



Leading learning and skills

Learning and Skills Council Local Area Statement of Need

Suffolk

2008/09

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Of interest to everyone involved in improving skills and learning opportunities across
Suffolk

Introduction

Suffolk is a largely rural county with a relatively low population density. Population is projected to increase to 740,000 by 2016, mainly through inward migration. Lack of public transport is a significant barrier to accessing education, employment and training. There is a relatively small black and minority ethnic population in Suffolk (6%), however there is a rapidly expanding community of eastern European migrant workers attracted into Suffolk. Although Suffolk is generally perceived as a prosperous county it includes wards with some of the highest levels of deprivation in the East of England, particularly in Ipswich, Lowestoft and north Suffolk.

Too many young people and adults in Suffolk do not have the qualifications and skills necessary to secure their own futures or to meet the needs of the local community and its economy. The Suffolk Community Strategy identifies raising skills levels as a transformational priority critical to the future success of the county.

Some progress has been achieved in improving the participation of young people in learning: the proportion of 16 year olds continuing in learning increased by 3% in 2007. While this is an encouraging trend, there is still much to do to retain learners at 17 years and to prepare for the raising of the compulsory participation age in 2013. The proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Suffolk is falling, with a reduction of 1.2% in November 2007 compared with November 2006. This is very encouraging following several years of high NEET figures, however Suffolk remains above the England average and reduction of NEET must be a key focus.

The level of qualifications among the 400,000 adults of working age remains below the regional and national average. Over a third of economically active people do not have a qualification at level 2 and over one quarter have no qualifications. The low skill levels of adults are a major barrier to social and economic development. Numeracy levels are also a particular challenge. Suffolk continues to make good progress towards the national Skills for Life target, but there is still much to do.

Generally, young people and adults who continue in learning have high levels of success, well above national averages. Level 2 achievement is good with over 60% of school leavers achieving 5 A*-C grades at GCSE level (Level 2) or equivalent, but over half still leave school without both English and mathematics achievement at Level 2. This is a major challenge in terms of young people's employability. Achievement in the FE and Workbased learning sectors remains high and improving, however A level achievement remains below national averages and a significant improvement challenge.

Suffolk has a heavy dependency on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Important sectors include food and drink manufacturing; engineering (including automotive and renewable energy); construction; hospitality and tourism; health and social care; and logistics and transport. Emerging sectors for the county include renewable energy technologies, food tourism and the cultural sector. Historically there has been relatively limited involvement of employers in education and training in Suffolk. A priority for the future will be to encourage more employers to demand education and training for their workforce through the Skills Pledge and Train to Gain.

Judith Mobbs
Area Director for Suffolk

Challenges, key actions and measures of success for Suffolk

Priority 1: Creating demand for skills

Challenge	Key Actions	Measures of Success	Links to LSC Regional Commissioning Plan and other local plans
1.1 Raise the numbers of young people continuing in learning at 16 and 17 years	1.1.1 Increase the numbers of apprenticeship places in Suffolk	TBC	RCP 1.1, Suffolk 14-19 Strategy Children and Young Peoples Plan for Suffolk
	1.1.2 Establish improved progression pathways into apprenticeships including E2E, pre apprenticeships and programme led apprenticeships		
	1.1.3 Establish the 17 Safety net to provide flexible learning routes and keep young people in learning.		
	1.1.4 Increase the numbers of places available for fulltime FE or school sixth form study for 16-19 year olds.		
	1.1.5 Develop new strategies to support young people who are NEET or NET into learning		
	1.1.6 Establish an improved offer for young people with special educational needs that supports them to progress and where appropriate to secure work activity.		
	1.1.7 Improve the progression/ IAG support available for young people.		
	1.1.8 Develop phase 2 of the 14-19 strategy to ensure effective implementation of the full range of 14-19 reform.		
	1.1.9 Continue to develop a more diverse offer for 14-16 year olds to support post 16 progression		
1.2 Increase the number of adults achieving level 2 and 3 qualifications and Skills for Life	1.2.1 Implement the Adult Learning Strategy for Suffolk.	TBC	RCP 1.2, 3.1, 3.6
	1.2.2 Build an effective PCDL partnership to ensure the best use of resources to support first steps into learning		
	1.2.3 Develop the LEAP centre concept to establish a network of multi agency centres where information and training can be accessed.		
	1.2.4 Increase the proportion of LSC funded programmes leading to full level 2 / 3 qualifications.		
	1.2.5 Develop strategies to improve the take up and achievement of numeracy qualifications		
	1.2.6 Use ESF funding to provide additional programmes that support minority groups into learning.		

Priority 2: Transforming FE

Challenge	Key Actions	Measures of Success	Links to LSC Regional Commissioning Plan and other local plans
2.1 Development of a configuration of provision that supports 14-19 reform and offers all young people and adults the best possible opportunity for future success	2.1.1 Continue to improve success rates across all types of provision	TBC	RCP 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.8,
	2.1.2 Develop further strategies with the LA for improvement of A level performance across Suffolk		
	2.1.3 Lead / support as appropriate the development of appropriate Post 14/16 structures for effective delivery of provision through the Suffolk School Organisation Review and review work initiated by the LSC.		
	2.1.4 Co-ordinate capital strategy and support the development and implementation of capital projects to provide modern high quality facilities for learners across Suffolk		
	2.1.5 Support providers in the introduction of Framework for Excellence and the move to demand led funding		
2.2 Increasing the responsiveness of the sector to the needs of employers	2.2.1 Support providers to work towards achieving the Training Quality Mark	TBC	RCP 2.5,
	2.2.2 Increase the take up of Train to Gain programmes in Suffolk.		

Priority 3: Better skills, better jobs, better lives

Challenge	Key Actions	Measures of Success	Links to LSC Regional Commissioning Plan and other local plans
3.1 Increasing employer involvement and contribution to developing workforce skills across Suffolk.	3.1.1 Develop and deliver a rollout plan for the Skills Pledge in partnership with the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and other LAA partners.	TBC	RCP 1.3, Suffolk Community Strategy Suffolk Economic Development Strategy
	3.1.2 Increase participation of employers in the Train to Gain programme.		
	3.1.3 Explore the establishment of employment and skills boards or similar arrangements where this can support greater employer involvement		
3.2 Increasing the numbers of people who are in work and therefore not dependant upon claiming benefit	3.2.1 Work with Jobcentre Plus to co-ordinate Skills for Jobs developments and establish Local Employment Partnerships.	TBC	RCP 3.4, 3.3
	3.2.2 Invest in further local LLDD developments and capacity building.		

Our challenges and actions are based on our *Regional Review*; a robust strategic analysis of supply, demand and need; as well as ongoing dialogue with key partner organisations.

Partnership Working

Inter-agency working is central to our strategies for raising the levels of skill within Suffolk and contributing to a vibrant economy. We will continue to develop our work with many partners across the county, including the partnership developments highlighted here:

Suffolk Strategic Partnership and Local Strategic Partnerships: The LSC will work with all partners to lead the transformation of learning and skills in Suffolk and deliver the ambition for skills set out within the Suffolk Community Strategy and within the local strategies that determine the needs of specific areas of the county within the six LSPs. We will participate as an active partner in LAA2 to enable the SSP to realise its goals.

Suffolk County Council: During the past year we have built on already strong links to form a broader partnership with the County Council. Our partnership with Children and Young People's Services will continue to support joint working on the School Organisation Review Programme, the Children's Trust and the Suffolk 14-19 Strategy. Strengthened links with the Adult and Community Services Directorate will enable the establishment of a joint Adult Learning and Skills Strategy and the delivery of our multi-agency LEAP Centres project. Partnership with corporate services will enable us to develop further strategies to support the skills development for the staff of the county council.

Suffolk Development Agency: The LSC will continue to strengthen its contribution to the economic development plan for Suffolk - 'Expanding Suffolk's Horizons', working closely with the SDA and other economic development partners. We will lead initiatives within the plan that seek to develop skills to secure the economic prosperity of Suffolk for the future.

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce: Our partnership with the chamber has enabled the development of Suffolk Young Chamber Programme; a joint initiative in support of the Skills Pledge and the enhancement of learning and skills information services for adults and employers. We will build on these initiatives in the coming year.

Job Centre Plus: We have established a new local strategic focus to our partnership work with Job Centre Plus that has enabled the identification of shared goals for partnership working during 2008/09, including work to provide a more seamless offer to customers across the range of LSC/JC+ procured provision; improvement of job centre staff knowledge regarding LSC funded programmes and collaborative development in relation to the Skills Pledge and Local Employer Partnerships.

PCDL and LEAP Partnerships: We have identified the enhancement of adult skills as a key priority for Suffolk over the coming year. The work of the Suffolk PCDL Partnership and the LEAP Multi-agency group will be central to delivering this outcome.

University Campus Suffolk: We will continue to work closely with the new HEI in Suffolk, in particular through a joint approach to increasing employer involvement in education and skills and through the LEAP Project.

The Voluntary Sector Consortium: the LSC will work with the new VCS consortium to develop the capacity of the third sector to contribute to provision within Suffolk.

Haven Gateway Partnership: The Suffolk Area team will support the ambitions of the Haven Gateway Partnership to provide additional jobs and to maximize the role of the sub region as an international gateway to the UK through developing further the skills partnership group based on the recently completed needs analysis.

1st East : We will seek to develop improved skills in the Lowestoft area to support the regeneration programme championed by 1st East. We will strengthen our partnership with employers in learning and skills through exploring the establishment of an employment and skills board to serve the Lowestoft and Waveney area.