



>LSC

Leading learning and skills

the magazine

Train to Gain drives
skills improvement in
the motor industry

page 5

October 2008

The magazine of the Learning and Skills Council
(LSC) for partners and people interested in
learning and skills issues in London

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Cover photo: HGV Technician Brian Fox is living proof that you're never too old to learn (see page 5)

the magazine

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David
Hughes

Comment

Welcome to the October issue of *the magazine*.

As ever, the summer was a busy time for the LSC and its partners. In July the Mayor launched *London's Future: The Skills and Employment Strategy for London 2008 – 2013*, which sets out a blueprint for the changes required to improve employment and skills outcomes for Londoners and our region's employers over the next five years.

It's already very apparent that this strategy, the first ever by the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), has been the catalyst for some really good joint working between the LSC, the London Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus, resulting in the development of a more 'joined-up' solution for employers and learners.

There's also been a strong push from the LSEB for the various partners involved to focus on helping people get into work and gain the skills they'll need to progress once they are in work. It's vital to ensure that all our adult skills funding reflects this.

In the 14-19 arena, we've been doing some excellent work with local authorities. Together, we've been setting out the post-LSC vision for the London Region and planning out what'll be needed at a local level in order to be able to offer young people a good range of options. It's great to see so many people – and from such a wide variety of roles – who are keen to get involved in this.

Our centre-spread article outlines some of London's Apprenticeship success stories to date. I'm confident that there will be many more to come, which is why we're doing all we can to convince employers of the value of Apprenticeships and to encourage them to come on board.

Last but not least, at the time of writing we still await clarity regarding the learning and skills landscape after the LSC is disbanded in 2010. We look forward to finding out more in the near future, but there's no denying that the uncertainty is proving unsettling for everyone involved, especially for LSC staff.

David Hughes
 LSC London Regional Director



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Supporting swimming success

Some British Olympic swimmers don't just have incredible talent in common – they have the support of an Apprenticeship scheme behind them.

Rebecca Adlington became Britain's first female Olympic double swimming champion by winning two gold medals in Beijing.

An Advanced Apprentice, backed and funded by the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) scheme, Rebecca won the 400m freestyle in 4:03.22 and shattered the oldest female world swimming record for the 800m freestyle with an 8:14.10 victory.

Three other advanced apprentices were also competing: Jenna Randall and Olivia Allison, Britain's first Olympic synchronised

swimming duet since 1992; and swimmer Jemma Lowe.

The AASE scheme recognises the talent, ability and endeavour sports people need to exhibit in order to reach the top. It offers people like Rebecca, Jenna, Olivia and Jemma the chance to undertake an Apprenticeship that equips them with the skills they need to compete at international level (see centre pages).

David Way, National Director of Apprenticeships at the LSC, said: "It was fantastic to see these athletes competing at the Olympics. They worked extremely hard to get to Beijing."



Three of AASE's Water Cube stars: 19-year-old Rebecca (above) is now the most successful British swimmer in modern Olympic history; Jenna and Olivia (right) are Britain's top synchronised swimming duet



Regional Council is up and running

England's nine regional councils have been in operation since the middle of September. Established as part of the Further Education and Training Act 2007, they will inform the LSC's decision-making at a regional level, guide progress and ensure that the Government's strategy for education and skills works on the ground.

The members of the London Regional Council are:

- **Barry Francis** – Unionlearn Regional Manager for the Southern & Eastern TUC
- **Caroline Allen, CBE** – Principal of Orchard Hill College
- **Claire Ighodaro, CBE (Council Chair)** – Non-Executive Director of the Banking Code Standards Board and Lloyds of London
- **David Hughes** – LSC London Regional Director
- **Douglas Hands** – Chair of Governors at Lewisham College

- **Frances O'Grady** – Deputy General Secretary TUC (Observer from the National Council)
- **Iain Smith** – Head of Skills at London Underground
- **Javed Khan** – Director of Community and Cultural Services at the London Borough of Harrow
- **Mohamed Omer** – Director of Holt Whitney & Co Ltd
- **Pablo Lloyd** – Deputy Chief Executive at learnirect
- **Paul Butler** – Chair of Leyton Sixth Form College in East London and the London Voluntary Services Council
- **Peter Ibbetson** – Regional Chairman for Coutts and Chairman of the Social Enterprise Loan Fund
- **Roger Mills** – Regional Managing Director of Newsquest (London)
- **Sue Davidson** – Interim Executive in the public and private sectors.

Forget luck, celebrate skills

A London careers event in November will highlight the benefits of skills and achievements, rather than counting on a lucky break.

Skills London 2008 will be held at the ExCeL exhibition and conference centre from 20-22 November and will be the UK's biggest careers event. Supported by the LSC, the event will provide young people aged 14-19 with inspiration and an opportunity to receive unbiased, hands-on careers and skills advice.

The event, presented by business organisation London First, will showcase the career opportunities currently available, while putting across a serious message. It aims to counteract the perception held by many young people that all they need to succeed is luck, rather than genuine skills and achievements.

At Skills London 2008 attendees will get the lowdown on careers in a wide range of sectors, including creative, construction, healthcare and retail. And a hands-on

element could find them mixing tracks with radio DJs or playing with a top London football club.

The LSC will be promoting the *Choice* e-prospectus at the event, with a central stand in the Advice & Guidance zone and several interactive pods positioned strategically in other zones.

For more information and to book your free visit, go to www.skillslondon2008.co.uk



Skills competitions

The November ExCeL event will also host the finals of various competitions organised by not-for-profit organisation UK Skills, both to showcase excellence and demonstrate how exceptional performance improves individual and organisational success.

Competition winners will stand a chance of being part of the UK team competing in WorldSkills Calgary 2009, which will set international standards in 40 skills categories, including construction, creative arts and fashion, and social and personal services.

UK Skills successfully spearheaded the bid to bring the world's biggest skills competition to our region. WorldSkills London 2011 will provide a truly global showcase for skills and young people from across the world.

To find out more, visit www.ukskills.org.uk

Choice mural workshops inspire young Londoners

Throughout the summer, young Londoners engaged in a variety of activity programmes. One of the most unusual activities was a mural painting workshop, which was commissioned by the LSC. It was delivered by brand expert hey moscow to young people in schools, youth centres and Connexions centres across the region.

The murals helped young people connect with the positive values reinforced by their schools and linked to *Choice*, the comprehensive online guide to educational provision for young people in the capital.



Train to Gain enhanced by additional flexibilities

The Train to Gain service is set to enjoy a rapid expansion, confirming its major role in delivering the Government's skills strategy and ambitions.

Across the country, by 2010/11, more than £1 billion of public funding will be routed through Train to Gain and the service will support more than 950,000 employees each year.

Among the many new flexibilities introduced in order to help drive the expansion of the service are the following.

- New compacts between the Sector Skills Councils, DIUS and the LSC will promote the benefits of employer involvement. This aims to increase the number of learners at Level 2 and Level 3.
- For those who already have a Level 2 and/or Level 3, a limited number of Level 2 (30 per cent of the total) and Level 3 (20 per cent) places will be available.
- The LSC's systems have been streamlined to make it easier for people to access Train to Gain services.
- Successful colleges and training providers will be able to increase their contracts without having to go through a further tendering process, where their training is addressing the needs of employers and learners. This applies both in their existing region and across the country.

For more information about the wide range of additional flexibilities relating to Train to Gain, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/ttg/latest



Brian Fox (left) and Martin Stroud review the results of high-level diagnostic tests



Middle-aged technicians gain new qualifications

A forthcoming legislative change will mean that technicians who inspect or prepare vehicles for testing must have a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Vehicle Maintenance & Repair as a minimum.

One of the many companies that will be affected by this change is Enfield-based Norfolk Trucks Limited. Operations Manager Martin Stroud said: "Quite a few of my best technicians are what I'd call 'old school'. They've worked in the industry for decades, so are extremely competent in high-level technical and diagnostic work, but lack official qualifications to back that up."



Martin Stroud is a big fan of Train to Gain

Martin decided to put six of his technicians forward as Level 3 "Jumpers" – those who go straight to Level 3 without first gaining a Level 2 – in anticipation of the new law and to meet the growing pressure among clients to include formally qualified staff as a contract requirement.

When Train to Gain Assessor Neil Wilson came to visit them on site, the men immediately warmed to Neil who, after 29 years in the motor trade, clearly knew what he was talking about. Martin said: "They would complete job cards, photocopy them, get the foreman to sign them and then save them up to show Neil, who had a complete understanding of commercial vehicle workshops, so was really easy to work with."

All six men passed their Level 3 NVQs within eight months. HGV Technician Brian Fox has been in the business for 26 years. He said: "I'm 50 now and am self-taught. The training didn't interfere with my work at all and I learned about new areas, like airbag systems. Passing my NVQ gives me a greater sense of job security, and I'm really pleased I did it."

Martin added: "It's been good for the company and good for the guys!"

VQ Hero Award for South Thames College student

Sophie Kelly, who completed a BTEC National Diploma in Health and Social Care at South Thames College in July, is the VQ Hero Young Learner of the Year 2008 (see VQ Day article on page 11).

Elected by her peers as Student Union President and a Student Governor, Sophie has worked as a college ambassador, promoting the benefits of vocational education to local schools. She has also worked with a number of youth organisations that champion and empower young people.

College Principal Sue Rimmer said: "We nominated Sophie for this award because she is an inspirational and ambitious student who is a positive role model to her fellow students and the wider community."

Shocked to have won the award, Sophie said: "Studying for vocational qualifications has given me the confidence and aspiration to achieve my goals in life." She is now on the path to a career in social work and starts at Goldsmiths University in October.

How learning transformed a drug addict's life

Gillian Mowberry, 31, did not have the easiest start in life. Rendered homeless at the tender age of 13, she failed to complete her secondary school education, dropping out early and ending up in a life of drug dependence.

During her recovery, she was inspired by the support offered by her occupational therapist. So much so, in fact, that she decided to embark on a 34-week Occupational Therapy access course at Kensington and Chelsea College (KCC).

The course is designed for people who have few formal qualifications or who wish to update their existing qualifications. Encouraged by the unstinting support of



the KCC tutors, Gillian's confidence soared. She said: "I realised a love of learning that I'd never known before."

Since completing the course, Gillian has secured a place at Brunel

University to study for an Occupational Therapy degree. She said: "I plan to use my studies in part of a substance misuse programme to help other people improve their futures, as I have improved mine."



Land college celebrates landmark anniversary

London's only specialist land college marked its 40th anniversary with a tea party and tree-planting ceremony.

Capel Manor College, Enfield, originally comprised just 48 students and one centre in the walled garden at Capel House. It now owns and runs the whole Capel estate, has four other major centres across London, and a student roll for 2007/8 of more than 2,600.

To mark its success, a Capel Buck's Fizz Cream Tea Party and tree-planting ceremony were held as part of the Country Fair in July, attended by past and present students, staff,

governors, vice presidents and friends. A commemorative tree was planted by Capel Manor Vice President Marion Rowe and Enfield Mayor, Councillor Lee Chamberlain. Technical support came from Geoff Bylett, one of Capel Manor's earliest students.

The college is funded by the LSC and offers courses ranging from Horticulture and Saddlery to Conservation and Balloon Artistry.

For further information on courses or about shows and events, visit www.capel.ac.uk or www.capelmanorgardens.co.uk



A fun time was had by all at Capel's Buck's Fizz party and tree-planting ceremony

A home for budding 'Dragons'

Many people have been inspired to start up their own businesses by programmes such as *Dragon's Den*, but even the most innovative entrepreneur needs support.

The £1m Hayes Business Studios, based at Uxbridge College's Hayes Community Campus, will provide support and low-cost accommodation to young businesspeople. The Studios are set to open later this year and will also offer LSC-funded courses through Train to Gain and Apprenticeships.

Facilities available will include meeting and training rooms, internet access, spaces on flexible lease terms, office cleaning, on-site caretaking and security. Occupants will also be able to use all the campus facilities, including the fitness suite, restaurant, and hair and beauty salons.

Uxbridge College Principal Laraine Smith said: "Supporting the local and regional economy through training is already a key part of what Uxbridge College does, so it is pleasing to be able to extend that role even further."

A topping-out ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of the highest part of the new structure and Hillingdon Mayor, Councillor Brian Crowe, planted a commemorative tree.



Uxbridge College celebrates an outstanding set of Ofsted inspection results

Meanwhile, Uxbridge College has been told by Ofsted that its standards have risen from 'Satisfactory' to 'Outstanding' in just four years. Laraine said that work on Quality Assurance and an increased focus on equality and diversity had played a key part in the college's incredible

improvement and stressed: "It was a relentless, rigorous approach to driving up standards through hard work and getting the basics right."

For further information about Hayes Business Studios, email hbs@ukbi.co.uk

Bromley young entrepreneurs win award

Young people from Bromley with learning difficulties and/or disabilities won two prizes in a Young Enterprise Scheme competition that was spread over several days: the Team Programme Award and the Best Stall Award.

The students were all in their final year at Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, where they completed a Life Skills course to develop their personal, social and practical skills for everyday living.

As part of the course, the students participated in the Young Enterprise Scheme, which gave them an invaluable opportunity to learn about the world of work by running a real business. Having set up their own small company, the students took up board director roles and went on to design, launch and market their own products.

For the competition, the students created an attractive stall on Bromley market, displaying a wide range of their hand-crafted products, including decorated mirrors, mosaic frames and greetings cards. The judges chose the students' "outstanding" stall as the competition winner – this is the third year in a row that students from the college have taken home an award.

Company Director and student Adam Southworth said: "For me, the best part was actually making the products. We all had fun and learned useful things, like how to be nice to customers and how to handle money properly. And we've learned how to work as a team."

Tutor Kate Jones said: "The scheme has given our students an opportunity to see all aspects of the business process, from design



The Bromley students' work was praised by the judges

and manufacture through to sales. It's a wonderful way to develop a variety of skills."

Susan Donovan, Head of the School of Access to Learning, added: "The students have worked very hard and are highly motivated. This is reflected in their continued success each year."

London Apprentice numbers are set to

The Government and the LSC are committed to expanding and improving Apprenticeships, which will be a key component in the drive to increase London's economic prosperity and the participation of young people in education and training.

The *World-Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All* report sets out the basis of the Government's plan to stimulate exceptional growth in Apprenticeships across the country.

This poses a huge challenge for our region. Currently there are fewer Apprenticeships per head for London's young people and adults than in nearly any other part of England. For example, London has a similar-sized population to the North-West region, yet take-up in 2006/07 was dramatically

lower: 11,090 apprentice starts, compared to 32,210 (source: DIUS).

However, all that's about to change. By 2013, across the country every school leaver will be entitled to an Apprenticeship place – over the next decade, it is anticipated that one in five young people will start an Apprenticeship.

The London Apprenticeship Plan for Growth aims to increase numbers so that our region can meet this

requirement. Through a rolling campaign, the Plan will expand occupational and sectoral Apprenticeships into current and new areas. It will work to change the perception of

"What I really liked about the Apprenticeship was that it could all be done in the office."

Nicole Marriott,
Apprentice,
UK Border Agency



Taskforce aims to overcome barriers to take-up

At the start of the summer, Skills Minister David Lammy launched the London Apprenticeship Taskforce to expand the number of Apprenticeship places offered by employers.

It comprises employers, the LSC, local government representatives, college principals and training providers, and is headed up by the minister. Its role is to persuade more London employers to offer Apprenticeships, with a particular focus on public sector employers, together with small and medium-sized private enterprises.

Currently half of all Apprenticeships in London fall within five occupational areas

(and five Sector Skills Councils): hairdressing, children's workforce, administration, customer services and construction. London's public sector participation in Apprenticeships is particularly low – although the sector accounts for at least 25 per cent of employment, it is responsible for just 5 per cent of Apprenticeships.

The Taskforce is also responsible for overseeing the delivery of the London Apprenticeship Plan for Growth, and for advising the Skills Minister about how best to address inequalities and overcome barriers to take-up.



"My experience at the nursery has helped me to decide that working with children is what I want to do in life."

Kirsty Tattam, Apprentice, Nursery, Newham College

Net gains for ten



Safety net: Niall Angus, from Middlesex, values the back-up qualifications he'll gain as a result of his tennis AASE

The two-year Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) tennis programme was launched in September 2006 and offers a structured training and development route for athletes between 16 and 18. It is the result of

ship rocket

Apprenticeships and provide a clear route to higher-level education.

The Plan will also address problems of under-representation in Apprenticeships among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners and people with disabilities, especially within the 16-18 age group. A mentoring scheme will be introduced, to better enable under-represented groups to access and achieve an Apprenticeship. Work will also be undertaken to raise awareness of Apprenticeships among the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic business community.

Shown here are some recent examples of Apprenticeship developments and activities taking place across our region.

Luke powers through to win national award

Sixteen-year-old Luke Powers, from Catford, South East London, is the LSC National 2008 Young Apprentice of the Year.

Diagnosed with dyslexia as a child, Luke struggled with reading and writing throughout his youth. He has always believed that hard work brings rewards, so he threw himself into his Young Apprenticeship programme, determined to overcome these difficulties and succeed in both the workplace and the classroom.

Luke undertook his Young Apprenticeship in Sports Management, Leadership and Coaching at London Leisure College and Eltham Green Specialist Sports College. His efforts did not go unnoticed. Neil MacGillvray, Head of Sport, Leisure and Tourism for London Leisure College, described Luke as the "most outstanding student I've ever come across".



Luke proudly receives his award from television personality Amanda Holden

On completion of his programme, Luke became a permanent employee at Venture Health Club. In addition to his work responsibilities, he is an ambassador for Young Apprenticeships and gives presentations to other young people about the benefits of pursuing an earn-while-you-learn scheme.

nis apprentices

collaboration between SkillsActive, which is the sector skills council for the active leisure and learning industry, LSC London Region and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).

In its first year, 64 tennis apprentices embarked on the programme, and in 2007 the number of new recruits rose to 89. Although they have all been able to enhance their playing ability at LTA-accredited high-performance centres dotted around the country, including at Chiswick and Sutton in our region, the programme extends way beyond practical skills.

Amandeep Takhar, AASE Programme Manager, said: "We launched AASE primarily to create a performance atmosphere while creating pathways into coaching."

For more information about Skills Active, visit www.skillsactive.com



Shaped by You

A new campaign is encouraging employers to take on apprentices to improve long-term productivity and introduce a fresh approach to their business.

Launched in August, the regional campaign aims to increase awareness of Apprenticeships among key sectors in London, particularly in construction, retail, hospitality, and sports and active leisure.

The campaign is being run by marketing company Haygarth, which devised the unusual 'Shaped by You' creative, based around plasticine figures of people at work.

In my view: the LSEB strategy

The London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB) unveiled its ambitious strategy in July. We asked Philippa Langton, LSC London Region's Skills Director, for a progress report.

Q: Why was the LSEB created?

London is a complex region. It has a very successful economy, but a third of the working-age population is not in employment, so is not part of that success story. The Mayor believed that an employer-led board would make a positive difference to the employment and skills of Londoners.

Q: Do the other English regions all have a skills and employment board?

No, we've broken new ground here in London. We are in the unique position of having a Skills and Employment Board that brings a different perspective to setting the strategy for spending the adult skills budget in London. It means we have a closer working relationship with the London Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus.

Q: What are the LSEB strategy's primary objectives?

There are three. The first is to ensure that there's a really clear offer to employers in relation to employment and skills – employers have told us that it's a jungle out there, and that it's a nightmare trying to understand what's on offer from the various agencies and funding streams. The second centres on the employment and skills offer to individuals – we need an easily accessible system to support people into employment and up the career ladder. And the third one is to build a far more integrated employment and



skills system, wherein all the different organisations share a common goal and work together to achieve it.

Q: What's the extent of LSC London Region's involvement in implementing the strategy?

We've been involved right from the start and our Regional Director, David Hughes, is a board member. As one of the key officers working on the LSC's strategic input, I've been really pleased with the enthusiasm the LSEB is generating, across many different organisations. Rather than taking a defensive stance during strategic discussions, people have been very honest and open. Basically, we know the current system isn't right; we know we could do a lot better; and we know it's not lack of money that's

holding us back – we're just not smart enough in spending it. Our new collaborative approach is proving very effective. We still have a bumpy road to travel, but there's a real willingness to make it work.

Q: Have you tested out any new ways of partnership working?

We are running a number of trials that will really test our ability to work together and make a difference. The fact that we have developed the LSEB strategy together stands us in good stead. The big challenge now is to involve local authorities in this work, particularly because they are often the gateway to the local voluntary organisations that do such sterling work in supporting vulnerable individuals.

College boosts employment prospects for local residents

Since its launch in February 2008, the National Skills Academy for Financial Services has worked with employers to deliver new qualifications and to open up new progression routes to employment for local people.

Tower Hamlets College is the flagship centre for London's Academy, which supports employers in the City, Canary Wharf, Docklands and east London with a range of demand-led services to meet their training and recruitment needs.

The Academy has built on the College's long-standing relationship with HSBC and the Financial Services Authority (FSA). It has already forged links with more than 20 large employers who are supporting the development of customised pre-employment programmes that combine focused employability skills training with a work placement and workplace mentor to deliver an industry-based qualification. Mentors come from over 40 different organisations.

It's a formula that works: during the Academy's first six months of operation, 94 learners gained employment in the



Pictured at the Academy are (left to right): John Biggs, London Assembly Member, LDA Deputy Chair and LTGDC Deputy; Lorraine Baldry, LTGDC Chairman; Therese Reinheimer-Jones, Head of Financial Skills Academy; Hazel Blears; and Joanna Gaukroger, Principal, Tower Hamlets College

financial services sector, and more than half of them had undertaken a prior placement or internship.

The Academy has agreed a ground-breaking programme with Lloyd's of London and the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII), and is now busy developing its curriculum to include CII qualifications. Eleven local students have already been recruited to the programme.

Judging by the volume of repeat business, the commitment shown by financial services organisations is no "flash in the pan". On the contrary, it's part of a longer-term strategy.

The Academy is catalysing learning across London's financial services sector:

HSBC is funding the production of an online careers information, advice and guidance tool for Academy learners; and, working closely with the ADAB Trust, the Academy has developed a hugely popular masterclass programme – with high-profile guests including Lynda Parker Pennington, Director of Human Resources and Talent Management for Google – designed to inspire local learners to fulfil their potential.

During a July visit Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, described the Academy as "fantastic" at delivering new entry routes into the sector for young people and adults.

For more information, visit www.tower.ac.uk/programareas/academy.asp

National celebration event for vocational qualifications

July saw the first-ever VQ Day, a national celebration that aims to raise the profile and communicate the value of vocational qualifications to future students, potential employers and the wider public.

On 23 July vocational success was celebrated at more than 50 VQ Day events held in schools, colleges and workplaces across the country. At London's event, a student from South Thames College won the VQ Hero 2008 award (see article on page 6).

Among the providers who held their own event was JGA Group, a training and career development company that trains adult learners at its Eastcote training centre or in the workplace. Kenyan student Oscar Wasike was one of those whose success was acknowledged by Nick Hurd, MP for Northwood-Ruislip. Taking JGA's intensive Better English course resulted in Oscar gaining an English for Speakers of Other Languages qualification, which in turn has enabled him to realise his dream of joining the British Army.

The VQ Day initiative is led by Edge, the education foundation, in conjunction with numerous organisations including the DIUS, City & Guilds, ILM, QCI and the Association of Colleges.



Award winner Sophie is flanked by *Strictly Come Dancing* star Alesha Dixon and Garry Hawkes, Chairman of Edge

3.2 million vocational qualifications were awarded last year, an increase of 8.3 per cent on the previous year. (Source: *The VQ Landscape 2008 Report*)

ESF provides life-changing for Londoners

The European Social Fund (ESF) aims to extend employment opportunities and develop a skilled and adaptable workforce. It is enabling thousands of Londoners to increase their skills and job prospects so that they can fulfil their potential.

Many London employers are frustrated by the lack of first-rate, skilled workers available in our region's labour pool.

That's not surprising. Recent research confirms that a high proportion of Londoners have problems with reading,

writing and working with numbers. The Skills and Employment Strategy for London, published by the London Skills and Employment Board, states that 19 per cent of Londoners have literacy skills below those expected of an 11-year-old and that almost half of Londoners have numeracy skills at this level.

But the tide is starting to turn. ESF support is helping LSC London Region and its partners reach out to many people on the margins of the labour market, inspiring them to acquire new skills and thus improve their chances of entering employment. Workless adults across London are being helped to realise their potential, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups who are furthest from the labour market.



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

Finance for a better future

ESF was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and it aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. Under the national 2007-2013 ESF programme, London has been awarded £324 million of funding. Although this is the largest ESF allocation in England, it is well below the £520 million allocated to our region under the previous ESF programme (2000 to 2006).

London's ESF allocation for 2007-13 is managed by the Mayor's Office. Funding is distributed through a co-financing system, which is designed to enhance government programmes through additional activity that would not otherwise have been funded. Co-financing organisations, including LSC London Region, are responsible for distributing ESF funds (co-financed with their own domestic funding) and contracting with organisations that deliver ESF projects.

Proof of the pudding

Individuals and employers from across London Region have benefited greatly from ESF support.

Shown here are some inspirational examples from London-based projects that were funded under previous ESF programmes.

ESF 2007-2010 programme: a new cycle with new targets

LSC London Region's new ESF programme runs from 2007 to 2010. Its priorities are to extend employment opportunities and create a skilled and adaptable workforce.

The first round of tendering under the ESF programme resulted in LSC London Region receiving a total of 328 tenders. A number of contracts are still being finalised, but around 100 projects are expected to be able to share ESF funding amounting to nearly £48 million.

Paul Crosswell, LSC London Region's Head of ESF, said: "We are contracting with a huge range of providers to deliver on the ESF 2007-2010 programme, including more than 40 charitable, voluntary and community organisations from London's third sector.

"Through this latest round of ESF-funded projects, we expect to be able to offer support to 9,900 unemployed and economically inactive people from across our region, with a view to lifting 3,069 into sustainable employment.

"The projects target some of the most disadvantaged adults in London. They also target more than 9,000 young people who are not in education, training or employment, with the greatest investment made in those areas of London that have the greatest need for support."

For more information, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/ESF/20072013programme or contact londoninfo@lsc.gov.uk

opportunities



City Lit's MOVE project has had a significant impact on many learners

ESF case study: City Lit

An innovative project led by City Lit has enabled homeless and unemployed people to undertake vocationally relevant Level 2 training aimed at preparing them for employment as support workers.

Through the MOVE project, learners were offered a range of Level 2 training, leading to certificates in Housing and in Supporting the Development Needs of Vulnerable People.

A structured programme of classroom-based training and work placements helped beneficiaries to build on their own experience of homelessness and convert it into a work asset.

The project enabled learners to overcome barriers caused by discrimination, lack of employment and experience. It also included basic skills diagnostic tests and Skills for Life training.

MOVE has had a significant impact on many learners. One said: "Through doing the course I learned to put my pride aside and ask for help. I learned to care for others and myself. It changed my life beyond recognition."

Thrilled at gaining an NVQ, another said: "I want to help other people. Giving is the name of the game."



Tribal's construction training project helped John Burundu gain sustainable employment in the sector

ESF case study: Tribal Consulting

Tribal Consulting led a project that set up on-site training centres on major construction projects. These centres provided construction training, along with Skills for Life and other training, work experience opportunities and job brokerage, to help learners gain sustainable employment in the sector.

The primary targets were unemployed and economically inactive social housing tenants and private tenants who receive housing benefit. The project also targeted numerous sub-groups who are under-represented in London's labour market. John Burundu completed a certificate in Adult Numeracy and construction-related NVQs at levels 1 and 2. He is now employed by project partner UNOCO as a technician.

Learner Selena Hall, a single mother aged 23 who left home at the age of 15, gained an Introductory Certificate in Basic Construction Skills and a CSCS card. She went on to win the Young Builder of the Year Award and said: "I now have much more confidence and am looking forward to the future."

Five minutes with... Claire Ighodaro

As the new Regional Chair of the LSC's London Council, Claire Ighodaro CBE has an important part to play in the capital's skills arena. We spoke to her to find out why she took on this role and how things are going.

Q: How has your experience to date prepared you for your new role?

After spending more than 25 years in industry, including a period as President of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, I have a strong understanding of employers' requirements for skilled people who can work productively and effectively. This industry experience also allows me to appreciate the complexity of what the LSC is tasked with delivering. And I've been a member of the LSC's National Council for the last three years, because I fully support the organisation's core role: to make England better skilled and more competitive.

Q: What's the purpose of the Regional Council?

The fundamental role of the Council is to deliver the agreed strategy of the LSC in London. We also work alongside the London Skills and Employment Board, which shares our belief in the strong link between skills and employability. In practical terms, the Council is responsible for the scrutiny and endorsement of large capital projects, and for a £1.6 billion spend on supporting skills training.

Q: So you're tasked with keeping all the executives in line then?

As Council Chair, it's my job to provide support, to challenge constructively and



to give the executives the benefit of my industry experience. It's important for me to be a leader but, from what I've seen so far, the executives are very dedicated and focused on improving skills delivery so I think I'll be pushing against an open door!

Q: What do you see as the key issues for London?

Our region is a paradox. We have highly skilled people living and working alongside people with a paucity of skills and education. That's why it's always dangerous to rely on averages in a place like London. We must enable workless people to enter sustainable employment – we don't just want them to go through a revolving door – and workers to progress. And we need to cast our Apprenticeship net wider, to bring more employers and young people on board. It's also important for

us to work with employers to ensure we meet their skills needs in relation to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, especially in the five Olympic boroughs.

Q: As a staunch advocate of lifelong learning, are there any skills you'd still like to acquire?

When it comes to learning, I'm like a child in a sweet shop! Whenever I contemplate a new position, I have two main considerations: do I have the necessary skills and experience to do a good job; and is there something I'll learn? I undertake continuous professional development activities too, of course. On a personal note, I'm not very good with musical instruments; I've tried and failed many times to learn the piano. If I live long enough, I may become a good piano player, but I'm nowhere near that as yet!

Learning unlocks Londoners' potential

Business is benefiting from the LSC's investment in learning, which also boosts opportunities for Londoners, according to recent research.

LSC London Region's new report, *What has learning ever done for us? The impact of learning on London*, demonstrates that learning is providing employers and learners with the skills that the economy values, moving people into work and further learning, and progressing them up the career ladder.

An increasing number of London employers are struggling to secure the right staff with the right skills. Broad "employability skills" like oral communication, customer handling, teamworking and problem-solving are often found to be in short supply.

But the good news is that people who pursue publicly funded learning programmes in London are succeeding in gaining the skills and qualifications that employers need. As a result, they are entering employment, progressing up the career ladder and moving onto higher levels of learning. Level 2 learners have been particularly successful at moving into paid employment following their course.

Learning is also helping many people who are furthest from the labour market to come off benefits and gain employment. The Learner Tracker research found that of 2,679 unemployed learners taking a course to learn new skills: the proportion on benefits fell from 88 per cent before the course to 53 per cent after; a third moved into employment; and one in five learners who had been claiming Incapacity Benefit moved into work.

People from disadvantaged and excluded communities are also benefiting from learning. Three-quarters of London's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners had achieved a qualification as a result of



their course and just over a third achieved a job after the course. Most who remained unemployed said they felt closer to getting a job.

Meanwhile, employers using the Train to Gain service are reporting a range of business benefits, including improvements in long-term competitiveness, profitability, the skills of employees in relation to their specific job role, and staff retention.

The life-changing effects of learning are lasting. Learners report improved skills important to current or future work, and increased confidence. They also continue to develop social, communication and teamworking skills, 18 months after their course. What's more, a significant proportion of learners progress onto another course to further bolster their skills and enhance their long-term prospects.

To access the report, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/Publications

News in brief

Bexley Mayor presents awards

As a former hairdresser, Councillor Nick O'Hare, now Mayor of Bexley, was the ideal person to present the awards at Bexley Training Group's annual Hairdressing Awards ceremony. He enjoyed watching the students' hair show extravaganza, then spoke movingly about the trials and tribulations of being an apprentice, and about the many challenges of today's hairdressing world.



Nick O'Hare presents Hazel McKenzie with her award

Wembley Works

Wembley Works was officially opened at the end of August by Stephen Timms, Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform. This new employment portal, which has been built within the Wembley Regeneration Scheme, now provides skills training delivered by the College of North London. It includes a "one-stop shop" job brokerage unit as well as access to local job opportunities arising in the Wembley City development.

Principal achievement for Stanmore

Jacqui Mace, Principal of Stanmore College, is one of just 10 principals in the country to have completed the Principal's Qualifying Programme. Run by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, this demanding development programme included residential courses at Warwick Business School and visits to private companies and other colleges. Jacqui feels that the programme has helped her understand her role in leading cultural change within her organisation.

Paralympic celebration

City of Westminster College celebrated the official handover of the Paralympic Flag from Beijing to London, marking the close of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the start of the build-up to London 2012. The College staged a range of sporting activities, including rowing, cycling and relay races, with students and teachers from across its five campuses taking up the sporting challenge.

Take4

Choice eProspectus

London's online guide to educational provision contains a wealth of information designed to help young people choose the course or career that suits them best. *Choice* is expected to help drive down the number of learners quitting their course in the first term because of bad choices – we spoke to four Londoners to find out their views.

Sean McMahon
14-19 Director
LSC London Region

"It's a sad fact that too many young Londoners embark on a course after their GCSEs, but drop out by Christmas. Last year, record numbers stayed on in London post-16, but too many dropped out in Year 12, and some of those found it very hard to re-engage in learning thereafter. Any way you look at it, this is a lose:lose situation. It's hugely disappointing for the young person and their family; frustrating for their institutions; and frustrating for us in terms of using taxpayers' money to good effect.

"The beauty of *Choice* is that it enables users to explore the amazing breadth of opportunities available and it can help them make an informed decision about their options. Getting more young people on the right courses across London is key to further increasing participation and driving down the number of young people not in education, employment or training."

Georgia Holleran
Consultant
Newham LEA

"I'm experienced in website development so I know how hard it is to hit the ground running when creating an easy-to-use website. I've been working with the *Choice* team for the last 18 months and am certainly a fan; it's a great product. *Choice* really does show London as a cohesive collection of boroughs – I've looked at many other equivalent sites around the country, and we're now up there with the best ones. I hope it keeps developing and evolving."

Danny Smith
Learner
William Morris Sixth Form College

"For young people who are unsure about what they want to do with their life, *Choice* can point the way and give them the extra boost they need. There are so many different options available that they're almost guaranteed to find something to suit their needs, course wise. They can even type in their postcode to find out what's on offer in their local area. It's a really easy site to navigate.

"*Choice* also encourages young people to look further ahead. I'm now in my second year of A-levels in Business and IT; when I searched under 'business' I was amazed at how many further study and career opportunities my course could lead on to. It's helped me decide to study music marketing and I'll be using it again soon to narrow down my choice of university."

Sam Armitt
Choice Manager
Central London Connexions

"*Choice* helps young Londoners make sound career choices because everything is in one place. With more than 35,000 detailed courses readily available, plus 800 different jobs, a planning tool, CV builder, quiz and action planner, young people have all the tools they need to plan their route forward and to reach their career goals and aspirations. *Choice* has proved invaluable for Connexions personal advisers, who use it in everyday practice. Parents and carers also feel that *Choice* helps their teenagers to make career choices and get the support they need from Connexions and teachers in planning ahead."



Sean McMahon



Georgia Holleran



Danny Smith



Sam Armitt