The **'What are we learning about...?' series** is designed to make public the learning that has emerged from NCSL's Networked Learning Communities (NLC) programme and other initiatives during the last three years. The aim is to generate useful and usable knowledge for practitioners and policy-makers. We intend to produce readable and practical publications, that enable some of the current learning about networking and collaboration, from both NLCs and the wider knowledge-base, to be shared more widely.

Each edition in the series includes:

- Accounts of practice, written by practitioners, that provide concrete examples of networked learning.
- Articles and think pieces drawn from the public knowledge-base that try to make sense of what is known in order to provoke and inform new thinking.
- Development tools that enable system leaders and network leaders to work with others in order to develop, analyse and reflect on practice.

What are we
learning about...?

Sustaining a network of schools

In this sixth edition in the series, we outline what we have found to be the characteristics of effective networks and describe what they look like in practice when focused upon sustaining a network of schools.

We also look at four key features of network design for sustainability:

- **Building capacity for network development** – through growing and embedding participation, ownership and reach of network ideas and activity.
- **Building capacity for adaptive change** – which maintains core purpose, is context sensitive and embraces proactive networked innovation.
- **Building capacity for network leadership** – which is distributed and supports leadership and facilitation of networked activity at all levels.
- **Building capacity for system change** – through the alignment of network-based solutions at the individual, organisational and network levels.

These ideas are then illustrated though a series of think pieces, accounts of practice and development tools designed to share the best of what we are learning about sustaining a network of schools. We hope that the publication will be of use to you if you are considering setting up a network, are part of a newly formed or established network, or if you are simply interested in finding out more about school learning networks and their potential benefits for all.

Networked Learning Communities

learning from each other | learning with each other | learning on behalf of each other

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learning about...?

The 'What are we learning about…?' series is designed to make public the learning that has emerged from NLCs in the last three years.

The first seven titles in the series will focus on:
What are we learning about…?

- LEA involvement in school networks
- Establishing a network of schools
- Community leadership in networks
- *'Making mathematics count'* in school networks
- Facilitation within school networks
- **Sustaining a network of schools**
- Leadership of school networks

To order a copy of this series, please email **nlc@ncsl.org.uk** quoting the reference **WAWLA/Sustaining a network of schools.** Alternatively you can download this publication at **www.ncsl.org.uk/nlc**

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NCSL National College for School Leadership

Networked Learning Communities

Sustaining a network of schools

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"A network leader will plan for sustainability from the very earliest days of establishing a network. On one level this means thinking ahead about how the network will survive. On another, It Is to do with building reach and ownership."

Network Co-leader

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