

>LSC

Leading learning and skills

# the magazine

July 2008

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

Celebrating  
excellence  
at the  
London  
Skills Awards  
2008

Centre pages

LSC Skills for London Awards 2008

Asad Ahmed

Winner  
Apprentice of the Year

David Hughes  
Regional Director

Learning and Skills Council  
10th June 2008

Train to Gain

# Contents

## July 2008

National and regional news	03
Regional news	04-05
Local news	06-07
London Skills Awards 2008	08-09
Regeneration	10-11
14-19 learning	12-13
Spotlight	14
Research and news in brief	15
Regional views: literacy and numeracy	16

Cover photo: Asad Ahmed was delighted to become the Apprentice of the Year at the London Skills Awards 2008 (see centre pages)

### the magazine

#### Editorial

Editor: Lynn McSweeney  
 T: 020 7904 0663  
 E: londoninfo@lsc.gov.uk  
 W: www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/london  
 The editor reserves the right to amend or cut submitted copy.

Published by the LSC in the London Region, where there are five local LSCs:

Learning and Skills Council London Central  
 Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DR  
 T: 0845 019 4144

Learning and Skills Council London East  
 Boardman House, 64 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 1NT  
 T: 0845 019 4151

Learning and Skills Council London North  
 Dumayne House, 1 Fox Lane, Palmers Green, London N13 4AB  
 T: 0845 019 4158

Learning and Skills Council London South  
 Canius House, 1 Scarbrook Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1SQ  
 T: 0845 019 4172

Learning and Skills Council London West  
 Central House, Lampton Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1HY  
 T: 0845 019 4164

Written and produced by Item ([www.item.co.uk](http://www.item.co.uk))

Publication reference LSC-P-LOR-080006



**European Union**  
**European Social Fund**  
 Investing in jobs and skills

July 2008 *the magazine*

**Apologies** – in the previous issue of *the magazine*, we omitted to mention that Tower Hamlets College is home to the National Skills Academy for Financial Services, an update on which will be included in the October issue.



David  
Hughes

## Comment

Welcome to the latest issue of our quarterly stakeholder magazine, which provides a round-up of the many developments within London's learning and skills sector.

Firstly, I'd like to welcome Boris Johnson as the new Mayor of London. I look forward to working closely with him in his role as Chair of the London Skills and Employment Board, which will shortly be launching its strategy.

It gives me great pride to know that, out of all the English regions, London has the highest proportion of young people in learning. Our NEET (not in employment, education or training) rates also fall well below the national average. I believe that the strong links we've been able to build with local authorities, alongside a large number of high-quality colleges and providers, have been a significant factor in these achievements.

Over the last few months we have been working hard to strengthen the LSC's existing relationships with local authorities, in preparation for them taking responsibility for 16-19 funding in two years' time. We are now focusing on relationship-building at a regional level. As you can imagine, with 33 boroughs to deal with, this is a very complex process, but we're determined to make the transition to the successor bodies as smooth as possible. Meanwhile, on top of all that, it's vital for the LSC team to keep driving forward developments in learning and skills, right across the region.

Also featured in this issue is the incredibly ambitious Thames Gateway regeneration scheme, the scale of which is hard to imagine. The skills levels of many people who live in the Thames Gateway area do not fit well with future job requirements, so it's critical for them to develop the skills they'll need to benefit from the regeneration. Over the next three years, the LSC will be spending at least £2.45 billion on this ambitious project.

I hope you find *the magazine* an informative and enjoyable read. As ever, we welcome all suggestions for topics you would like us to cover in future.

**David Hughes**  
**LSC London Regional Director**

# New Regional Chair appointed

The LSC's nine new regional councils will have a key role to play in continuing to drive progress within post-16 skills delivery. Claire Ighodaro CBE has been appointed as London's new Regional Chair.

The Machinery of Government consultation, *Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver*, proposed sweeping changes to the post-16 education and skills arena, as featured in the previous issue of *the magazine*.

To assist with these reforms, the LSC is setting up nine regional councils, to be formally established in September. London's council will be led by Claire Ighodaro CBE, who is also currently a member of the LSC's National Council.

Listed by *New Nation* (August 2007) as the UK's fifth most powerful black woman, Claire was the first female President of the Chartered Institute of Management

Accountants from 2003 to 2004. She is currently a non-executive Director of the Banking Code Standards Board and Lloyd's of London. She is also an Independent Board Member of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, a Trustee of the British Council, and sits on the Council of the Open University. Until 2004 Claire was an executive at BT plc, where she held a number of senior posts, including Finance Director, Broadband, BT Group plc.

David Hughes, LSC London Regional Director, welcomes this new appointment. He said: "During the transition to the new post-16 skills delivery arrangements, I am confident that Claire will challenge and



Claire Ighodaro takes on another challenging new role

support us as we strive to shape a world-class education and skills system for London."

The October issue of *the magazine* will feature an interview with Claire.

## Skills London 2008: Bursting with careers

London's skills shortage is a key concern among employers across our region. To help combat this, the LSC is supporting Skills London 2008, the biggest skills and careers event happening this year.

Presented by London First, Skills London is expected to attract more than 150 organisations keen to showcase skills and training opportunities for London's young people aged between 14 and 19. More than 25,000 people have already booked a free visit.

The event will be staged at ExCeL London from 20 to 22 November. It will include employers from a wide range of sectors, and young people will be able to seek advice and gather information about the many different career and educational opportunities available. With 12 'zones' to explore, and many 'have a go' areas to try out, the event is sure to appeal to all attendees.

Skills London 2008 will also host the finals of a number of UK Skills

competitions. The results will be used to select the UK squad for WorldSkills Calgary 2009.

To find out more, visit [www.skillslondon2008.co.uk](http://www.skillslondon2008.co.uk)



## Compact to tackle skills shortages

Towards the end of May, Skills Secretary John Denham announced a new agreement between the Government and employers to deliver more skilled workers in science, engineering and manufacturing technologies.

The Government will earmark £65 million from the Train to Gain budget to help Semta, the UK's Sector Skills Council for science, engineering and manufacturing technologies, invest in the skills of the sector's workforce.

See page 14 of *the magazine* for an interview with Semta's Chief Executive, Philip Whiteman.

# London's skills brokers are up to standard



London's Train to Gain skills brokers lead the way by achieving a professional business advice qualification

In April, 46 of London's Train to Gain skills brokers achieved the Skills Broker Standard, which is a professional business advice qualification.

Philippa Langton, LSC Regional Director for Skills, and Glenn Robinson, LSC National Train to Gain Director, presented certificates at a celebratory event held at Centre Point.

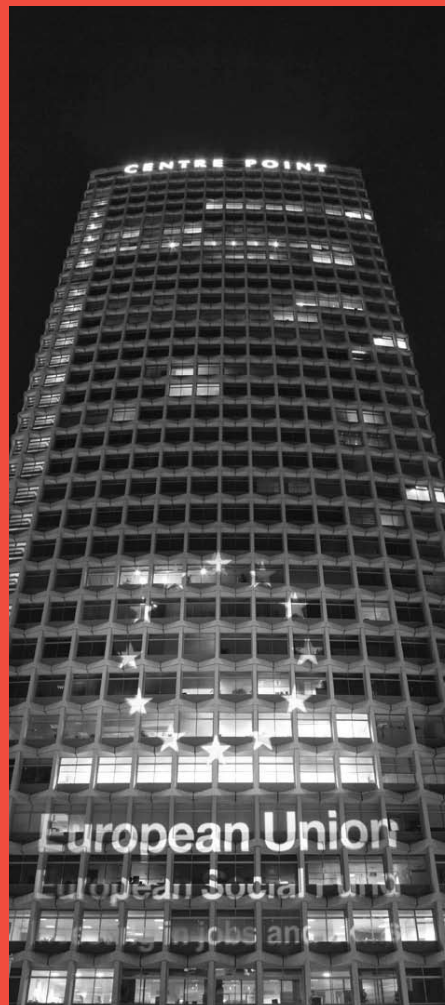
The skills brokers achieving the Standard came from the London Brokerage Consortium (LBC), Prevista and Triangle. Glenn spoke warmly about the comprehensive service delivered to London's employers by Train to Gain, and commended the skills brokers for their achievement.

His words were echoed by Nick Prince, who added: "Achieving the Skills Broker Standard has enabled me to demonstrate and develop the skills and knowledge I need to ensure that I can deliver a high-quality service to employers, helping them develop their business and achieve their objectives."

Across the country, skills brokers are responsible for 20 per cent of Train to Gain learner starts. In our region we are way ahead, with a whopping 30 per cent (*source: ILR data*). To date the skills brokers have engaged with 12,000 London employers – half of which had not undertaken any training in the previous 12 months. The programme overall has resulted in 45,000 employees starting an LSC-funded qualification at Level 3 or below.

## Flying the flag for Europe Day

LSC London Region celebrated Europe Day on 9 May by projecting an image of the European Union flag and the Union Jack onto the front of the Centre Point building.



The celebration marked the recent announcement of the new European Social Fund (ESF) programme for 2007-13, which will help thousands of disadvantaged Londoners get qualified and enter the job market.

A total of £324 million has been made available in London, of which £188 million will be managed by the LSC.

The programme, which kicks off in summer 2008, aims to assist around 285,000 individuals. It targets:

- unemployed and inactive adults
- young people not in employment, education or training
- people in employment who have basic skills needs or who need Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications.

Mary Conneely, LSC London Regional Director for Regeneration, said: "London is a city that has plenty of opportunities. To benefit and prosper from these opportunities, people need the right skills. London's workforce has some of the highest skills levels in the country. However, too many of its residents have low skills levels, resulting in many households being trapped in poverty.

"To make a real difference in people's lives, we must make sure that all residents have access to gain the skills they need to help them find jobs, succeed at work and build a brighter future."

Visitors flocked to the HRD 2008 exhibition, held at ExCeL in April, to share knowledge and best practice among the learning and development community.

With 250 stands manned by leading learning and development providers and 60 free, exhibitor-led sessions on hot HR topics, attendees were spoilt for choice.

LSC London Region was a major sponsor of the HRD 2008 event, which provided the perfect opportunity to promote the Train to Gain service, Apprenticeships and the Skills Pledge to an audience consisting mainly of HR professionals.

Two London employers spoke at LSC-sponsored seminars about the benefits Train to Gain had brought to their organisation.

Denise Fresco, Director at The Courier Service (Same Day) Ltd, explained how the service has made her staff confident and competent in operating the forklift

# ExCeL event attracts HR professionals



LSC staff and Train to Gain skills brokers were on hand to give advice at HRD 2008

truck. She said: "They feel valued by their employer and are happy that they are achieving qualifications in their specialist field." Di Gallagher, London Conurbation

Manager at the Boots Greenwich Distribution Centre, also spoke about how staff retraining through Train to Gain had helped boost morale.

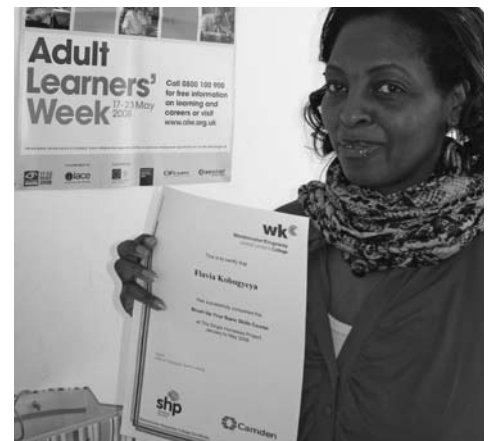
## Adults seize the chance to brush up on basic skills

In May, people across London tried out new skills or refreshed existing ones during Adult Learners' Week.

This year's Adult Learners' Week ran from 17 to 23 May. As always, a broad range of activities was on offer from training providers throughout London Region.

Adult Learners' Week is also the ideal time to celebrate learner achievements. So

Westminster Kingsway College took the opportunity to award certificates to the adult learners from central London's Single Homeless Project, who had successfully completed a 10-week course to brush up on their basic English and maths skills. Among the learners was Flavia Kobugyeya, who said: "This course has given me confidence. Now I am helping my 14-year-old niece with her studies, which makes me really proud."



Flavia Kobugyeya proudly displays her certificate

The college also hosted an annual tea party and design exhibition for participants of its over-60s classes, which range from painting and craftwork to dance. Jean Watt, 75, said: "The classes are so relaxed but we feel stretched each week with the work we do – and luckily we don't have to take any exams!"

Rochelle Scholar, Head of Community Based Learning at the college, said: "Adult Learners' Week is a celebration of the achievements of all our adult learners and their tutors throughout the year."



Jean Watt enjoys her painting classes

# Haringey opens cutting-edge sixth form centre

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, officially opened the brand new Haringey Sixth Form Centre in April, accompanied by local MP and Minister for Skills David Lammy. LSC London Region contributed £10 million of capital funding to the project.

Located in Tottenham, the centre offers students a wide range of academic and vocational courses including hospitality, catering, sports, music and science. Its state-of-the-art facilities include five industry-standard kitchens, a 200-seat theatre, dance studios, an outdoor amphitheatre, sports facilities and specialist science laboratories.



Haringey sports student and future Olympian Israel Tshikeva attended the opening ceremony along with (from left) David Lammy, Joanne McCartney, London Assembly Member for Enfield and Haringey, and Ed Balls

More than 500 students aged between 16 and 19 are already using the centre, with a further 500 lined up to enrol this September.

Mr Balls said: "This centre is a tremendous example of the way that

buildings and facilities are being transformed by investment through the Building Schools for the Future programme. It's something that Haringey can be justifiably proud of – both for students and for the local community."

# 60s musical sparks transatlantic collaboration

For the second year running, staff and students from Havering College joined their counterparts from Hocking College, Ohio, to stage and perform a musical on both sides of the pond.

There were eight performances in all: three in London, including one at The London Palladium; and five in the Stuart's Opera House in Ohio.

*Hair* proved to be as big a hit in 2008 as it was in its 60s heyday. A hippy-culture rock musical, it is packed with memorable songs like *Let The Sun Shine In* and *Aquarius*. It reflects the 60s culture of drugs, sex and rock and roll, and the political, social and economic factors affecting America during the Vietnam War.

Peter Dayson, Director/Producer and Havering College Advanced Practitioner, said: "*Hair* is controversial but stands the test of time. It is a masterpiece of 1960s history. Our students have benefited enormously from the educational aspect of studying the period and culture, and have enjoyed the experience of working with students from another country."

Havering College is funded by LSC London East.



Students delivered stunning performances on both sides of the pond



## Job Fair offers something for everyone

In May, visitors flocked to the Kensington & Chelsea Job Fair, which was led and funded by the LSC.

Although the event was open to all the borough's residents, the LSC had used innovative field marketing techniques to encourage the participation of Jobcentre Plus clients from deprived wards. With nearly 600 people attending the one-day event, this provides a strong example of successful partnership working between the LSC, Jobcentre Plus and the local authority.

The fair offered something for everyone. More than 40 employers manned exhibition stands, to advertise over 700 job vacancies. Training brokers and providers were also on hand to give advice and guidance, conduct CV surgeries and promote opportunities for further learning. And a stimulating programme of performances from Kensington & Chelsea College and Dress for Success added colour and drama to the occasion.



One of the 40 exhibition stands

## Ford drives ahead with Apprenticeships scheme



Ford apprentices gain invaluable hands-on experience within the motor industry

Skillnet Automotive Academy, the UK's leading training provider to the automotive industry, has been selected by Ford Motor Company to manage its national Apprenticeships programme, which is funded by the LSC.

The Ford Masters Apprenticeship Programme is a challenging three-year course combining hands-on workshop training with block release for college training and study. Apprentices are trained to the standards set by the Sector Skills Council for the motor industry.

Ford Apprenticeships include a practical insight into many key roles including:

- Car Technician
- Van Technician
- Rapid Fit Technician
- Service Advisor
- Accident Repair Centre Advisor
- Parts Advisor
- Vehicle Body Mechanical Technician

- Vehicle Body Panel Technician
- Vehicle Body Paint Technician
- Commercial Vehicle Sales Executive
- Vehicle Sales Executive.

Nationally, it is expected that around 1,000 young people aged between 16 and 20 will have signed up for the Apprenticeships programme over its three-year duration.

LSC Area Director Clare Arnold and her team at LSC London West will support Skillnet in delivering the Ford contract.

The LSC London East team is also working with Ford Dagenham on a Skills for Life programme as part of its Automotive Upskilling project. According to LSC Partnership Manager Shaun Newton, the team has had a phenomenal response from the employees at Ford Dagenham.

**For more information, visit [www.ford-apprenticeships.co.uk](http://www.ford-apprenticeships.co.uk)**

## South London training providers lead by example

An event organised by LSC London South resulted in 11 local training providers confirming their commitment to the Skills Pledge by signing a statement of intent.

Vic Grimes, LSC Area Director for London South, said: "Research shows that one of the keys to a productive, successful business is having a skilled and competent workforce. The Skills Pledge enables the leaders of a business or organisation to show publicly and demonstrably the importance they

place on investing in the skills of their people. It is a commitment to support staff in gaining basic literacy and numeracy skills and a first Level 2 qualification."

The 11 south London training providers confirmed their commitment to the Skills Pledge by signing a statement of intent. Among them was Richmond Adult & Community College, which has a diverse workforce of more than 800 employees. College Principal and Chief Executive

Christina Conroy OBE said: "We were pleased to commit to the Skills Pledge as it represents our public commitment to training and development of the workforce at the College.

"Our investment in training at all levels has enabled us to manage the talent of our organisation and create effective succession plans, which have resulted in year-on-year improvements in bottom-line performance and an 'Outstanding' rating by Ofsted."

# You're hired! Top London the competition in the 'real

You may think that the recent BBC series of *The Apprentice* put the contestants through their paces, but that's nothing compared to the hurdles that this year's candidates for the Skills for London Awards 2008 had to overcome.

More than 100 candidates from across London battled it out to win this year's accolades, which recognised the top learners, businesses and skills providers from across the capital.

Unlike Sir Alan Sugar's apprentices, these contestants have completed gruelling training courses and will not get a six-figure salary straightaway. However, they have all secured qualifications that will enable them to get higher-paid jobs and move up the career ladder. Top businesses also slogged it out to prove that they provide the best on-the-job training available for their staff, to help their businesses succeed.

Last month, TV presenter Fearne Cotton and Skills Minister David Lammy MP revealed the 13 'hired' contestants to a packed audience of over 350 people from the education and skills sector at the Royal Opera House in London.

Fearne Cotton joined David Lammy and David Hughes to present the awards



## The winners of the Skills for London Awards 2008

### Apprentice of the Year

#### Asad Ahmed

After leaving school without any GCSEs, Asad's e2e course and work towards an Apprenticeship in Business Administration at Redbridge College set him on the path to success. His employer, estate agent Victor Michael, describes him as an incredibly hardworking and upstanding young man whose contributions have tripled the organisation's internet coverage.

Despite her family and work commitments, she cheerfully devoted her evenings to studying for a Business Administration Apprenticeship. She is now working towards an Advanced Apprenticeship. "Winning this award means everything," she said. "I'm going to go forward and tell everyone I work with that they can do it, because I've done it."

### Apprenticeship Employer of the Year winners

#### Small employer – George Fraser

Over the last eight years this Ealing-based automotive service and repair business has provided many apprentices with an invaluable opportunity to work and learn in the motor vehicle sector.

### Young Apprentice of the Year

#### Luke Power

Working towards a Young Apprenticeship in Sports Management, Leadership and Coaching through the London Leisure College and specialist sports college Eltham Green, has enabled Luke to overcome low self-esteem and frustration resulting from his dyslexia.

#### Medium employer – Axima Building Services

This heating and ventilation systems company is a strong advocate of training. Over the last 21 years it has recruited an average of five apprentices a year. "This prize is hugely important and I feel very proud," said Brian Woodcraft, Axima's Managing Director. "We put a lot of time and effort into our training programmes, particularly Apprenticeships but also other training for older staff. Ultimately it reflects on our bottom line because we have some of the best skilled tradesmen in the industry."

### Advanced Apprentice of the Year

#### Aline Cornu

Aline has completed an Advanced Apprenticeship in Customer Service. A valued member of the team, the self-confidence, customer service skills and knowledge of the retail sector she gained through her Apprenticeship led to her being promoted to Assistant Manager.

#### Large employer – BT

BT's apprentices come from many different backgrounds. More than 1,000 are currently

### Personal Achiever of the Year

#### Julianna Alli

Julianna, 22, is a single parent who works at Connexions as a business administrator.

# candidates beat off life' Apprentice



## competition were:

in learning across a range of business areas and around a fifth progress to higher Apprenticeship frameworks.

### Train to Gain Learner of the Year

#### Katarzyna Brzezinska

Originally from Poland, Katarzyna is a firm believer that learning is a lifelong process. She learned English in order to gain work at Chatsworth Home, went on to complete an NVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care, and is now working towards a Level 3. "My company has given me a lot of support," she said. "I've learned a lot from them so it's great for us to be acknowledged in this way."

### Skills for Life Learner of the Year

#### Iwona Zamojska

When Iwona arrived in London two years ago, despite having a Polish Masters degree in civil engineering, it was difficult for her to find work. She was taken on by Molecular Solutions and enrolled on an Adult Apprenticeship programme, through which she completed literacy, numeracy and IT qualifications.

### Training Provider of the Year

#### TBG Learning Ltd

This provider has centres offering education and training to the residents of many of London's most deprived boroughs. The needs of learners and staff alike are central to the organisation, which has used a range of innovative programmes and flexible learning pathways to engage

with the wider community. Sue Gidman from TBG Learning said: "We are absolutely delighted. It means so much to all our staff and to all our learners – 30,000 in a year. We are providing services for people who perhaps wouldn't ordinarily have achieved."

### Train to Gain Employer of the Year winners

#### Small employer – Leary Brothers and Ream Partnership

This building and maintenance company employs 35 full-time staff across its two sites. It has consistently demonstrated a proactive and progressive attitude to staff training and development.

#### Medium employer – Coffee Snobs Ltd

By embedding a culture of learning within the business and matching training needs to business requirements, this Harrow-based coffee shop franchise has grown from six to 65 staff in just three years.

#### Large employer – The Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability

This Putney-based independent medical charity has worked with Southwark College to develop specific NVQ and Skills for Life qualifications for its staff. Its development activities have resulted in improved retention rates and an increase in the quality and number of external applicants.

"Through Apprenticeships and Train to Gain we are giving employers and individuals the support to find the right training to meet their business skills needs. The new skills that these learners bring to their organisation will improve not only their business, but the economy as a whole."

David Lammy MP,  
Skills Minister

"These awards are so important: to recognise and showcase what excellent work is being undertaken at all levels; and to encourage all employers to ensure that skills and training are at the top of the list of business objectives."

Boris Johnson,  
Mayor of London

"Sir Alan Sugar would be impressed by our award winners and candidates; he might even want to hire some of them. They are all bright, intelligent and highly motivated people who have gained vocational skills that will stand them in good stead in today's competitive business world. This year's contestants prove that further education is now really the training ground for creating the skilled workforce England needs to remain competitive."

David Hughes,  
LSC London Regional Director

## Super sponsors

The key sponsor of the Skills for London Awards 2008 was Knapp Goodwin, a marketing design and events company that applies a wide range of skills to client projects.

Chairman Geoff Knapp was very vocal in his support for training. "With the right encouragement and teaching we can all turn potential into success and make an impact on any business," he said. "The

award winners have demonstrated a commitment to developing their people and we are proud to help recognise those achievements."

LSC London Region would also like to thank the following organisations for their sponsorship of the 2008 awards: Kiss 100; LearnDirect Business; Full On Publications and *Loud!* magazine; *Choice* e-prospectus; *X-cel* magazine; Get On; and Prevista.

# In my view: Thames Gateway

Things are moving quickly at the Thames Gateway – Europe's largest regeneration project. We spoke to Mike Pettifer, LSC London East's Area Director, about what's being done to ensure that local people reap the benefit.

**Q: Will the LSC be producing a Thames Gateway Skills Plan?**

Yes, we are finalising it as we speak and arranging a ministerial launch. Planning and funding skills in the region have proved to be complex undertakings. The Thames Gateway is not a discrete region, so we're having to work with national data sets that cut across three LSC regions: London (the nine east London boroughs), South East (Essex) and East of England (Kent and Medway). We're also using research findings from the National Employer Skills Survey.

**Q: So why is LSC London Region leading on the project?**

It was the most sensible option. The majority of residents living in the Gateway are based in London East. Working across the three regions has been surprisingly straightforward, which is a credit to our teams.

**Q: How much will the LSC be ploughing into the local area?**

The regeneration project will breathe new life into the area, including an anticipated 225,000 new jobs and 160,000 new homes. Over the next three years, the LSC intends to invest at least £1.6 billion of revenue and £850 million of capital in the Thames Gateway.



**Q: Will the regeneration project really transform local people's lives?**

Compared with the rest of London and the rest of the country, the skill levels of Thames Gateway residents are noticeably low. What's more, many of the new jobs resulting from the regeneration programme will require higher-level skills. So our overwhelming concern is to ensure that as many residents as possible are given the opportunity to improve their skills, so that they can compete for the new jobs as and when they arise. Raising aspirations and appetite for learning among the local population is absolutely crucial to this. If we deliver on this, then yes, it most certainly will.

**Q: With 2012 getting ever closer, things will soon start ramping up on the Thames Gateway project. What's the best way to keep up to speed with the latest developments?**

Coinciding with the publication of the commissioning plan, we will be launching a virtual platform for future development and partnership working. Called 'Mi Gateway', it will include all the data and research that we used to inform the plan and will, I'm sure, become the primary source for information about the regeneration project and related issues. The site will also allow real-time discussions with and across our external partners. It will be launched at the same time as the plan, and stakeholders will need to register in order to gain access.

**Q: What's next on the agenda?**

After we launch the LSC's Skills plan, we want to get together with all the other funders of skills and education, right across the Gateway. Our long-term goal is to involve them all in formulating a collaborative plan that will ensure we're all working efficiently and to the same priorities.

# Personal Best volunteers prepare for 2012

Just like the Olympic competitors, students on the Personal Best training programme are busy honing their skills in order to deliver a world-class performance in 2012.

Several Personal Best volunteers have already assisted with a number of major events this year. In March, many of them helped steward the 2008 Boat Race, an international sporting occasion that attracts millions of viewers from around the globe and dates back to 1829. The volunteer stewards played a vital role in directing the crowds of visitors, offering information and helping with the general organisation of the event.

Volunteers were also on hand to help steward the Olympic torch relay through London in April. Jesa Modhawadia, who had the honour of being a torch bearer, said: "This is the best thing to happen to me. It's like winning a gold medal at the Olympics. Before I joined Personal Best, I would not have had the confidence to be a volunteer or apply to carry the flame. My aim now is to be a volunteer at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Games."

The Personal Best programme is run by the LSC and the London Development Agency (LDA). It is helping some of our region's most disadvantaged individuals to improve their job prospects, using the excitement of the 2012 Games to promote training for an accredited volunteering qualification while also offering participants support into further volunteering, training or work.



Jesa Modhawadia had the honour of being a torch bearer

In London Region, Personal Best is up and running in 11 boroughs. Early signs look very promising: so far, 15 per cent of graduates from the programme have moved into jobs; 42 per cent have taken up further training; and 33 per cent have opted for volunteering opportunities. Personal Best will be rolled out across London by the autumn and organisers expect 20,000 Londoners to get involved with Personal Best by 2012.

It is expected that a tenth of all Games-time volunteers will come from the national Personal Best programme. Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee, said: "It's fantastic to see Personal Best graduates gaining further experience of working at major sporting events. The programme is clearly helping to deliver our vision for increased employment and skills opportunities for Londoners."

## On your marks, get set, go!

London is all set to establish the first National Skills Academy (NSA) for Sport and Active Leisure.

Led by employers in the sport and active leisure sector and coordinated by Sector Skills Council SkillsActive, a new NSA for Sport and Active Leisure will open at Crystal Palace in October.

Minister for Skills David Lammy MP said: "For the UK to perform at its best in 2012, we need to make a sustained investment in coaching skills, giving our athletes the very best support and training to help them win. However, it's not just about winning Olympic medals. I want to ensure that every young sports person, at every level of competition, is given the opportunity to reach their full potential."

Minister for Sport Gerry Sutcliffe added: "There has never been a better time to get involved in sport, and the NSA will ensure that our sports administrators, coaches and volunteers get the best learning and support possible while working in community or elite sport."

Skills Academies have been created to address specific and potentially acute skills shortages in their respective sectors, enabling employers, government and other stakeholders to design more effective solutions to training needs.

There are now nine approved National Skills Academies, representing real progress towards the Government's target of having a Skills Academy in each major sector by the end of 2011.

The NSA network is managed by the LSC in partnership with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; the UK Commission for Employment and Skills; the Skills for Business Network; and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

**For more information, visit [www.skillsactive.com/academy](http://www.skillsactive.com/academy)**

## Meeting the Thames Gateway skills challenge

The Thames Gateway Skills Plan (see article opposite) identifies seven key challenges:

1. local community access to skills, qualifications and jobs for the future
2. opportunities to progress onto higher-level skills and jobs
3. clear and flexible career paths for young people and adults in all sectors of opportunity
4. 21st century buildings for 21st century skills
5. the right providers in the right place to meet the needs of employers and local communities
6. a successful 2012 Olympic Games and a legacy that inspires a generation and delivers sustainable benefit to local employers and communities
7. a flexible offer for investing in employers and new businesses to create sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

# Young people's learning options in a click

London Region's *Choice* website just keeps getting better and better, combining more information than ever before and a suite of advanced guidance tools to help students select the right course.



The *Choice* website is proving a hit with its target audience

As reported in the previous issue of *the magazine*, the LSC launched a new and improved *Choice* e-Prospectus at the start of April.

Development of the site continued, with user feedback helping to fine-tune the full extended portal: *Choice 3*. In April, many professional users of the e-Prospectus attended a workshop focusing on curriculum mapping functions.

Final testing on *Choice 3* took place in

May. This involved consultation with young people about the enhanced functionality to be incorporated within *Choice 3*, which came on stream at the end of June.

The enhanced features on the site are designed to help users plan their study and careers more easily, including:

- a job planner, with the opportunity to save learner pathways and favourite courses in a personal folder
- a career matching quiz, to help users establish job options

- an action planner, including key steps and milestones
- a CV builder, to help inexperienced job hunters create a ready-to-use CV
- career search, which contains details of 800 jobs that are profiled by role, range, working hours and potential salary
- guides to help users get the most out of the site
- a supporter system, provided by Connexions.

Sean McMahon, LSC London Region's 14-19 Director, said: "More than 100,000 visitors have accessed this 360° view of their options in Year 1. The curriculum will develop quickly over the next five years to include Diplomas and much more. With so much choice, we must provide increasing advice and support to help young people find the right answers to meet their individual needs.

"The new *Choice* service is a big step forward, but we're not stopping here. We'll continue to invest in developments to support young people in planning and managing course and career options better."

**To view the new, enhanced *Choice* site, visit [www.mychoicelondon.co.uk](http://www.mychoicelondon.co.uk)**

## Local Entitlement Plans in place for Barking & Dagenham

Barking & Dagenham's 14-19 partnership is leading the way in London with its new 14-19 Plan, which expresses local partners' plans for the curriculum or "entitlement" for young people while attempting to meet demand from learners and employers.

The 14-19 Plan maps all providers' mainstream 14-19 provision against 17 Diploma lines. For key local partners, it was very important to develop a local 14-19 learning environment that best prepares resident young people with the skills, knowledge and experience to take advantage of local opportunities like the Thames Gateway.

The local Plan is ultimately owned by the

LSC and the Local Authority and developed by the local 14-19 partnership, so it retains a local flavour. Providers particularly welcomed the Plan's focus on the locality's needs and its mainstream curriculum.

In Barking & Dagenham, senior staff from all the borough's providers gave their commitment to the Plan. By late 2008, it will be a key commissioning tool for 2009/10: identifying gaps in the local curriculum offer, over-supply and poor quality provision.

The Plan will help prevent young people from falling into the NEET (not in employment, education or training) category by building mainstream curriculum solutions to attract and retain

14 to 19-year-olds into learning to help them achieve a full Level 2 or 3 by age 19.

The 2009/10 planning round will be improved by using the Plan to make cross-references between performance data and providers' curriculum provision: enabling commissioners to purchase only good provision.

*Choice*, the pan-London e-Prospectus, is of crucial importance to the future success of the 14-19 Commissioning Plan. Soon, it will be used to perform local curriculum mapping, enabling us to continually update the Plan on an ongoing basis.

**For further details please contact [Sara.Gilani@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:Sara.Gilani@lsc.gov.uk)**

# Central London takes partnership approach to Diploma delivery

Complex travel-to-study patterns and a concentration of sectors in specific areas have resulted in the development of an innovative partnership solution to the 14-19 Diploma delivery dilemma.

The Government's 14-19 reforms are designed to encourage more young people to continue learning for longer, to gain the skills and qualifications they will need to progress into further and higher education or employment. The new 14-19 Diplomas are central to these reforms.

In central London, the development of Diplomas is far from straightforward. This is because large numbers of learners travel across borough boundaries to study their chosen subjects. Furthermore, some industry sectors are very concentrated in certain sectors within the capital.

Andrew Knight is the LSC's Westminster Partnership Manager. He said: "Diplomas represent a fundamental change to the

education system in this country. So it's important that we get it right. The special circumstances in central London mean that numerous delivery partners have had to work together to come up with a practical solution.

"LSC London Central has been busy brokering relationships between local authorities, learning providers and key industry sectors with a view to delivering a number of Diplomas on a partnership basis from September.

"We've also succeeded in spearheading one of England's first tri-borough Diploma partnerships. Westminster, Camden, and Kensington and Chelsea will jointly deliver a Creative and Media Diploma pilot from September 2008. This is a complex and

exciting project that will involve numerous delivery partners, schools and blue-chip employers."

Across the country, the first five "lines of learning" to be piloted from September 2008 are: Construction and the Built Environment; Creative and Media; Engineering; IT; and Society, Health and Development.

The next five lines of learning will continue to broaden the Diploma curriculum offer. They will be piloted nationwide from September 2009: Environment and Land-Based Studies; Manufacturing and Product Design; Hair and Beauty Studies; Business, Administration and Finance; and Hospitality and Catering.

## Inspiring the entrepreneurs of the future

Young Londoners battled for the title of "Inner City Young Entrepreneurs 2008" in an exciting competition at the Foreign Press Association.

The competition came about because of a unique partnership between the London arm of the Young Enterprise charity and the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Commercial Education Trust. The LSC also supported the event as part of the 2011 WorldSkills London Strategy.

Ten Young Enterprise companies representing schools from across London were selected as finalists, and each team produced a display stand about their company, highlighting the highs and lows of their year in business. Their products ranged from footwear and handmade jewellery to environmentally friendly bags and sustainable calendars.

Representatives from each team faced a judging panel who asked probing questions about their business, using the format of the popular TV programme *Dragons' Den*. It was a close call, but "G" from Queens

Park Community School won the Innovation Award and Overall Young Entrepreneurs Award 2008. This inspirational company discovered a naturally grown, biodegradable and sustainable fabric made from bamboo. They used this innovative fabric to create their unique product, a cross between a scarf and a towel, designed for use at the gym, when playing sports or in hair salons.

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, was impressed with what he saw. He spoke enthusiastically about how important it is for today's youth to develop enterprise skills, in order to improve the economic prosperity of the UK. He also spent time with each of the teams, finding out about their company and what they had learned from the Young Enterprise experience.



The winners of the Overall Young Entrepreneurs Award 2008 show off their innovative, environmentally friendly product

Young Enterprise is the UK's leading business and enterprise education charity, and reaches more than 370,000 young people each year.

**For more information, and to find out about the London organisation, visit [www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)**

# Five minutes with... Philip Whiteman

Semta Chief Executive Philip Whiteman talks about why the recent sector compact (see article on page 3) is vital for improving skills within the UK's science, engineering and manufacturing technologies industries.

**Q: What are the main skills issues facing the employers you work with?**

We look after several industry sectors, and each has its own set of skills needs. For example, leadership and management are the big ones in bioscience, whereas in engineering the focus is on technical skills at all levels. But the golden thread running through all Semta sectors is a strong drive to improve productivity and increase the effectiveness of the supply chain.

**Q: How will the sector compact help?**

We're an employer-led body; our Sector Skills Agreements and our contribution to the Leitch skills review have been built around what employers have told us they want. The sector compact is a fantastic opportunity to develop the specific programmes and qualifications our employers need.

**Q: With 76,000 companies and 1.4 million workers in Semta sectors, will £65 million be enough?**

We hope it isn't, because that will mean employer demand has increased! Employers already invest more than £30 billion a year in training, which actually dwarfs the public funding element. Lack of skills is costing this country around £700 million a year in lost productivity – an appalling



statistic. So we want to use the £65 million to encourage Semta organisations to get onto the ladder of learning and implement continuous improvement processes. Then, company by company, we will measure the economic impact of this improvement in skills.

**Q: How important is it for Semta's employers to get behind the Skills Pledge and Train to Gain?**

It's critical, because we now have something that the entire supply chain can access. The really big companies do an awful lot of training to improve their performance, so there's not a lot we can do for them that we haven't done already, in terms of qualification reform and getting programmes in place. But what the compact gives us is a mechanism to engage with the smaller organisations in their supply chain. The support we have received

from the large organisations to date is extremely flattering and valuable; they are really behind our agenda.

**Q: What part will the LSC play in all of this?**

We've been working closely with the LSC since the first Sector Skills Agreement. As well as providing the £65 million funding from its Train to Gain budget, the LSC has an enormously important role in supporting qualification reform and is already working in partnership with us to build capacity and capability in the training provider network. A good example is the new Business Improvement Techniques qualification, which represents a big step forward, because it allows us to equip technically skilled employees with the supervisory and management skills they need to run a leaner and more effective operation.

# Research results track the positive impact of learning

The Learner Tracker 2007/08 reports confirm that learning is transforming the lives of many Londoners, improving their employability and inspiring progression into further learning.

David Hughes, LSC London Regional Director, said: "The results of London's latest Learner Tracker survey confirm the huge impact of learning on an individual's ability to meet employer needs. This provides a clear demonstration that the LSC's programmes and strategies are increasingly meeting the needs of individuals and employers in London."

The latest Learner Tracker reports include four surveys of adult FE learners in London. Headline findings of the research are summarised below.

## Where are they now?

**86%** of the 922 Level 2 and Level 3 respondents are now engaged in work or study 18 months after the course – a marked increase compared with the proportion who were working or learning immediately before starting their course (75%)

**13%** are unemployed, down from 19% before the course

**73%** of Level 2 learners are in paid employment, compared to 58% before the course

## The impact of the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT)\*

**28%** of FLT learners who were unemployed before starting the course are now employed

**33%** of all FLT learners have progressed onto higher study

\* FLT is defined as Entry Level and Level 1 provision

## The impact of FE learning on employability

**More than a third** of learners who were on benefits at the start of the course moved off benefits after the course

**20%** of learners who were claiming Incapacity Benefit at the start of the course have moved into employment

## What's achievement got to do with it?

**38%** of Level 2 and 3 achievers unemployed before the course have found work, compared to 31% of early leavers

**82%** of achievers who are currently out of work say that FE study has improved their chances of finding a job, compared to 44% of early leavers

To access the Learner Tracker reports, visit [www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/Publications/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/Publications/)

## News in brief

### Westminster Kingsway's pioneering partnership

In partnership with Travelodge, Westminster Kingsway College has launched the UK's first Foundation Degree in Hospitality, Budget Hotel and Retail Management. The two-year course has been designed to equip Travelodge employees with the necessary skills to meet the changing requirements of the hospitality industry. It focuses on teaching the practice behind low-cost and retail business models that aim to deliver profit by operating efficiently and effectively.

### Two accolades for Lewisham College



(From left): Simon Bartley, Len Duvall OBE, Richard Marsh, Dame Ruth Silver and Mark Cook

During a celebratory event to mark a very successful year of employer engagement, Lewisham College received two prestigious accolades: the LSC-sponsored AoC Beacon Award for Employer Engagement; and the LSC's new Training Quality Standard. Mark Cook, the College's Director of Business Development, said: "Our work with employers is central to the objectives of the College. We are constantly trying to forge strong links with businesses."

### CNWL Principal champions WorldSkills

Vicki Fagg, Principal of the College of North West London (CNWL), is London's new WorldSkills UK Champion. In the run-up to the 2011 competition, her role will be to promote skills excellence and skills competitions of all types, right across London. Simon Bartley, Chief Executive of UK Skills, said: "Skills competitions bring recognition to the successful student, kudos for the college and a confidence that boosts the skills of hundreds of learners to higher and higher levels of achievement."



Vicki Fagg (right) talks to the Prime Minister

# Take4

## literacy and numeracy

The LSC's commitment to adult Skills for Life provision is reflected in the huge number of Londoners engaging in learning. Here, four learners provide their views on their literacy and numeracy training with provider Red Kite.

### George Zografos Learner

"Even though I'm now 83, I see life as one long lesson. It's also important for me to keep my brain active, to slow down the development of dementia. 'Use it or lose it' is what my surgeon advised, so I go to talks or exhibitions almost every day, to keep learning.

"Last year I saw an advert for a numeracy course and decided to give it a try. I was part of a very small class, consisting mainly of young people. Our tutor was a very kind, compassionate, knowledgeable, patient and tolerant lady. I was extremely impressed; she's a credit to her company.

"At my age, I'm blessed to have been able to complete the course and gain a numeracy qualification."

### Colin Duncan Learner

"I got in touch with the training provider because I wanted to upgrade my English and maths skills, to get a job. The classes were small and I attended for around five hours a week. We all got on really well because we were all there for the same reason: to better ourselves.

"I completed Levels 1 and 2 in literacy and numeracy. This helped me get a job with Eurostar's catering team, because when I'm assembling food, it's important to be able to read and understand instructions and labels, and to check that everything's kept at the right temperature. I can also help my daughter with her maths homework."

### Annette Potter Learner

"I left school just before my 16th birthday with no qualifications. These days you can't get a job without qualifications, so I decided to try out an adult course in literacy and numeracy. It was daunting at first, but I really enjoyed it.

"Having the same tutor all the way through helped my confidence, because I wasn't embarrassed to ask questions when I didn't understand something. My spelling and punctuation have really improved and, when I'm shopping, I now understand what bargains like '20 per cent off' actually mean.

"I've gained a Level 1 qualification in maths and a Level 2 in literacy – and I've even completed a six-month plumbing course at college. Since I started learning, I haven't looked back!"

### Gianna Lanteri Learner

"I moved from Italy to England more than 20 years ago. I'm now 55. I never got the chance to take any qualifications and I've never liked exams.

"I really enjoyed being in class with the other learners. Our teacher was so clear and patient, too. I'm dyslexic, so I have trouble with numbers, but it really started to make sense to me, for the first time in my life. It felt good.

"I've now passed Levels 1 and 2 in literacy and Level 1 in numeracy. It's a tremendous feeling, having a qualification on my CV. I've been showing it to everybody. It made me happy, for sure!"



George Zografos



Colin Duncan



Annette Potter



Gianna Lanteri