

More money and greater flexibility for adults in London LSC adult skills budget rises to £672 million

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London's adult skills budget is set to rise to over £672 million over the next three years, to allow the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the FE sector to offer better quality courses which will be more responsive to the needs of individuals and employers. The increased investment will provide thousands more adults in London with the skills they need to get a job or move up the career ladder. The figures were contained in the annual Grant Letter to the LSC from the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, John Denham. The amount spent in London will increase by 14 per cent between now and 2010, from £588 million, to £603 million next year, and £672 million by 2010-11.

Representatives from London's FE colleges and providers heard the news at an LSC event attended by Secretary of State John Denham, LSC Chairman, Chris Banks, LSC Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, Vice-Chair of the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), Harvey McGrath and LSC London Regional Director, David Hughes. The speakers all united behind a powerful agenda to tackle worklessness in London, by raising skills levels and getting more employers engaged in training their staff.

The LSC's Statement of Priorities "Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives" has also been published, setting out the organisations priorities up to 2010-11. The priorities are to raise the educational achievement of all young people and adults by 2020, increasing the numbers of people with basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as the number with higher skills at GCSE equivalent Level 2 and A level equivalent Level 3. There also needs to be a massive increase in the number of Apprenticeships and Train to Gain qualifications achieved in London.

David Hughes, the LSC's Regional Director for London said:

"London is different. We have high rates of worklessness, massive competition for jobs, and a greater percentage of jobs that require higher level skills. We are hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and have work to do in ensuring that there are enough people trained in construction, sports and customer service skills to benefit from the opportunities the Games will bring.

"Employers in London are also different so we need to tailor services like Train to Gain and Apprenticeships to meet their needs. This budget will allow us to do this.

"We have been working closely with the LSEB to secure this fantastic settlement for the capital. This includes securing a stable line of funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision which has been an issue in London.

"We will need the help of all colleges, providers and employers in London to meet the ambitious targets set by Government, in particular the challenge of increasing the numbers of apprentices and the numbers of employers using Train to Gain".

The funding settlement will allow the LSC greater flexibility to adapt national programmes like Train to Gain to better meet the needs of Londoners, and this in turn will ensure greater success in meeting targets set by Government. London LSC is also piloting a £20 million Level 3 Train to Gain programme for women, which equips them with vocational skills in key areas such as business and construction with the aim of reducing gender gaps in these sectors.

Secretary of State John Denham said:

"Today's announcement amounts to a kick-start of the Government's drive to put Britain in the premier league for skills. This work will help ensure the future economic

competitiveness of the country. It will raise aspirations, improve life chances and strengthen our families and communities”.

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC said:

“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”.

Meeting these ambitious targets will require the LSC to continue to work closely at a local level with the Further Education sector and employers. Colleges and providers will need to become more flexible in the courses they provide so that they can benefit from the increases in investment. This will involve providing a ‘blended’ offer to employers where some provision is fully funded by the LSC, some by employers and some by learners themselves.

Following on from the publication of “Better skills, Better jobs, Better lives”, the LSC will be publishing a Regional Commissioning Plan for London in January 2008, which will set out the specific funding and planning priorities for London.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

LSC

The Learning and Skills Council 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.

LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk/london

1. This press notice relates to England only
2. DIUS and DCSF today 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 letter is available at: <http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/LSC-Grant-Letter-2008-09.pdf>
3. The LSC's strategy based on this letter is outlined in: "Our Statement of Priorities – Better skills, Better jobs, Better lives". The document is available at: <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-statementofpriorities-nov07.pdf>
4. To prepare the city for the Games, London LSC is investing an additional £5 million annually to expand the range of Apprenticeships in sports, construction, customer service and media skills: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/News/Pressreleases/Skills-boost-for-2012-Games.htm>.
5. Train to Gain is the LSC's skills service for employers. To find out more go to: <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/>
6. The Government also today published a document for providers "Adult Learning and 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: <http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/Adult-Learning-and-Skills-investing-in-the-first-steps.pdf>

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