

Learning and Skills Council sets out investment priorities to deliver learning and skills for 2008 - 2011

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) East of England held a strategic briefing event for regional providers and stakeholders in Cambridge recently setting out its investment priorities to deliver learning and skills for 2008 – 2011.

The briefing began with Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC, talking about the Government's ambitious investment plans for the skills and learning of the country followed by Caroline Neville, Regional Director for the LSC East of England.

Commenting on the Government's plan to help boost the Nation's job prospects, Mark Haysom, said: "We want to reach out to more businesses and more people, to give them the skills they need. This year we are ramping up our focus on people who are not in work. We want to give them the skills they need to break out of the vicious cycle of unemployment and poverty. And we won't stop there. We want more people to progress in learning – gaining the skills they need to prosper in their chosen careers.

"These ambitions will not be met without radical changes to the Further Education system – ultimately purchasing power must rest with learners and employers.

"To do all of this, the Further Education system must make sure that those who can afford to pay contribute more to the cost of their learning, freeing up resources that we can focus on those who need it most."

Caroline Neville, then talked about the LSC Statement of Priorities and what it means for the East of England. Launched on 16 November the Statement of Priorities sets out the LSC's investment priorities for the FE system to deliver learning and skills for learners and employers in England 2008/09. She informed delegates that: "Skills open up opportunities for thousands of young people, adults

and employers and have the power to change lives. We want people to recognise that investment in learning is an investment in their future earnings.

“What is needed is a cultural shift in the way we talk and feel about learning. The five year marketing campaign “Our Future. It’s in our hands” is designed to change attitudes positively to learning and skills.”

A major investment programme for the skills and learning of the country has been unveiled by the Government. Over the next three years more than £11 billion a year will be invested in education, employment and training initiatives for young people and adults to help boost the country’s job prospects.

Over the next three years total spending on learning and skills will rise to £12.3 billion a year in 2010/11 – compared to £6.5 billion in 2001/02.

At the centre of the programme is a major expansion of apprenticeships with over £1 billion in Government funding to increase overall places from 250,000 today to more than 400,000 by 2010/11, provided high quality employer places are available. Achieving these figures in this timescale would deliver the challenges set by Lord Leitch in his review of skills almost 10 years early.

For the first time, funding will be targeted specifically at expanding apprenticeships for adults aged over 25. This will mean 30,000 additional such apprenticeships costing £90 million over the next three years.

All apprentices for those aged over 19 will total 125,000 by 2010/11 alongside 281,000 apprenticeships for those aged 16-18.

The Government was setting out its priorities and funding for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), outlining the first stage in its longer term strategy to meet the challenges set out by the Leitch review of skills.

It is the role of the LSC to deliver these ambitions, to make sure everyone has a suitable place in learning and to reduce young people NEET year on year.

To support these initiatives, the Government also announced it was making available over £2 billion by 2010-11 to help build world class and sustainable education facilities to support this programme.

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive for the Learning and Skills Council said: “We welcome the increased investment in learning that will give more young people, adults and employers the skills they need to succeed in work and life.”

END

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

1. For enquiries on the LSC Statement of priorities – please contact Sarah Leith Russell, Regional Press Officer, LSC East of England on 01234 420076 or e-mail: sarah.leith.russell@lsc.gov.uk
2. **LSC**
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.
3. The LSC Statement of Priorities can be found on the LSC Website:
<https://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/lscstrategy/statementofpriorities/>
4. This press notice relates to England only.
5. **DIUS and DCSF** jointly published the Government's Grant Letter to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) outlining the investment strategy following the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. The LSC's strategy based on this letter is outlined in 'Priorities for Success 3'. Both documents are available at www.dius.gov.uk, www.dcsf.gov.uk and www.lsc.gov.uk
6. The Government also published a document for providers 'Skills Investing in the first steps' which sets out DIUS investment and vision for adult learners who have yet to obtain basic skills. This is available at www.dius.gov.uk
7. Lord Leitch's Review of Skills was published in December 2006 and identified skills as one of the most important drivers to a successful economy and a just society that offers opportunities for all citizens. The full report can be viewed at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm
8. The Government's response to the Leitch Review 'World Class Skills' was published in July 2007 and set out what targets we need to achieve in order to

meet the challenges identified by Lord Leitch. The full report can be viewed at <http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/skills.html>

9. For more information please contact Joshua Coe at the DIUS press office on 020 7215 6242.

Overall, total DIUS funding for LSC spending for **adult** skills and apprenticeships will increase to £4.3 billion a year by 2011, helping deliver an increase in spending of 17 per cent on adult learning. The funding will provide over seven million training places over the three year spending review period from 2008/9.

Funding will be focused on training designed to improve job prospects and opportunities for further learning. Investment will be targeted in new priority areas where the greatest benefit will be felt.

Key improvements will include:

- A right to basic skills training where needed, coupled with the biggest ever investment in this area. DIUS will spend around £1.5 billion per year on first steps training – including over 3.6 million learners on ‘Skills for Life’ courses over the spending review period. To underline the Government’s commitment John Denham also published a new booklet ‘Skills - Investing in the first steps’ setting out the Government’s investment and vision for adult learners who have yet to obtain basic skills.
- A right to free, first-time full level 2 adult training (equivalent to 5 A-C GCSEs) through the provision of over 800,000 places in 2010/11 - a 30 per cent increase on 2007/08.
- The provision of over 500,000 full level 3 adult training places (equivalent to 2 A-levels) in 2010/11 an increase of 148 per cent on 2007/08. Free provision will be a right for those aged between 19 and 25.
- A doubling of Government investment in work based skills training to boost the skills and expertise of the workforce. The budget for the ‘Train to Gain’ programme will rise from £440m to over £1 billion in 2010-11 supporting an expected 872,000 learners that year.
- Developing a joined up, one stop advancement service for adults to support people to identify training, develop skills, access child care support and find long term employment.

- Providing learners with 'Skills Accounts' to help fund skills training which will help drive the system to meet individual needs. By 2010/11 helping them access around £500 million of adult learning, increasing to nearly £1.5 billion by 2015.

For **young people** The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will play a crucial role in helping achieve the ambition to increase participation post-16, raise attainment at 19 and reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Nearly £6.8 billion is being invested in learning places for young people - an increase in funding of £758m by 2010. This will be on course to have a full 100 per cent participation in education and training when the participation age is raised to 18 and will cement the delivery of the challenging Level 2 and Level 3 targets at 19.

Key improvements include:

- The delivery at post 16 of all 14 diplomas lines across the country leading up to 2013 when every young person has an entitlement to access diplomas.
- The delivery of a rise in apprenticeship and work based learning places across the country for all young people
- A rich and diverse offer for 16-18 year olds to provide the platform by 2015 to stay in education or training until at least 18, with total funding for participation of £6.8 billion.
- Aiming for Level 2 attainment (GCSE or equivalent) to reach 82 percent of 19 year olds by 2011 and 85 percent by 2013.
- Introducing for the first time a threshold target at Level 3 (A level or equivalent) of at least 54 percent of young people achieving this level by age 19 in 2010/11.
- The LSC managing the system to ensure every young person gets the offer of a suitable place, extending the September Guarantee for 16 year olds to 17 year olds.
- Learner Support Funds to enable young people from deprived backgrounds to stay in education and training post 16, including education maintenance allowance of over £600m in each of the CSR years. We have recently announced that EMA will be available for all Entry to Employment participants.
- During 2008/09, introducing a simpler, more transparent and common 16-18 funding system for school sixth forms, colleges and providers. It means

colleges, schools, sixth forms, local authorities and the LSC working together to plan education and training to meet young people's needs and funding follows the learner regardless of where they are.

- The LSC working closely with local providers as part of 14-19 partnerships, ensuring that at every level every young person has a complete range of options to suit their needs.
- There will be a simpler, more transparent common funding system which will narrow the funding gap for 16-18 year olds between schools, colleges and providers. We have achieved our commitment to narrowing the gap to 8 percent a year early and the common funding approach will narrow the gap to less than 5 percent by 2008/09.