



>LSC

Leading learning and skills

the magazine

Londoners
benefit from
2012 regeneration
page 12

April 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: learner Curdy Nelson is making the most of the practical training opportunities on offer at the National Skills Academy for Construction on the Olympic site

the magazine

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Written and produced by Item (www.item.co.uk)

Publication reference LSC-P-LOR-080003



David
Hughes

Comment

Welcome to the latest issue of *the magazine*, our update on learning and skills in the London Region.

We have achieved so much over the past seven years but, despite our success, the world does not stand still. As part of the Machinery of Government reforms (see opposite), the LSC will cease to exist from 2010. Clearly there are many changes in the pipeline, but we should all be proud of the fact that the LSC and its partners have laid such solid foundations on which the two proposed new systems can be built.

We are continuing to work closely with the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), which sets the strategic direction of our region's adult skills budgets while at the same time helping to increase the flexibility of funding arrangements in the capital. It's great to see how all the various strands of learning are now becoming intertwined.

Take Train to Gain, for example. Although it's true to say that this service got off to a fairly rocky start we're now making excellent progress, with colleges and providers delivering a more responsive, flexible and high-quality service to employers across London's industrial sectors.

London's employers have been keen to get involved, which bodes very well for the need to grow Apprenticeship numbers in our region (see page 4). We are using the findings of the National Apprenticeships Review to engage more employers and apprentices, and to raise the quality and appropriateness of the training programmes.

And then there's *Choice*, our young Londoners' online guide to educational provision in the region (see back page). The whole purpose of developing this website has been to reach out to young people, to ensure that they make an informed and carefully considered choice from the wide range of options available to them... which is something that echoes the need for employers to take Apprenticeships seriously.

I'm delighted to see all these different strands linking together. I firmly believe that the work we and our partners are doing with young people and adults will eventually result in a skilled workforce capable of meeting the needs of London's employers.

David Hughes
 LSC London Regional Director



European Union
 European Social Fund
 Investing in jobs and skills

Machinery of Government changes announced

In mid-March the Government published its Machinery of Government consultation document, which outlines a proposal to restructure the post-16 learning landscape.

Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver is the White Paper published jointly by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

Under the consultation proposals, the LSC will cease to exist from 2010, when its funding and planning roles will be delivered by two new bodies.

There are two key themes in the document.

- **The transfer of planning and funding responsibilities for young people aged 16 to 19 from the LSC to local authorities**

Local authorities will be supported in commissioning and funding

14-19 provision by a national Non-Departmental Public Body called the Young People's Learning Agency. They will help colleges and sixth forms to deliver the reforms needed to raise the leaving age for education and training to 18 by 2015, and will be responsible for offering all young people in their area a full menu of choices: Diplomas and Apprenticeships alongside A-levels and GCSEs.

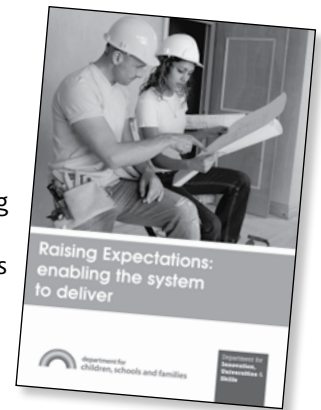
- **The reform of the post-19 skills system so that it becomes more responsive and demand-led**

A new national Skills Funding Agency will build on the success of the LSC and report directly to the DIUS as part of the civil service. It will streamline the funding process for colleges and training providers

so that funding responds to the skills needs of adults and employers, and supports excellence in the further education sector.

The Skills Funding Agency will manage the work of three new agencies: the National Apprenticeships Service, the Adult Advancement and Careers Service and the National Employer Service.

The consultation period runs from Monday 17 March to Monday 9 June. A full copy of the proposals can be downloaded from <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk> and <http://www.dius.gov.uk>



Skills Campaign gathers momentum

The national **Skills Campaign** aims to achieve an increased demand for and engagement in learning and skills, right across the country. In London it has targeted more than 50,000 businesses, including many small to medium-sized enterprises spread across a variety of industry sectors.

The **Skills Pledge** is a key component of the campaign and in January, three south London local authorities signed up to it. At an event attended by Minister for Skills David Lammy, Croydon, Kingston and Merton local authorities made a voluntary, public commitment to ensuring that all their staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the organisation's success. The event was also attended by Sutton Council, which was one of the first authorities to make the pledge last summer.

The **Train to Gain** service is also a key element of the campaign – not surprising, given that a third of the national adult skills and further education budget will be routed through this service by July 2011. The latest phase of national TV advertising was launched in January on terrestrial and satellite TV stations. Train to Gain radio commercials were also broadcast



Tim Davis, the Fire Brigade Union's Learning Co-ordinator for the London Region, is a huge fan of the Train to Gain service

on national and regional stations, together with an online presence using MSN, Google and Yahoo search engines.

LSC Marketing Manager Juwon Adenyin said: "Here in London, a Train to Gain poster campaign was very much in evidence from the end of January at train stations and on the Underground. Press advertising in the London freesheets also helped raise the profile of the service to a very broad audience."

For more information, visit www.traintogain.gov.uk or call the Skills Campaign helpline on 020 7413 3400.

Tap into our campaign resources

A wealth of marketing materials is available for training providers to download. To view the materials, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources.

After registering, you will receive a password within 24 hours, giving you access to posters, key messages and advert scripts, along with Skills Campaign guidelines and updates.

Apprenticeships to help create a Britain of opportunity

Apprenticeships are a key component of Prime Minister Gordon Brown's plan to create what he describes as "a Britain of opportunity".

Speaking to a conference of business leaders, Mr Brown outlined plans designed to encourage more employers to offer Apprenticeships, and more young people to take them up.

His goal is for one in five young people to be on Apprenticeships within 10 years. "Our first step is to get 90,000 more young people taking part in Apprenticeships by 2013, when a new legal entitlement to an Apprenticeship place for suitably qualified young people will come into place," he said. "Together with opportunities for those in

their 20s and older, this will mean 220,000 people starting an Apprenticeship each year overall."

To achieve this expansion in Apprenticeship numbers, new measures will include:

- action to make it easier for employers to improve the range of Apprenticeships by, for example, enabling them to include their own accredited qualifications
- a pilot wage subsidy programme for small businesses
- a new drive to increase Apprenticeships in the public sector.

Here in London, an Apprenticeships Task Force will be established, led by the Minister for Skills, to address London's unique challenges.



Advanced Apprentice of the Year Award runner-up Lucy Rouillon, from Middlesex, met the Prime Minister at Number 10 to discuss how young people are improving their skills



City Lit speech therapy student Simon Boughey talks to the Queen at Buckingham Palace. With him are (back row, from left) fellow student Lola Balogun, Speech and Language Therapy Co-ordinator Carolyn Cheasman and City Lit Principal Peter Davies

Queen's award double

In February two London institutions were presented with the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize, which honours outstanding achievement and excellence in UK universities and colleges.

City Lit is the first adult education college ever to achieve the award, which it won for its internationally recognised work with adults who stammer. The college's Speech Therapy department receives LSC funding

to provide specialist courses and support for people who stammer or live with aphasia.

City and Islington College was recognised for its high-quality science provision and became the first general further education college to win the award twice. The citation states that it offers "one of the widest selections of innovative science courses of any college of further education".

Gearing up for WorldSkills

In 2011 London will host WorldSkills, a global competition that compares world-class competency standards across a range of occupational areas.

In the run-up to the 2011 competition, LSC London Region will increase the number of London schools participating in Young Enterprise business start-up competitions from 150 to 350. Credit Suisse, Clifford Chance, Citigroup and John Laing have already agreed to co-sponsor and judge London's competitions.

Colleges and training providers are raising the aspirations of learners through the 'From Competence to Excellence' project. This aims to change the emphasis of learning from acknowledging and accrediting competence to achieving excellence. Leading exponents of vocational skills that are crucial to the local economy or that form part of the WorldSkills competition are also being invited by colleges to deliver masterclasses.

Joe Billington, LSC London Region's Director of Communications and Diversity, said: "The learning and skills sector must raise its game to ensure that we have young people capable of winning medals when we host WorldSkills in 2011."

To find out more about WorldSkills, visit www.worldskills.org.



Steve Cram was delighted to launch the Athletics AASE, which is aimed at elite athletes who may go on to represent Great Britain at the 2012 Games

Apprenticeships Week

At the end of February London hosted a week-long series of events designed to raise the profile and celebrate the success of Apprenticeships, while encouraging employers to view them as an investment in long-term skills development.

Apprenticeships Week began with the LSC releasing the results of new, independent research demonstrating that employing apprentices has a hugely beneficial impact on overall business performance. The survey of 203 UK businesses reported that over three-quarters of respondents felt their Apprenticeship programme made them more competitive and more productive.

Events took place at colleges and other venues across London. They included:

- **on the air** – Apprenticeships were a hot topic throughout the week on the LBC 97.3 FM late-afternoon drive-time show, which included interviews with apprentices, employers, Minister for Skills David Lammy and SkillsActive Chairman Stephen Studd
- **employer views** – London employers gave personal accounts of why Apprenticeships play such a valuable role in their business. Liza Okafor, Apprentice Co-ordinator at Tube Lines, said: "We carefully look after our apprentices, nurturing this home-grown talent. In return, they come up with new, innovative ways of working to smooth the journeys of millions of passengers"
- **inaugural summit** – hosted by BBC News' George Alagiah and held at the West End's Congress Centre, this event attracted more than 300 employers and stakeholders from across the country. Speakers included LSC Director of Apprenticeships David Way and Apprenticeships Ambassadors Network Chairman Sir Roy Gardner
- **sporting impact** – the LSC and SkillsActive co-hosted an event at Twickenham Stadium that was attended by many athletes, including Olympic medal winner Steve Cram. The event saw the launch of a new Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) for Athletics and celebrated two years of success with London's AASE programme
- **trade insight** – two young Painting and Decorating apprentices spoke to young work-related learners about the skills they have acquired at Lewisham College, which they attend one day a week, and in the workplace.

It is hoped that Apprenticeships Week will have inspired many London employers to take on apprentices, and many young people to seize this invaluable training opportunity.

skillsLondon 2008

In November, the ExCeL London exhibition centre will host the UK's biggest skills event for young people. Hands-on demonstrations and interactive activities will combine with informative exhibits to provide 14 to 19-year-olds with an invaluable opportunity to find out more about a wide range of careers.

Skills London 2008 is organised by London First, supported by the LSC and the London Development Agency. Details about the event have been sent to every school and college across London and the South East, and more than 50,000 visitors and 150 exhibitors are expected to attend.

To find out more, contact Andrew Coates on 01823 362801 (andrew.coates@prospects.co.uk) or visit www.londonfirst.co.uk

To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk or call 08000 150 400.



Gordon Brown and John Denham join the chefs in the kitchen at Number 10

Young apprentices showcase their skills at Number 10

Westminster Kingsway College Young Apprenticeship students did a tremendous job in preparing a range of canapés for a meeting hosted by Prime Minister Gordon Brown at 10 Downing Street.

The 15-year-old budding chefs are all studying for the Young Apprenticeship in Hospitality. Stephen Hyde, Westminster Kingsway's Head of Division, Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism, said: "This event

has provided our younger students with a platform to showcase their skills. I am very proud of the exemplary professionalism they displayed at such a prestigious event."

The guest list included John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, David Lammy, Minister for Skills, and young people who represented the UK at WorldSkills 2007.

Shaping financial services skills

The flagship National Skills Academy for Financial Services was officially opened at the end of February.

Based in Tower Hamlets, the specialist Academy will tackle the recognised skills shortage in financial services while stimulating regeneration in some of the country's most disadvantaged communities.

LSC London Regional Director David Hughes said: "The financial services industry dominates the London economy. Thanks to the Academy's progressive approach to education – reflected in the fact that students are selected based on their enthusiasm and aptitude for finance, rather than their formal academic qualifications – it provides new opportunities for a fresh pool of high-quality, local entrants from diverse backgrounds to enter the sector."



Student Ky Minh Tran hits the mark, watched by HSBC's Tony Ramos

The £5 million costs involved in setting up the Academy were shared among five partners including LSC London Region.

High-flying women take centre stage

The prestigious Institute of Directors at Pall Mall was a fitting venue to celebrate the achievements of 91 participants in the Train to Gain Level 3 women's pilot programme, which aims to encourage more women to develop their leadership and management skills.

The women all gained the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Management. They are the first group of more than 250 candidates enrolled by management training specialist Skills Team since the pilot began in March last year.

Sally Tate, Skills Team Managing Director, said: "Feedback has been very encouraging, with women reporting that they have gained skills and confidence, and have begun to realise their own potential."

Skills Team is part of a consortium led by the Centre for Business Enterprise at Kingston College, whose Deputy Director Christian Wilkins said: "Many of the candidates have told us that they or their employers would not have had the funds to support this type of personal development had it not been for Train to Gain."

With so many women taking part, there are plenty of success stories to choose from. One candidate who does stand out is 66-year-old Anne Hutchins, who left school with no qualifications and has held a managerial position for the last 12 years at Merton Libraries, working with some very demanding communities. On gaining the NVQ, which is her first formal qualification, she said: "Coming on the programme has really helped my confidence and given me new skills."



Celebrating the achievements of some of London's high-flying women are (left to right): Shelley Campbell, Traffic and Logistics Specialist, Bechtel Ltd; Rod Kenyon, LSC London Regional Chair; Penny de Valk, Chief Executive, ILM; Juliet Vuong, Senior Engineer, Bechtel Ltd; and Maureen Owens, Senior Tutor, Skills Team

Leyton Orient introduces young people to sports coaching

Fifteen disaffected young people from east London have received an inspiring introduction to the world of sports coaching.

Training for the Sports Leaders UK Level 2 Award in Community Sports Leadership was delivered by the Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme (LOCSP). Financed by the LSC through the European Social Fund, the course was primarily targeted at disaffected young people who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream learning. Candidates were selected by local schools and colleges, and by LOCSP coaches.

Phil Rudling, the Programme's Education Manager, said: "The course uses sport to engage young people in working towards a nationally accredited qualification in the sport and leisure sector.

"The 15 participants made the most of this exciting opportunity to develop organisational, communication and leadership skills, using sport as a focus. It proved to be a great way of boosting their self-confidence and getting them to work as part of a team.

Leyton Orient's sports coaching proves to be right on target for disaffected young east Londoners



"Being in a professional sports environment also gave them an understanding of what it takes to be a professional coach within our industry. This aspect of the course is reinforced through 10 hours of work experience, which the young people undertake following their time at Leyton Orient."

Course Tutor Tony Murphy said: "It's really important that we can show these young people that a community sports leader can be helpful to anyone in the community. Doing the first aid element of the course is an example of this."

The training went down a storm with the young participants. Katie, aged 16, said: "I have definitely improved my confidence and have learned how to use my voice

effectively. I now want to do an FA Level One coaching award." Janet, also 16, who hopes to become a volunteer at the 2012 Games, said: "This past week I have learned how to work with constructive criticism. Rather than just telling someone 'that's good', which they may not learn something from, you can explain how to improve with their sport."

Course Tutor Dan Whitehead said: "We have tried to fit in as many experiences as possible, so they can go and help out in their youth centres and work with experienced coaches. We have seen here that there are young people who want to enjoy their lives, improve themselves, gain extra skills and have ambitions and goals to work towards. Maybe it will inspire other young people out there to get involved too."

CONEL wins Inspire Award

The College of North East London (CONEL) beat off stiff competition to win Capita Further and Higher Education's first £10,000 Inspire Award.

The Award recognises the college with the best enrichment activity that will benefit students and the wider community. CONEL plans to use the prize money to develop taster construction courses for women from disadvantaged groups in Haringey, including workless and Black and Minority Ethnic women, lone parents and refugees. The courses will be run by female trainers in order to help those who, for cultural reasons, feel more comfortable being trained by women.

Andrew Thomson, Chief Executive of the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning, was impressed with the CONEL



Capita Director Chris Cooper (right) presents Charmaine Brouard and Paul Head with CONEL's prize cheque

entry. He said: "The college offered strong community and student interaction as well as economic benefits. Construction is an area suffering from a skills shortage and this influenced our final decision."

Delighted to win the award, CONEL's Principal and Chief Executive Paul Head said: "These groups of women are difficult

to reach in education or training terms and the course aims to change this."

CONEL Project Co-ordinator Charmaine Brouard has already started to promote the courses and has received a strong response to date. She said: "Initially the funding will be used to equip mobile training units to visit places such as community centres."

London to make record investment in skills

LSC London Region will make a record investment of £600 million over the coming year to raise adult skills levels across the capital and get more people back into work.

Published online in February, the *LSC London Learning and Skills Plan* marks a radical shift in adult skills funding arrangements that will help meet the needs of Londoners and employers, while contributing to a more just, inclusive and successful economy and society.

LSC London Regional Director David Hughes said: "It's very clear that 2008/09 is a transition year, as we work with colleges and providers to re-model learning and skills provision to better meet the ambitions and objectives of the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), which will direct the adult skills budget across the capital.

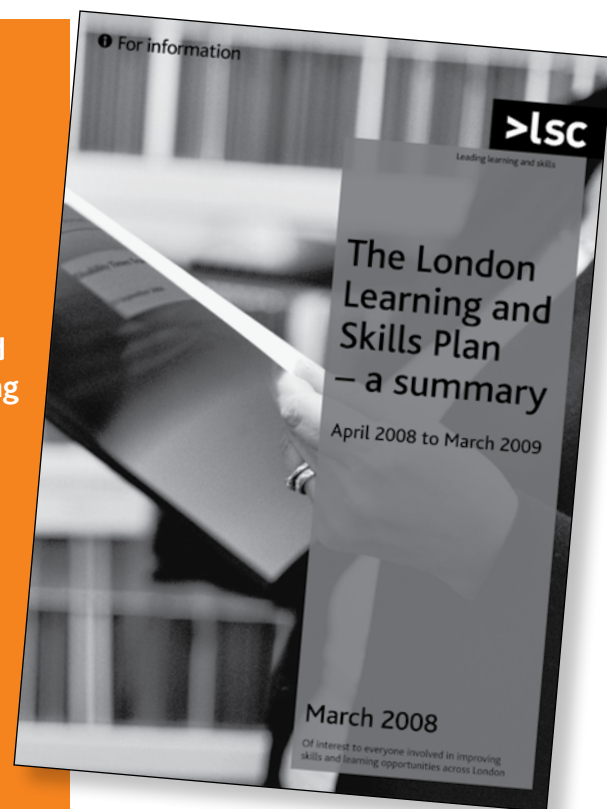
"These ambitions are compelling and challenging. They are also absolutely right for London and for Londoners because they involve a more joined-up and integrated public sector offer. The new offer is centred on helping more people to move from worklessness into sustained and rewarding employment. The focus of the further education (FE) system must now change from achieving qualification outcomes to achieving job and career outcomes. Many colleges and providers have already made a good start in this respect, and the LSEB will expect all post-19 institutions funded by the LSC to make that transition over the next year."

Harvey McGrath, LSEB Vice Chair, said that the Plan marks a helpful first step in aligning the adult skills funding of the LSC with other agencies and the LSEB's emerging strategy. He added: "Increasingly this funding will be targeted to support the Board's priorities, including helping Londoners at greatest disadvantage in the labour market to acquire the skills they need to get a secure job and progress."

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Our priorities for 2008-09

- 1 Improve the educational opportunities for all Londoners
- 2 Raise the effectiveness and performance of the learning and skills sector
- 3 Integrate skills within economic development and employment
- 4 Equip Londoners with the skills to benefit from investment in the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games



A better integration of job and

London currently faces an impressive skills challenge: a fifth of its residents have poor literacy skills; half are unable to do basic mental arithmetic; and 15,000 young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET). What's more, the employment rate is the lowest in the country.

As outlined in the Plan, LSC London Region has introduced a number of measures to tackle these challenges head on, including a better integration of job and skills services that will make it easier for people to get the skills they need to enter employment or move up the career ladder.

The following examples are among the many important new approaches being pioneered by the LSC and its partners.

- **Employability Demonstration Pilots** – these have been established in 11 London FE colleges to develop new ways of partnership working between skills providers and employment agencies.
- **Skills for Jobs** – this programme will receive an extra £22 million in 2008-09 to support jobseekers by helping them develop the skills they need to gain paid employment. Pre-employment training is an LSEB priority.

71% of young Londoners now achieve a Level 2 qualification by age 19, and 49% achieve Level 3 (these are the highest ever figures, which the LSC hopes to top over the coming year)

Realising the 2012 legacy for Londoners

From the outset Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee, made it clear that the residents in some of the most deprived boroughs in London should benefit from the massive investment being made in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

In support of this vision, the LSC is increasing investment that contributes directly to Olympic skills needs. This includes £7 million allocated for participation (a rise of £2 million on last year's figure). It also includes investment in a series of 2012 legacy buildings across east London. As centres of excellence focused on sectors that are key to the London economy, these buildings will enable local communities to benefit directly from the regeneration associated with the Olympics and the Thames Gateway. The centres will specialise in the delivery of work-based learning, Train to Gain and other employer-funded training.

Mary Conneely, LSC London Regional Director for Regeneration, said: "Our increased investment will enable us to meet London's emerging Olympic skills needs by expanding the Train to Gain



Construction is a key sector linked to the 2012 Games

programme and boosting our region's apprentice numbers by 500 in key sectors linked to the Games, like sport and construction. Also, it will help to fund the new National Skills Academy for Construction on the Olympics site and the roll-out of the Personal Best programme (see below). "

Hosting the Games offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our region's children and young people. This was described in the *Mayor of London 2012 Olympic Delivery Plan* as a chance for them to "realise their own capabilities, to sharpen their perception of themselves as young Londoners and to develop their understanding of the world community of nations". In support of this objective, the LSC has produced an educational play about the Olympics, which is being performed in 180 schools across London.

In addition, the LSC will implement the London Employment and Skills Taskforce Plan for 2012 by:

- rolling out the next phase of the Personal Best programme, a joint initiative with the London Development Agency (LDA) that encourages workless and socially excluded individuals in London to gain

new skills, lift their aspirations and open up new career options (70,000 trained volunteers will be needed to help stage the Games)

- piloting a Joblink programme, run by the East London Business Alliance within the five Olympic boroughs, that equips students with employability skills. The LSC is investing £250,000 in this initiative, which is jointly funded by the LDA
- establishing a Customer Service Gold Standard
- increasing the number of employers signed up to public sector Apprenticeships
- rolling out the next phase of the Employer Accord, which aims to increase the number of jobs filled through a better co-ordinated partnership between employers and public sector agencies
- launching an Olympic section on the *Choice* website (see back page feature).

Clearly, the 2012 Games offer an outstanding opportunity to make a permanent reduction in the level of worklessness across the capital. By working together, the LSC and its various partners will ensure that this vision is converted into reality.

skills services

- **Jobcentre Plus** – the additional Skills for Jobs funding will allow the LSC to work with Jobcentre Plus to provide more flexible employment pathways for individuals and employers. The LSC will also spend £11 million out of the total £22 million Skills for Jobs funding on providing Jobcentre Plus clients with basic skills training.
- **Training Quality Standard colleges** – only 13 per cent of London's employers currently use FE colleges to train their staff. To help rectify this, the LSC will develop 20 Training Quality Standard colleges that are centres of excellence in offering a responsive service to employers.

David Hughes said: "We want to join up skills training, pre-employment support and learning at work. This will mean that people can get a sustainable job with prospects because they have the right skills."

2,000 people will have become Personal Best graduates by March 2009

In my view: opportunities for disabled learners

In January, London's strategy for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was launched by Peter Little OBE. We asked him why he has such a strong interest in this area and what he thinks of the strategy...

Q: Has this become your specialist subject?

Yes. I worked for more than 20 years in post-16 education and training, with a particular emphasis on learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When I retired from full-time work in 2004, I was invited to chair the national review of LSC provision for this group. This resulted in the publication of the *Through Inclusion to Excellence* report, which forms the basis of London's new strategy. So naturally I was very happy to launch and endorse it.

Q: What struck you most about the London strategy?

The huge buy-in from key influencers across the region is what stood out for me. In the opening pages of the document, the reader is presented with 10 strong statements of support from a broad range of significant partners and organisations. That's a pretty unique achievement, and one that reflects very well on all those who have worked on the strategy.

Q: Will partnership working be crucial to the success of the strategy?

Indeed it will. I was particularly impressed with the way in which the London report consistently picks up on statements made in the Government's strategy, *Progression through Partnership*, which was published last summer. Both documents emphasise that Government, agencies



and organisations all need to work together in partnership to develop and deliver quality provision that leads to qualifications and employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. What London Region has to do now is to find better ways to put partnership working into practice.

Q: Are you confident that London's strategy can improve outcomes for its target audience?

I believe it will make a big difference. I hope it will encourage better sharing of resources and expertise between organisations for the benefit of learners. And I hope that, for some learners who currently have to go outside the region to meet their specialist needs, they will in future be able to continue learning within London.

Q: I hear you threw down the gauntlet at the London launch?

You're right. The strategy was unveiled the day after the Prime Minister announced his plans to expand Apprenticeships. The number of disabled young people participating in the Apprenticeships programme is actually very low, right across the country.

So I challenged London to set targets within its strategy to remedy this. And I'm delighted to say that David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London, responded very positively and accepted without hesitation. There's a very wide range of ability as well as needs among disabled people, and I've long felt that, with a little encouragement, many could do really well on Apprenticeships.

Improving routes to employment for disabled learners

It's estimated that more than 48,000 learners in London's further education (FE) system have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A new strategy aims to provide them with better routes to employment.

Back in 2006, the LSC set out an ambition that by 2015 England should be an international exemplar in providing high-quality post-16 learning provision for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

London has made a strong start. At the end of January, after an extensive consultation period, the LSC published the *Learning for Living and Working in London* strategy in partnership with members of the London Region Strategic Advisory Group for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It was launched to industry representatives and key partners in the sector at a conference chaired by Peter Little OBE.

The strategy will ensure that these learners receive the best possible education and training and will require a multi-agency approach for its successful implementation. All partners, including the LSC, local authorities, the Health Service, training providers, the London Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus and other agencies and employers, will need to work together in supporting people with learning



The new strategy has been well received across London

difficulties and/or disabilities, so that they can progress into sustainable employment and independent living.

The LSC has an important part to play in this respect, including driving up course quality, reshaping the curriculum, expanding employment opportunities and

investing capital in improving the college buildings and infrastructure.

To download the strategy visit http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/London/Learning_for_Living_and_Working_in_London_-_FINAL_version_28_01_08.pdf

1 in 6
working-age Londoners has a disability. Half of this disabled population is economically inactive and those who are in work earn on average 12% less than their counterparts

Some fine examples

Many organisations in London have already put measures in place to help disabled learners live independently. For example:

ROSE – Havering College's ROSE (Realistic Opportunities for Supported Employment) programme provides work placements for students with learning difficulties, enabling them to gain skills and confidence, engage with society and earn money

Choices 4 All – this charity helps 19 to 25-year-olds with learning difficulties to channel their abilities and aspirations towards paid employment opportunities. It also supports employers by providing disability awareness training and advice

Roots and Shoots – every year this charity helps up to 20 disadvantaged young people, mainly from Lambeth and Southwark, to develop the skills and confidence they need to enter employment in the field of horticulture.

Five strategic goals

Using a multi-agency approach the strategy aims to achieve five broad goals over the next three years, to improve outcomes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

1. Expand employment opportunities and improve progression routes into employment of different kinds.
2. Provide people with better services through effective partnership working at local, regional and national levels.
3. Understand better what learners and employers want, the services currently available and what changes need to be made.
4. Reshape the curriculum so as to support people in achieving their potential for independent living and employment.
5. Make a good range of opportunities accessible throughout the region through shared expertise and building local capacity.

Signs of the 2012 re starting to emerge

It's still early days, but Londoners are already starting to reap the benefits from the capital hosting the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

Equipping Londoners with the skills they need in order to benefit from the 2012 Games continues to be a priority for LSC London Region.

The early signs are that the increased investment in addressing Olympic skills needs is already starting to have a positive effect on the local population. For example, the latest employment figures published by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) indicate that more than one in 10 of the current Olympic Park workforce was previously unemployed, and more than a third of this group lives locally. Here we look at three of the many examples of the regeneration impact 2012 is making across our region.

1 in 5

members of the total Olympic Park workforce is a local resident

Source: ODA

On your marks, Get Set London...

Trafalgar Square provided an impressive venue for the January launch of the Get Set London Roadshow, which visited all 33 boroughs within our region during the last three months.

The Roadshow, which is aimed at the whole community, was officially launched by Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee Sebastian Coe, Chief Executive of the London Development Agency Manny Lewis and Minister for the Olympics and London Tessa Jowell.

Despite the chilly weather, former and current athletes were out in force to show their support, including king of the triple jump Jonathan Edwards, Paralympic

swimmer Giles Long, cycling champion Shanaze Read and diving prodigy Thomas Daley. Enthusiastic young 2012 hopefuls were also well represented at the event. "The Games are already delivering their lasting legacy," said Ken. "We have seen a number of programmes start up, providing support to businesses, improving skills, securing jobs and delivering infrastructure improvements. It has been encouraging to see the eagerness of Londoners to realise their potential and get involved. The London Roadshow is key in ensuring we up our game to give everyone, from all backgrounds, the opportunity to benefit from the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity the 2012 Games offer."

Following the January launch, Roadshow events took place in shopping centres, parks and town squares right across the region. Each featured brightly coloured pods, which local people and businesses visited to find out about the many job, development and skills opportunities available in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, as well as to try out new sports and learn about facilities in their local area. The LSC worked with Nextsteps and Connexions to provide skills advisers for each event, to offer information on the learning and business opportunities available in each borough.



Attracting interest: a pod at Trafalgar Square



Inside the pod

Theatre tour inspires

Young people from more than 180 London schools will enjoy a unique play about the many different learning, career, vocational and voluntary opportunities available to them in the run-up to the 2012 Games and beyond.

The *Going for Gold* theatre tour has been developed by the LSC and Gibber Theatre Group to excite, inspire and engage young people to set challenging career goals and to get involved in the sporting, volunteering and other activities that will be taking place as we approach 2012. It is scheduled to run from mid-February to early May.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games have the potential to act as a catalyst for economic growth in some of our region's most deprived areas, tackling

generation impact

Plant Training Centre launched at Eton Manor

In February the Plant Training Centre, part of the National Skills Academy for Construction on the Olympic Park site, was formally launched by Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell.

The Academy was set up by the LSC and its partners Construction Skills, the London Development Agency and the host boroughs. It will co-ordinate training for people to get the skills they need to win work on the Olympic Park, as well as helping members of the existing workforce to update and develop their skills.

The ODA estimates that up to 10,000 construction workers will be needed during the peak building period in 2009/10. The Academy's service will therefore be vital in co-ordinating a range of training providers to ensure that they are equipping trainees with the skills needed by the



Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell is in the driving seat, flanked by (from left): learner Martin Eaton, ODA Chairman John Armitt and learners Alan Histon and Curdy Nelson

onsite contractors. The centre will deliver practical training in skills that workers will be using on site when operating equipment such as dumpers, telescopic handlers and excavators.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown said: "The Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a fantastic sporting celebration in 2012. They offer the opportunity not only to showcase sporting talent to its full, but also to

promote a range of skills and talents in the local community. The job figures and the ODA employment and skills strategy show that the construction of the site can be the catalyst for lasting social and economic change. With over 10 per cent of the current Olympic Park workforce previously out of work, an excellent start has been made and I wish the first graduates of the plant training school every success in their future careers."

teenagers to go for gold

worklessness by providing opportunities for employment and skills development.

The theatrical performance has been designed to inform young people about what the 2012 legacy will mean for them, and about the growing range of Apprenticeships connected to this high-profile world event. It also aims to raise aspirations and signpost young people to services where they can obtain independent careers advice and guidance.

Mary Conneely, LSC London Regional Director for Regeneration, said: "We see



Some of Gibber Theatre Group's talented performers

the Games as an unrivalled opportunity to tackle social deprivation and promote social cohesion in London by providing more young people with the skills they need to find work and succeed in their chosen career."

To book a free school performance, email sarah@gibbertraining.com

Minister for Skills David Lammy said: "London 2012 offers a unique opportunity to create jobs and skill up local residents, the effects of which will be felt for years to come. Our investment in the skills we need to build world-class facilities and infrastructure will bring considerable benefits to London's economy."

ODA Chairman John Armitt said: "Over the last year a lot of progress has been made to clean and clear the Olympic Park site and get ready for the start of construction later this year. A lot of this work has been carried out by people previously out of work, demonstrating that this regeneration is more than just physical transformation; it is also about social and economic change."

So London 2012 looks as if it is well on its way to fulfilling its ambitious promise of being 'the Regeneration Games' that will leave a long-term employment and skills legacy for local people and for the UK construction industry.

Five minutes with...

Fiona Fay

Despite having to live independently from a very young age, Fiona Fay refused to give up on her dream of a rewarding career. Here we find out how the Apprenticeships programme enabled her to turn her life around.

Q: Was an Apprenticeship always part of your life plan?

No. In an ideal world, I would have stayed on in education and gone to university. However, shortly after leaving school at 16 I was placed in a hostel. I did go to sixth form for a few months but then had to drop out because, although I was on benefits, I just couldn't afford to fund the travel to and from college on top of my monthly rent and living costs.

Q: How did you find out about the Apprenticeships programme?

Living in the hostel I was surrounded by people with negative outlooks on life. There are so many paths I could have taken, but when I met the Connexions adviser and found out about the Entry to Employment (E2E) and Apprenticeships programmes, it was the answer to my prayers: a chance to earn and learn at the same time. Everything then fell into place. I felt so lucky. I loved the E2E course, especially the work experience placement for Bethnal Green's Central Training Academy, and was thrilled when they decided to take me on as a receptionist with the promise of an Apprenticeship.



Q: So how was your Apprenticeship?

It was great. Business Administration was exactly what I wanted to do. I'd missed an awful lot of schooling during the GCSE year so I was really grateful for the opportunity to gain certificates in English, maths and IT, all of which I know will be useful throughout my career. I was promoted to Administrator within nine months of joining and went on to complete my Foundation Apprenticeship two years later.

Q: Has it helped further your career?

Definitely. It made me much more confident and positive about myself. After the Apprenticeship I was promoted to Recruitment Officer, which meant I could use my own experiences to encourage other young people to stay on in learning,

despite their personal circumstances and problems. This approach proved so effective that my role has now been expanded to include mentoring – so I guess you could say that having a tough start in life has proved to be a help, not a hindrance!

Q: How did it feel to gain national recognition of your achievements?

I was totally shocked and overwhelmed to win the Personal Achiever category at last year's Apprenticeship Awards ceremony. I love my job, especially mentoring the learners, and I'm so grateful for the chances I've been given. By helping others to stay on in education and choose the right path, I feel I'm giving something back, which is so satisfying. And as I always tell them: if you put in the hard work, it does get noticed.



Dramatic increase in London learners

The latest LSC statistics reveal that more and more young people and adults in our region are staying on in further education (FE) or learning new skills. This is good news all round: for learners, for employers and for the London economy.

It's official: London is a hive of learning activity. David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London, is delighted with the latest set of statistics, which are based on the 2006/07 academic year.

He stressed the importance of every young person entering the workforce equipped with the skills they need to fulfil their potential in work and life, saying: "That's why the LSC is targeting vulnerable, socially excluded learners.

"We are particularly pleased that, for the first time, the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) in London has dropped below the national average."

- 100,000** young Londoners undertook FE courses
- 73%** of people who embarked on an FE course achieved a qualification (a 3% increase)
- 7%** of young people were in the NEET category (this figure is below the national average and represents a 2.1% drop on the previous year)
- 50%** of Apprenticeship Frameworks were successfully completed (up 9% from last year)

The increasing number of adults gaining qualifications is equally encouraging. David said: "London suffers from a high level of worklessness and the LSC is targeting disadvantaged individuals through a range of innovative programmes, such as the Employability Demonstration Pilots."

- 33%** more adults undertook a Level 2 qualification than the previous year
- 78%** was the FE success rate for adults (a 4% increase)
- 22%** more adults took Skills for Life courses in literacy and numeracy

Employers have benefited too. The introduction of Train to Gain in April 2006 has helped drive up skills in the workplace. David said: "Among those signing up for Train to Gain in London, 74 per cent fell into the 'hard to reach' category, which means that they had not engaged in training during the previous 12 months. That's quite an achievement!" The service is now being expanded and made more flexible, to give even more people the chance to improve their employability skills.

- 20,990** learners and 7,060 employers had committed to Train to Gain by July 2007

News in brief

Tesco boss a fan of Apprenticeships

At a meeting attended by 70 delegates from the retail sector Sir Terry Leahy, Chief Executive of Tesco plc, described himself as a huge fan of Apprenticeships, adding: "They are good for our business and good for our bottom line." More than 600 staff have completed Tesco's Apprenticeship in Retail programme since it was launched in 2005.

Childcare event

An LSC-funded Childcare Network Dissemination Event in March shared good practice emerging from the specialist, self-sustaining Childcare Network providers. Discussion topics ranged from a peer referencing system for evaluating quality improvement processes to strategies to improve success rates for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain.

College wins Beacon Award



West Thames College Chair of Governors Linda Penny and Principal Thalia Marriott receive the Beacon Award cheque from LSC London Region's Joe Billington

West Thames College has won an AoC Beacon Award for its outstanding contribution towards Equality and Diversity in the further education sector. It is the only college in the UK to have received this award for its excellent work in this area.

Go for Excellence 2008

The LSC is teaming up with GoSkills (www.goskills.org) to organise the Go for Excellence Passenger Transport Awards, which will celebrate outstanding achievements by apprentices and other learners working in the sector. Application forms will be available from the start of May.

Offender learning conference

LSC London Region hosted its annual conference for offender learning practitioners at Wembley Stadium on 12 March. More than 400 people involved in the delivery of offender learning attended. Key issues discussed included how to improve the quality of courses and the prison curriculum.

Take4

Choice eProspectus

In April last year LSC London Region launched *Choice*, a comprehensive online guide to educational provision for young people in the capital. We asked four people to give us their views on this pan-London resource...

Chris Heaume
Chief Executive
Central London Connexions

"For Connexions personal advisers, *Choice* is a godsend. Previously, when meeting with a young person they would end up spreading multiple college prospectuses across their desk. But now they have an online facility that shows accurately the whole offer, including transport links, right across London, in one place. It's so much easier all round.

"Although already very useful, *Choice* is still in its developmental phase. We have been involved in redesigning the site to reflect the views expressed by young people and key influencers in our focus groups. So we're looking forward to increased functionality later this year, including career progression tools and a database detailing all London jobs appropriate to young people."

Ruth Lomax
Assistant Director
Marketing and Communications
Hackney Community College

"I am on the *Choice* board as a representative of the Association of Colleges (AoC) London Region. Having developed a successful course database several years ago, we have a long-standing commitment to providing a web portal for London's further education (FE) provision and were happy to take this experience forward to support the development of *Choice*.

"The AoC and individual colleges have worked closely with the *Choice* development team to make sure that data collection systems are FE-user-friendly and that we are well-represented on the site. Getting buy-in from each college is crucial to ensuring that the information on the site is valuable to the end user."

Sean McMahon
14-19 Director
LSC London Region

"The *Choice* website provides extensive information on close to 30,000 London learning opportunities and now includes a stakeholder section: *Choice* friends. It's proving very popular: during its first year of operation, the *Choice* website will have received more than 100,000 hits, with around 70 per cent going on to explore options in more detail. The challenge now is to expand and improve on this first year of trialling and testing. In that vein, we have just finished a focus group consultation with 200 young Londoners and launched our new look and feel – *Choice 2* – at the start of April, including a new URL (www.mychoicelondon.co.uk).

"*Choice 3* will become operational from June. It will combine information and guidance and include a suite of advanced guidance tools designed to help students select the course most suited to them. That will encompass diagnostic testing, a CV builder, individual learning plans and a comprehensive careers progression planner.

"The underlying trend in London is for more young people to remain in education and training. But we need young people better matched to opportunities so *Choice* aims to give them a 360° view of what's available."

Dan Rouche
Member, Central London
Connexions Youth Board

"It's good to see a website that is offering something young people like me need. Finding all this information in one place is a big help to working out what to do next. I'll definitely use it and I'll make sure everyone I know does too."



Chris Heaume



Ruth Lomax



Sean McMahon



Dan Rouche