



Leading learning and skills

East of England
Learning for Living and
Work Implementation
Plan for Learners with
Learning Difficulties and
Disabilities

Learning and Skills Council,
East of England
2007 – 2010

Consultation Document
March 2007

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this consultation on the East of England Learning and Skills Council's planned implementation of the national strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities *Learning for Living and Work*.

As you will be aware we are well positioned in this region to deliver the priority actions set out in the national strategy due to the pioneering work taken forward through the *Improving Choice Pathfinder*. This has tested many of the recommendations in *Through Inclusion to Excellence* –the national review of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In view of the significant progress we have made in relation to the expansion of regional and local area provision, the piloting of brokerage models and development on models to address transition issues for these learners, it is with some confidence that I present this implementation plan. I believe it is both challenging and achievable. However, I am clear that all that has been achieved so far, and our future success for learners, depends upon the continued commitment of our partners. I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those organisations working with us as we strive to make a real and sustainable difference to the way the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met in the East of England.

There can be no doubt that a wealth of expertise exists within this region. I would therefore strongly encourage partners from across the different sectors and agencies to get involved in this consultation by responding in writing. It matters to us to hear your views and experiences and it gives you a chance to make a difference.

Building on the good progress we have made, the actions we set out in this consultation document have the potential to significantly improve the outcomes of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. I hope you will play your part in making it happen.

Caroline Neville
Regional Director
Learning and Skills Council
East of England Region

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1. Introduction

1.1. Vision

The government's vision is that by 2025 disabled people will have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and will be respected and included as equal members of society.

In the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), our overarching vision is that by 2015, England will be an international exemplar in providing high quality education and training for post -16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In the East of England region, we aim to be a national exemplar in this field by 2012.

By 2010, it is our intention that people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will participate and achieve in learning at a rate that is appropriate to their need and in line with their aspirations and potential. They will have high expectations of what they can achieve in the community and in the labour market, and have the skills and confidence to direct their employment choices and personal development. They will have easy access to high quality provision designed to help them achieve this.

1.2 Background

In November 2005, the LSC published *Through Inclusion to Excellence (TITE)*, the findings and recommendations of the strategic review of the LSC's planning and funding of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the post-16 learning system. The LSC has made a public commitment to delivering the report's recommendations and principles.

The **overarching** recommendation of the report was that, in order to take forward its vision, the LSC should develop a national strategy for the delivery of provision to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the

Further Education (FE) system. In response to that recommendation the LSC published its national strategy, *Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, in October 2006. The strategy is the blueprint for the LSC thinking and reiterates the organisation's intention to ensure that all of the 40 recommendations made in *Through Inclusion to Excellence* are fully met. The strategy is driven by the national vision:

That individuals' needs should be met through equitable and easily Understood systems of planning, funding and placement, enabling all learners to achieve their goals and progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities, and in employment.

1.3 East of England LSC Improving Choice Pathfinder

The findings of the strategic area reviews of provision for learners with learning disabilities and/or disabilities, undertaken by local LSCs in the East of England region, led to the development of an ambitious pathfinder project to improve the choice, accessibility and quality of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This project provided progress reports to the TITE Implementation Group and thus helped to shape the national review recommendations.

Improving Choice set out to develop local post 16 provision for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities whose only alternative if they wished to continue in education would be to attend a specialist, residential college. It set out to establish an innovative process and a new and creative way of partnership working. Providers signed up to the model to improve choice for learners by testing a variety of models and packages of education and support that would enable them to study in their home area

and to open doors to a future that matched their aspirations. It will be important to retain and build on the successful models of partnership, processes and provision through this new implementation plan.

Within the context of national strategy and its vision and building on the regional *Improving Choice Pathfinder*, the LSC East of England region intends to publish, in June 2007, a regional strategic implementation plan, that will complement and supplement national action and not duplicate it and focus on regional priorities.

Whilst we are clear that we have developed greater knowledge about the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the fitness of current provision to meet their needs, we intend to complete further research by June 2007. The East of England regional implementation plan will therefore be a live document, reviewed and revised as further research delivers analysis of supply, demand and need and in response to other work at a national level. The planned interdepartmental statement on collaborative working with social services and health departments and the current review of funding for the FE system will be particularly relevant.

1.4. Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

The learning provision funded by the LSC caters for the full range of learners who may require support or assistance to participate in learning, employment and/or community activity. The support needed can arise from a range of learning difficulties or disabilities, including:

- Mental ill-health
- Sensory impairment
- Physical difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia

- Medical conditions such as epilepsy
- Communications disorders, including those that fall in the spectrum of autism
- Profound and multiple learning difficulties
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties

1.5. The FE System

The Government White Paper, published in November 2006, *Further Education: Raising Skills Improving Life Chances*, introduced the term 'FE system' to refer to the post 16 learning sector. In the context of this document, FE system refers to a range of organisations including, but not exclusively, those funded by the LSC. This comprises:

- FE colleges and providers
- Independent specialist colleges and schools
- Learndirect/UFI
- School sixth forms
- Providers of personal and community development learning (PCDL) including local authorities
- Providers of learning and skills for offenders
- Special school sixth forms
- Providers in the voluntary and community sector
- Work based learning providers
- Employers holding contracts with the LSC through the LSC's National Employer Service

1.6 Regional Structure

The **second** important recommendation of *Through Inclusion to Excellence* was that the LSC should put in place regional structures to enable regional strategic and operational oversight of the development of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The following summary describes the regional and local structures adopted by the LSC East of England region:

- Structure led by a Regional Director

- Strategic LLDD lead – Director of Learning and Quality
- Regional LLDD Manager reports to Director of Learning and Quality
- Team of 3 LLDD Advisers report to the LLDD Manager

These regional roles link to Area Directors and their teams in the 6 sub regions of Essex, Hertfordshire, Beds and Luton, Cambridge and Peterborough, Suffolk and Norfolk. These local teams develop and sustain local relationships with partner agencies and delivery partners and will drive the implementation plan at a local level. Local actions will be informed and complement the LSC regional economic development and skills teams. Successful implementation of this plan will also be dependent upon the sustainability of the strong partnership working that has been developed in the region, particularly through the Improving Choice pathfinder.

1.7 Investment for Change

A **third** key recommendation of *Through Inclusion to Excellence* was that the LSC should commit to a policy of investment for change to achieve systematic transformation of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In response, the LSC nationally has identified additional investment funds which can be used at a regional level to bring about change. £35 million ‘invest to change’ funding will be routed through the regional LSCs in 2007/08 which will be used to accelerate the change we have achieved in the East of England through the *Improving Choice Pathfinder*. The priorities for all regions will be to:

- invest in provision: understanding demand and building capacity
- raising the quality of provision, including workforce development;
- increasing participation in the economy and communities through sustainable employment.

1.8 The Purpose of this Document

This is a consultation document, intended to inform the development of the East of England’s strategic implementation plan for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It sets out our regional priorities and aims to provide an appropriate regional framework to support:

- the planning and development of appropriate, consistently high quality, accessible and relevant local provision in the East of England for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the expansion of the range and scope of learning opportunities that meet aspirations and lead to appropriate outcomes, including employment, for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Having consulted widely at a national level on the findings of *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, the LSC has established what the priorities are in relation to provision for this group of learners and *Learning for Living and Work* captures those national priorities. The purpose of this document is now to consult on how the LSC in the East of England will implement the national strategy. The questions asked in this consultation document therefore seek your views on the proposed regional priorities, which are set out below. We would appreciate it if you would focus your responses on these questions.

The regional consultation process is as follows:

- consult with learners and potential learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- consultation with key external partners to develop a draft implementation plan
- publication of the proposed strategic implementation plan on

- the LSC web-site for consultation with stakeholders and partners
- second consultation with key external partners following the web-based consultation to develop the final plan
- submission to the LSC East of England Regional Leadership Group and Regional Board
- publication of the final document in late spring 2007
- the implementation of this plan will be monitored by the Regional Leadership Team and Regional LSC Board.

The LSC values the views of stakeholders, providers, partners, learners and their parents and carers. We would therefore appreciate receiving your comments on this document, which should be sent by the closing date to the address shown at the end of the document.

2. The Regional Strategic Implementation Plan

2.1. Structure

Learning for Living and Work is structured into 6 themes. Each of the themes is underpinned by three key priority work areas, where investment funds will be used to pump-prime provision. These key priority work areas will be:

- investing in provision: understanding demand and building capacity
- raising quality of provision, including workforce development
- increasing economic participation through sustainable employment.

This document mirrors those themes and the section below sets out the headline priorities contained in *Learning for Living and Work*, together with the proposed regional priorities required to achieve these outcomes in the East of England,

and questions designed to collect your responses.

3. Theme 1: Communicating Our Priorities

As a strand of the proposals for strengthening learner participation and representation, the Department for Education and Skills, LSC and the National Union of Students are leading the development of a National Learner Panel to influence and inform policy-making. Linking to the National Learner Panel, the LSC will create a National Learners with Disabilities Panel. This Panel will enable the LSC to consult with people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to involve them in the LSC's strategy. The National Learners with Disabilities Panel will be launched in spring 2007, and will draw on the initial experiences of the National Learner Panel.

The LSC will also determine how best to capture the views and experiences of employers involved in open and supported employment of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This will ensure that the LSC can help improve the work of the delivery partners involved, and also use the information to help attract more employers into this area.

A major challenge in taking forward the LSC's strategy for its funding and planning of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, will be the need to improve the mixed reputation of the FE system to be able to provide high-quality, learner centred further education and training to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Specifically, we need to address the perceptions of learners, their families and carers and other agencies. Therefore, the LSC is keen to ensure that there is clear communication with learners, families and carers, pre-16 schools, providers, local authorities, Connexions, employers and other agencies. All of these groups have

expectations, and there must be clear understanding of what the LSC is able to deliver and what other agencies are able to deliver.

3.1. Regional Priorities

To complement and contribute to these national priorities the LSC regionally will:

- Consult with existing regional and sub regional partnerships and networks to advise the LSC on the development of the regional strategic implementation plan for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Consult with the *Improving Choice* networks to seek their views on our intended actions and how they build upon *Improving Choice* developments
- Consult with the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership (RQIP) to capture their views on the quality and workforce related elements of the implementation plan
- Consult a task group of learners or potential learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to advise on the development of the East of England regional strategic implementation plan
- Work through the sector skills councils and the regional CBI to capture the views of employers employing people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Gather the views of stakeholders, providers and partners through a web based consultation to inform the development of the East of England regional strategic implementation plan
- Continue to develop communication mechanisms to ensure messages are consistently understood by all interested parties, including an 'easy read' version of this consultation document
- Develop sustainable mechanisms for the sharing of good practice.

Questions: Theme One **Are these regional priorities:**

1a Clear?

1b. Feasible?

1c. Appropriate?

1d. Do you have any additional comments?

4. Theme 2: Planning

4.1. National Priorities

By autumn 2007, the LSC will have detailed needs analyses for provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across England.

In autumn/winter 2007, the LSC will publish details of how '*investment to change*' funds will be used to achieve systemic transformation and increased supply of high-quality, local provision.

New definitions of learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be used within the Individualised Learner Record system will be introduced in the 2009/10 academic year.

4.2. Regional Priorities

To complement and contribute to these national priorities the LSC regionally will:

- Complete the needs analysis for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the region by June 2007 taking account of the findings of the East of England *Improving Choice Pathfinder* Report published in 2006.
- Integrate the needs analysis into the regional strategic analysis published in 2006 to inform the 07/08 business cycle and regional commissioning plan in December 2007.
- Continue to work with the Regional Partnership East

Together, including implementation of protocols to support the transition of young people placed in out of county residential schools and colleges

- Review data agreements with Connexions and Local Authorities to ensure the provision of effective predictive data
- Identify with JobcentrePlus the learning and skills needs of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in receipt of benefits to support their entry to the open/supported employment market
- Ensure that OLLASS meets the needs of offenders with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- As part of the LSC annual planning review, collect feedback from LSC partnership teams on appropriate or priority areas on which to focus the 'invest to change' funding
- Adopt a person centred planning approach within the wider national policy development relating to personalised learning in FE
- Further embed the multi agency assessment framework developed through *Improving Choice*
- Integrate the policy requirements arising from the Green Paper *Care Matters*.

Questions: Theme 2

Are these regional priorities:

2a. Clear?

2b. Feasible?

2c. Appropriate?

2d. Do you have any additional comments?

5. Theme 3: Quality

5.1. National Priorities

Using the investment monies identified above, the LSCs at regional level will steadily reshape the local landscape by building on and expanding existing high-quality provision. Where required, the LSC regionally will also commission and develop new provision and services, and where appropriate, this will be on a competitions basis. Collaborative approaches to delivery will be a key assessment criterion in any competition for specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2007/08, the LSC and partners will publish a proposed programme of activities to support the development of a fully qualified workforce that teaches and supports learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the FE system.

By September 2008, the LSC will cease funding inadequate provision. This includes provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

By December 2008, the first provider will be awarded Centre of Excellence status for its provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

By 2010, there will be a fully qualified workforce in the FE system, including those working with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Additionally, the target of a fully qualified workforce by 2010 will be monitored through data collection processes by both LLUK and the LSC.

5.2. Regional Priorities

To complement and contribute to these national priorities the LSC regionally will:

- Develop regional and local collaborative LLDD provision in each of the 6 sub regions to reduce the number of 'out of county' placements by 30% from the 2005 baseline

- Promote partnership working between specialist colleges and other providers within the FE system, to facilitate best practice activity
- In recognition of the progress made through *Improving Choice*, work with national LSC and the Quality Improvement Agency to establish criteria for Centres of Excellence status
- Establish 3 Centres of Excellence/Expertise within the East of England for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Work with LLUK to develop a coordinated regional approach to LLDD workforce development communicated through a workforce development plan which fully utilises the LLDD expertise developed through the *Improving Choice Pathfinder*
- Explore the feasibility of piloting new ITT specialisms for learning difficulties and disabilities
- Work with QIA to establish regional LLDD peer review projects and relevant support through the Improvement Advisory Service and Support for Success Programme
- Use the East of England Framework for Excellence (F4E) Testing and Trialling Group and Pilots to test the F4E dimensions to clarify standards and measures of success in terms of quality of outcomes and quality of provision within provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Questions: Theme 3
Are these regional priorities:

3a. Clear?

3b. Feasible?

3c. Appropriate?

3d. Do you have any additional comments?

6. Theme 4: Funding

6.1. National Priorities

During 2006/07, the LSC will collect and analyse information from local authorities about the costs associated with supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This information will be used to inform the LSC's development of a planned approach for young people in the FE system.

In 2008/09, the common funding approach, developed as part of the *agenda for change* funding reforms, will be introduced across FE colleges.

By 2009/10, the new funding arrangements will be fully implemented across the entire FE system.

In addition to the wider *agenda for change* funding reforms, the LSC has identified a further area of work to deliver the principles of *Through Inclusion to Excellence*. The LSC will examine the development of individualised budgets and the interaction with LSC funding. The LSC wishes to engage fully and establish clarity in this area to ensure that the individual and funding body are purchasing the service required and without the possibility of duplication.

During 2006/07, as part of the development of a planned approach and common funding levels for young people in the FE system, we will work with 14-19 partnerships to gain better understanding of arrangements for learners with SEN in school provision, and consider how arrangements in FE and schools sectors might be better designed to maximise choice.

6.2. Regional Priorities

Over the period 2004/2006 the LSC East of England Region has invested £3.6 million through the *Improving Choice Pathfinder* to extend the choice, accessibility and quality of provision

To complement and contribute to the national priorities and the funding allocated through *Improving Choice*, the LSC regionally will:

- Invest a further £1.3 million by April 2007 to sustain the *Improving Choice* developments ahead of further significant investment in 2007/08
- Develop regional and sub regional capital plans and strategies to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Undertake a review of Learner Support and Additional Learner Support Funds spending in the region
- Work with local authorities piloting individualised budgets to explore the feasibility of joint individualised budgets, including an entitlement to learning
- Explore with other key agencies how the brokerage model piloted in 3 sub regions as part of the *Improving Choice Pathfinder* can be sustained and jointly funded
- Maximise ESF funding to supplement the LLDD regional budget
- Maximise the *Invest for Change* regional budget to develop the learning infrastructure in the region
- Further develop joint working protocols and service level agreements between partners to formalise working practice relating to joint funding.

Questions: Theme 5
Are these regional priorities:

4a. Clear?

4b. Feasible?

4c. Appropriate?

4d. Do you have any additional comments?

7. Theme 5: Working with Partners

7.1. National Priorities

By the end of 2007, DfES and other government departments will have agreed and published a set of protocols for shared funding responsibilities and partnership working.

During 2007, the LSC with the Quality Improvement Agency and Ofsted will commission an analysis of the benefits to the learner and the financial benefits associated with the co-location of specialist colleges and other providers within the FE system.

7.2 Regional Priorities

To complement and contribute to these national priorities the LSC regionally will:

- Identify all the regional and sub regional networks/partnerships associated with LLDD provision in order to:
 - Identify and disseminate good practice
 - Communicate key messages
 - Increase the supply of in county provision
 - Support the development of new models of collaboration.
- Ensure that the Regional Quality Improvement Plan gives prominence to action to improve the quality of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Review current protocols with key agencies in the context of the Regional Commissioning Plan 2007/08
- Open up the debate at regional and sub regional level on the commissioning of LLDD provision, including competitions and co location options
- Engage with the new Personal and Community Learning (PCDL)

Partnerships to explore ways of broadening the current offer to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- Develop stronger links and involvement with special schools
- Establish Learning for Living and Work Advisory Groups in each of the 6 sub regions in the East of England or convert existing Improving Choice groups where appropriate
- Actively engage with the Regional Mental Health Partnership to take forward the Action Plan for improving services
- Develop multi-agency joint training plans to underpin the implementation plan.

Questions: Theme 5
Are these regional priorities:

5a. Clear?

5b. Feasible?

5c. Appropriate?

5d Do you have any additional comments?

8. Theme 6: Learner Progression

8.1. National Priorities

In 2006/07 the LSC will commission an analysis of progress and progression in 'work preparation' and 'independent living skills' programmes. The analysis will be used to enhance their contribution to learning for living and work. It will also consider effectiveness, levels of support and time taken for learners to achieve.

During 2007/08, the LSC's National Employer Service will work with LSC regions to pilot the supported employment model with a range of

employers. By September 2010, the LSC will no longer fund providers to deliver work preparation programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that do not focus on learning in the workplace and the supported employment model.

In the long-term, it is our anticipation that the delivery of our vision will be through providers' core funding, and that the revised funding methodology will underpin this strategy, providing greater flexibility for personalised learning and supported employment models. The LSC has also identified additional investment funds, above existing expenditure, to instigate change and transformation. By 2008, the LSC will, via the regions, have invested £35 million.

The funds will be spent on three key priority areas, though development work and investment will occur in other areas, as appropriate to local and regional needs. The three key priority investment areas are:

- investing in provision: understanding demand and building capacity
- raising the quality of provision, including workforce development
- increasing participation in the economy and our communities through sustainable employment.

Underpinning each of these key priority areas is the intention that they will deliver increased social inclusion, improve the skills of individuals and enable them to contribute to local communities and economies.

Alongside improving the LSC's own internal performance measures, we are keen to ensure that we measure how well the strategy is delivered. During early 2007, the LSC will commission an independent longitudinal evaluation study focused on the progress and effectiveness with which the LSC has

implemented this strategy. This evaluation will include a consultation with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

8.2. Regional Priorities

To complement and contribute to these national priorities the LSC regionally will:

- Improve the mix and balance of provision in the region and support providers to develop progression measures to decrease the 'revolving door' syndrome.
- Trial the Foundation Learning Tier with specialist providers to improve progression routes
- Support greater use of Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) to measure the distance travelled of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Support providers to expand work related learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Maximise regional and sub regional strategic relationships to broker links between providers and housing associations/social enterprise organisations etc. to improve independent living skills and readiness for open or supported employment
- Undertake analysis of progression through participation and success rates for individual institutions to inform the LSC Commissioning Plan 2008/09.

Questions: Theme 6 **Are these regional priorities:**

6a. Clear?

6b. Feasible?

6c. Appropriate?

6d. Do you have any additional comments?

Please send your responses to this consultation to:

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Suffolk – IP2 8SJ

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The closing date is 23 April 2007

Related documents

Raising our Game, Our Annual Statement of Priorities: The LSC sets out its priorities, including key actions for 07/08 – Oct 2006

LSC East of England Regional Commissioning Plan 2007/08 – Jan 2007

Through Inclusion to Excellence: The report of the Steering Group for the strategic review of the LSC's planning and funding of provision for LLDD across the Post-16 learning and skill sector – Nov 2005

Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for people with LLDD: the national strategy for LSC-funded provision for learners with LLDD across the FE system: 2006/07 to 2009/10 – Oct 2006

Improving Choice in Post 16 education for young people with LDD – an evaluation of the East of England Pathfinder – June 2006

LSC Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004/07

LSC Disability Equality Scheme – Dec 2006

Improving Services for people with mental health difficulties – Aug 2006

All the above documents are available on the LSC's website, www.lsc.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Regional LLDD Strategic Implementation Plan Communication Timeline:

From initial draft to publication stage

