

Record investment to help London's unemployed get jobs

LSC to spend £600 million on skills development in 2008/09

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A record £600 million will be invested across London next year to raise skills levels and get more people back into work. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has revealed a radical shift in its funding and priorities up to 2010 in partnership with the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB) which will control the adult skills budget in London.

The LSC's ambition is to better integrate job and skills services in London so that people will find it easier to get the skills they need to get back into work or progress up the career ladder. At present, 20 per cent of London residents have poor literacy skills and 50 per cent are unable to do basic mental arithmetic. In addition, 15,000 young people in London are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

At 69 per cent, the Capital's employment rate is the lowest in the country. To tackle this, the LSC has pioneered new approaches to helping workless individuals gain the skills they need for work. Employability Demonstration Pilots have been established in 11 Further Education colleges across London to develop ways of partnership working between skills and employment agencies. The Skills for Jobs programme will receive an additional £22 million in 2008-9 to provide jobseekers with support to develop the skills they need to gain paid employment. This additional funding for Skills for Jobs is in direct response to the London Skills and Employment Board's strategy that identifies targeting pre-employment training as a priority. This will allow the LSC to work with Jobcentre Plus to provide more flexible employability pathways for individuals and employers. Crucially, the programme will not require recruits to gain qualifications but will supply them with the specific skills they need to be successful in job applications and interviews. The LSC will spend £11 million on providing Jobcentre Plus clients with basic skills training.

In addition to the skills budget, between 2006 and 2009 over £1 billion will have been spent on building or renovating college campuses across the city. Already, a quarter of the region's total floor space has benefited from LSC capital investment helping London to become a world-class centre for Further Education.

As a result of the increased investment, the LSC anticipates that:

- 1,300 more 16-18 year olds will participate in Further Education
- Over 10,000 young people will take up Apprenticeships / on-the-job training
- Over 83,000 young people will be supported by the Education Maintenance Allowance to stay on in learning
- 5,000 more adults will take Level 2 courses (equivalent to GCSE standard)
- 3,000 more adults will take Level 3 courses (equivalent to A level)
- There will be over 18,000 new Train to Gain learners and 2,600 Skills for Life
- 6,000 workless Londoners will be trained on employability skills programmes
- 13,000 workless Londoners accessing pre-employment training opportunities and job vacancies through Local Employment Partnerships

Currently, only 13 per cent of London's employers use FE colleges to train their staff. The LSC will work to improve this by developing 20 New Standard colleges that are centres for excellence in offering a responsive service to employers.

David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London, unveiled the plans saying:

"It is a scandal that in 2008, almost half the people in London can't add up properly and 20 per cent have poor reading ability. Employers are finding it hard to fill vacancies due to skills gaps, but at the same time we have the highest proportion of people out of work. We want to join up skills training, pre-employment support and learning at work so that people can get a sustainable job with prospects because they have the right skills.

“To do this we need to establish a new approach to skills and employment as outlined in the London Skills and Employment Board strategy. This year’s plan is a significant step in that direction.”

Harvey McGrath, Vice Chair of LSEB said:

“This plan marks a helpful first step in aligning the adult skills funding of the LSC with other agencies and the board’s emerging strategy. I am pleased at the flexibilities we have secured in the significant public funding that is available for skills in London. This will mean that increasingly this funding will be targeted to support the board’s priorities including helping Londoners at greatest disadvantage in the labour market acquire the skills to get a secure job and progress”.

To access the full report visit www.lsc.gov.uk/London

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Notes to Editors

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Its 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. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

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