas** – Alternating where the event is hosted, will help to distribute workload, expand reach and strengthen engagement across the wider region.



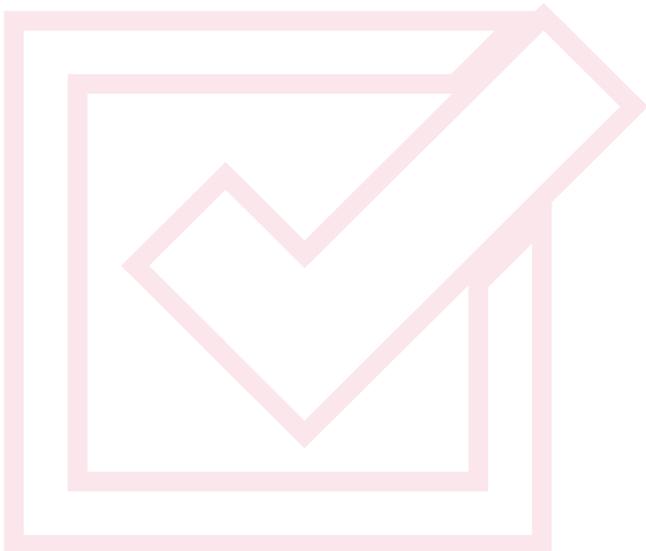
Key decisions

- Set a clear, costed budget using LSIP funds, supported by partner contributions and in kind support to keep the festival accessible and high quality.
- Invested in reusable assets and professional videography to maximise long-term promotional value and support future event cycles.
- Adopted a sustainable delivery approach, including a repeatable framework and rotating host areas.

Key learning

The event highlighted several practical lessons that will strengthen future festivals, improving planning, partner co-ordination and the long-term value.

- **Building a detailed, early costed budget** – Creating a comprehensive cost model at the outset brought clarity and discipline to planning, enabling efficient use of LSIP funds and ensuring all essential elements were fully resourced without narrowing the event's ambition or quality.
- **Partner funded enhancements** – Securing contributions from sector partners allowed the inclusion of higher profile speakers, appealing incentives and specialist materials, enriching the programme and significantly elevating the overall student experience.
- **A single project lead** – Assigning clear co-ordination responsibility strengthened continuity across the planning cycle, reduced duplicated effort among partners, and supported smooth, consistent multi agency delivery.





“Having done the event now, we’ve talked at the Chamber about asking care providers for a small deposit next time to reduce those last minute dropouts. There will always be unforeseen things that cause people to pull out, but if they’ve put a little bit of money aside to attend, they’re less likely to cancel. It’s just a way of strengthening commitment and helping us plan with more certainty for future events.”

Siobhan May, Co-ordinator, Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs