

LSC celebrates helping 17,000 learners across Essex develop skills

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£17.5 million of investment from the European Social Fund (ESF) has helped more than 17,000 across the county into work, learning or to develop their skills in their existing jobs, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Essex announced at a recent celebratory event.

The current six-year European Social Fund (ESF) programme is coming to a close during which time more than 150 projects have been allocated funding by LSC Essex.

To mark the success of the funding programme, LSC Essex celebrated with a 'fun afternoon' and awards presentation event at Towerlands in Braintree on Friday 12 October. Around 350 people attended, including learners, employers and project providers who have benefited from the funding programme. Designed to recognise the hard work and achievements of all those involved in the funded projects, fun activities were available for all attendees to take part in, including a wild west rodeo bull, human table football, bungee run and crazy golf.

Alison McCleave, ESF Contracts Manager for LSC Essex, said: "ESF helps people who need additional support to enter work by helping break down barriers and develop their potential by training people who lack basic skills and qualifications.

"This event celebrated the achievement of the projects in Essex with the support of ESF money and provided an ideal opportunity to thank and congratulate those who manage and have taken part in the projects".

Richard Howitt MEP gave a speech on the impact ESF funding has had on the people of Essex before cutting a celebration cake and making award presentations. Awards included 'Personal Achievement Award', 'Inspirational

Mentor/Tutor Award', 'Employer Dedicated to Learning Award' and 'Champion of Learning in Workplace Award'.

The current ESF programme is drawing to a close, but the Learning and Skills Council is working with other key agencies in the East of England region to plan for the next round of funding that will cover the period 2008 - 2010. The focus of the new programme will continue to be helping people get the local skills they need to enter work, as well as improving the skills needed by local employers. Co-financing organisations including the Learning and Skills Council will be issuing invitations to tender later this year.

For information on ESF projects in Essex call Alison McCleave on 01245 550142 or e-mail alison.mccleave@lsc.gov.uk

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Notes to Editor:

If you require further information, case study leads or an interview with an LSC spokesperson, please contact Sarah Leith Russell (LSC Regional Press Officer) sarah.leith.russell@lsc.gov.uk on tel: 01234 420076, OR Alison McCleave (ESF Contract Manager) alison.mccleave@lsc.gov.uk on tel: 01245 550142.

ESF funded projects:

*To be provided by Alison McCleave, ESF Contracts Manager, LSC Essex.
Additional attachment*

LSC

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational 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 by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

ESF

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of four Structural Funds designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union. www.esf.gov.uk

ESF's main purpose is to support the annual UK Employment Action Plan, which sets out how UK policies and initiatives take account of the Employment Guidelines established within the European Employment Strategy. ESF is channeled through three Structural Fund [Objectives](#) and the [EQUAL](#) Community Initiative.

The current programmes run from 2000 to 2006. ESF will provide about £4.5 billion in Great Britain (£3.5 billion in England) in this period.

The European Social Fund aims to:

- help unemployed and inactive people enter work
- provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market
- promote lifelong learning
- develop the skills of employed people
- improve women's participation in the labour market