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Leading learning and skills

London's Employability Demonstration Pilots

November 2007

Of interest to everyone involved in integrating
skills and employment services across London



Supporting employability and inclusion across London

London LSC has established Employability Demonstration Pilots across the region to trial new approaches to training provision and to develop a more integrated and demand-led skills and employment offer.

The LSC has provided an additional £2.2 million to 11 large further education colleges in London to test out innovative skills and employment interventions over a two-year period from March 2007.

The Employability Demonstration Pilots programme was established for three key reasons:

- to help providers meet the challenges presented by Lord Leitch's review of skills
- to prepare for the national Skills for Jobs programme
- to engage the provider base in wider partnership working with other agencies on the skills and employment agenda.

In this document we examine: the urgent need to drive up skills levels and respond to business needs; ways to increase sustainable employment opportunities; how local agency collaboration is starting to work; and what London's future integrated employment and skills service might look like.

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Raising skills levels becomes an urgent need

In his ground-breaking report, *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*, Lord Leitch emphasises the need to raise skills levels across the UK economy.

The report predicts that the number of jobs within the UK economy requiring low and intermediate skills will keep falling and that demand for higher skills will rise.

Given the observable link between low skills and unemployment and worklessness, this news is of considerable concern for the London Region, because it has:

- a high unemployment rate (7.5 per cent)
- around 1.1 million workless people (32 per cent of the working-age population)
- more than 1.5 million people within the working-age population who do not have a first full Level 2 qualification, or

five GCSEs at grades A to C, the basic measure of employability

- 18 of its 33 boroughs falling within the 'top 30 per cent most deprived in England' category.

Lord Leitch pulls no punches in his report. He believes that a failure to improve the skills of people with few or no qualifications would permanently exclude this section of society from the labour market.

This is an outcome that would incur enormous costs for London in terms of benefits, lost opportunity and associated disadvantage, including healthcare, crime, child poverty and social cohesion. The combination of all these factors would act as a constant brake on our region's future competitiveness, productivity and prosperity.

The time to act is now.



Our aspirations for London

London needs a publicly funded, integrated skills and employment system that addresses worklessness by responding to the skills needs of businesses, while providing people with the skills they need for work. This will involve radical culture change.

The key issues for our region are skills gaps, employee recruitment, worklessness and social inclusion. All four are closely interrelated, so must be addressed together using new, joined-up solutions. Achieving this will require a fundamental change to the relationship between learning and skills systems and institutions on the one hand, and to the structure we have for recruitment, employment and business on the other.

This approach will involve a complete and long-term transformation for London's

learning and skills sector in which all future provision is geared to establishing clear routes into employment for workless individuals. For this to happen, economically valuable skills must be at the heart of all learning.

Skills are what will continue to drive our region's prosperity and business. So our job brokerage and employment systems must be built around a commitment to skills as a route to work and a gateway to personal and business development.

Applying this model across London will make learning and skills provision more responsive to the opportunities created by business. This in turn will ensure that people are equipped with the skills they need to take advantage of employment opportunities that business offers them.

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Sustainable employment is the end goal

Employment is sustainable when people start work with an adequate level of basic employable skills, when they have the right skills to make a success of their job, and when they have the opportunity to gain more skills while in work.

The purpose of coordinating our skills and employment services is to increase opportunities for sustainable employment for London's working-age population.

Employment is sustainable when people start work with an adequate level of basic employable skills, when they have the right skills to make a success of their job, and when they have the opportunity to gain more skills while in work. Sustainable employment for people also means a sustainable reliable workforce for business.

There can be no magical 'one size fits all' solution. Instead, LSC London Region has established 11 Employability Demonstration Pilots to explore the most effective ways of tackling the challenges set out above and to establish opportunities for sustainable employment.

Each pilot has been tasked with examining how its mainstream provision can be linked to real jobs using the 'Licence to Skill' Employability Toolkit developed by London's Multi-Agency Skills Taskforce, which is a unique regional model for

collaboration between the LSC, the London Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus and other partners. This will entail the following:

- developing a detailed understanding of the local economy, local business sectors, sector skills needs, local skills gaps, travel-to-work patterns and common skills needs identified by local employers
- understanding the wider London economy and the economic trends that will affect local skills needs
- working with Sector Skills Councils to understand the economically valuable skills that are at the heart of business in specific sectors
- developing curricula that deliver the skills to meet local skills gaps, equipping learners to exploit employment opportunities and preparing learners for new, emerging skills needs
- integrating job preparation, interview skills and employability into all mainstream, publicly funded learning provision
- establishing job brokerage, job search and information, advice and guidance services as an integral part of publicly funded provision
- offering a service to business that establishes a reinforcing circle of learning to work and working to learn, which will result in sustainable employment through improved skills.

The pilots will also aspire to achieve the New Standard for Employer Responsiveness, which has recently been developed to measure providers' ability to work creatively and successfully with employers.

During the pilots, colleges will start to demonstrate being centres of learning within the wider community of both people and business. Effective, responsive providers will meet employer and learner needs through commercial and publicly funded services.



A great opportunity to transform lives

As well as responding to business requirements, London's providers must be able to tailor their services to meet the specific needs of the individuals and communities with whom they work.

The 11 pilots (see chart on page 7) have each used the Employability Toolkit to identify their target groups. The combination of services that many people need to help them move out of exclusion and into sustainable employment usually needs to be delivered by a range of different organisations working together. So the Employability Toolkit focuses planning and delivery of provision by segmenting different groups of people, employers and sectors, and encouraging delivery partners to work together in developing integrated employment and skills solutions. It ensures that programmes are tailored to suit the needs of learners and employers, and that resources and investment are used more efficiently and effectively.

They have gone on to develop practical, tailored support that will help and inspire individual learners to overcome the obstacles they face, which may include one or many of the following:

- **the benefits trap** – some benefit claimants need relatively high minimum earning levels for them to be better off in work
- **transport** – cost, time and safety implications can restrict people's access to opportunity
- **childcare** – costs can be prohibitive and a significant disincentive to work
- **health and disability** – can cause barriers to work, including both physical and attitudinal issues
- **housing** – the high cost of housing and the benefits arrangements associated with it can present obstacles to learning and work
- **confidence** – unemployment and absence from the workplace can result in a significant loss of self-esteem.



Through the 11 pilots, London is exploring the best ways to develop practical, tailored support that will help and inspire individuals to break through their personal barriers to learning and enter sustained employment. The pilots will be reviewing the information, advice and guidance available to learners, including brokerage and advocacy support around learning, skills and jobs.

The needs of the economy, the labour market and skills shortages will underpin service development within the pilots, which are also required to focus in particular on: the local economy at borough level; the wider London economy within the context of the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy; and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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Multi-agency working is the answer

Clearly, no one institution can ever hope to be all things to all people; each learning provider has its own particular strengths in delivering high-quality, responsive learning.

It's vital that we play to those strengths, rather than diluting them. So the pilots are trialling a model of learning and skills integration based on a broad range of skills and services provided by an interconnected group of organisations and institutions. This multi-agency approach is the most effective way of providing the high-level services needed to assist workless people into employment.

Our 11 pilots are exploring how services can be coordinated successfully to ensure that they are complementary and joined up for the benefit of the user. As part of this process, agencies across London are working to improve information sharing

and are experimenting with the delivery of services in different locations, to help learners move easily from one service to another. They are also pooling expertise to ensure that specialised services are delivered in a way that links to other services while reinforcing key messages, behaviours and attitudes.

Strategically, agencies' targets, outputs and services are being coordinated to run smoothly alongside each other, without gaps through which learners may fall, and without overlaps that may cause confusion.

Through the Employability Demonstration Pilots programme we intend to show that all the necessary elements of an integrated skills and employment service can be delivered by sharing the overall goal of progressing people into sustainable employment.

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Pilots weave an intricate web of services

The 11 colleges that are engaged in the Employability Demonstration Pilots have already started weaving an intricate web of services and expertise.

- Local authorities, the London Development Agency (LDA) and other regeneration agencies contribute knowledge of regeneration projects, associated skills needs and business growth.
- Local and regional employer organisations inform decisions about necessary skills for specific sectors and locations.
- Colleges and learning providers develop responsive curricula linked to

identified employer needs and deliver vocational skills alongside employability programmes influenced by employer demands.

- Advice providers with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) deliver information and guidance to individuals.
- Voluntary and community sector groups, health trusts and other specialist agencies offer specific individual welfare support to meet the particular needs of communities and individuals trying to re-enter work through learning.
- JCP offers recruitment solutions to employers and Train to Gain brokers provide employers with learning solutions for existing staff.

London's 11 EDP programmes			
College	Target groups	Target sectors	Features
City and Islington College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women offenders People with ESOL needs People with learning difficulties and disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment reviews and development plans will include employability Employer links across the college Sustainability will be achieved through changes to mainstream provision
Southwark College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult NEET (not in employment, education or training) group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and social care Catering Art and design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aiming for college-wide integration of employer-focused and partnership-focused work New approaches to be built into the college planning cycle Professional development to include curriculum, working with external partners, engaging with pastoral support workers and employability
Lambeth College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clapham Park residents on mainstream college provision, outreach programmes or the New Deal for Communities programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering Construction Business finance Health and social care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of employability model that can be rolled out across college departments Sustainability strategy includes coordinated personal and community development learning funding, JCP Deprived Area Funding and family learning, Entry Level 1 and Entry Level 2 provision
South Thames College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young NEETs within Wandsworth Adults who need skills for sustainable employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment system to be linked to employability at every level All staff to receive training to help them respond to employers and employability issues
College of North West London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults facing multiple barriers to employment People with ESOL needs People with learning support needs JCP and 'Brent in 2 Work' clients needing work experience 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherent approach to employer engagement Tracking through customer relationship management system and work experience database Sustainability to be achieved through the Wembley Works one-stop shop
Capel Manor College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economically inactive adults seeking to enter/return to the labour market People with learning difficulties and disabilities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to involve employers in curriculum development and delivery Planning a whole-college template approach Developing and testing the Routeway Broker concept
College of North East London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone parents Young adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care (for lone parents) Creative industries (for young adults) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with JCP to help with benefits issues and ensure learner focus is on employment at an early stage
Hackney Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JCP clients People with mental health issues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aiming for college-wide approach to identifying at-risk learners and to support progression into employment
Tower Hamlets College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners of all ages New Deal clients 'Priority 1' Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail Financial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing employment focus for all college provision Planning a comprehensive staff development programme, including 'train the trainer' employability courses
Croydon College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IB claimants with mental health issues Lone parents with children over 12 People from Black and Minority Ethnic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality (for IB claimants) Construction (for lone parents) Retail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot will build on hospitality and construction Centres of Vocational Excellence, underpin development of Skills and Enterprise College and support Borough's forthcoming Lone Parents Strategy Sustainability strategy will be based on JCP programmes, Train to Gain, the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative and the European Social Fund
Merton College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone parents Adults with mental health issues Ex-offenders People with ESOL needs Level 1 and 2 students not expected to progress to higher levels 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving employers and students in programme design: aiming to test various employer-centred approaches to employability Strategy to be set out in a three-year Employability Development Plan New model employability service will lead to greater curriculum flexibility across the college, with links to Train to Gain

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