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Lifelong Learning and Knowledge Exchange – missed opportunities?

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In 2021, the University of Wolverhampton was recognised by Research England (RE) as being in the top 10% nationally for public and community engagement (P&CE). This recognition formed part of the outcomes of the new metric for determining impact for universities – the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) with P&CE being one of seven measures used. The KEF is the product of years of work by RE to respond to the UK government's aim of understanding how Higher Education Providers are serving the economy and society for the benefit of publics, businesses and communities. Since piloting, it has become the third metric for higher education alongside the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

For the University of Wolverhampton, P&CE is about 'people in their place'. As an anchor institution, its priorities are influenced and driven by its location(s) with an explicit focus on skills, employment, and applied research. This presentation will focus on the crucial role that lifelong learning has played in the University's approach to P&CE beyond its roles in widening access and participation. It will consider opportunities for underpinning and shaping broader knowledge exchange goals and describe the model that has been at the heart of Wolverhampton's LLL strategy.

With the forthcoming introduction of the new Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) in 2025 and the increasing emphasis on the role of higher education in addressing the needs of a skilled workforce nationally and regionally, it is timely to consider this new opportunity for LLL.