

- Starts -

### **Success rate in Further Education at an all-time high**

Latest statistics from The Data Service shows the further education sector is becoming increasingly important to the nation's economy with participation and success rates on the rise.

According to the results, the FE College success rate was 80.6% in 2007/08 – up from 78% last year and 3 years ahead of the planned date for meeting this target. Participation of adults has also increased to over 3.2 million in 2007/08 with huge increases in the number of adults achieving full level 2 and 3 qualifications. Add to this the fact that the number of NVQs and SVQs awarded by colleges in the UK has also increased substantially in the last year and we're starting to see a very positive trend for the sector.

These are welcome findings for the Further Education Reputation Strategy Group (FERSG) as confirmation of the sector's pivotal role in providing a world class education. Established in 2007, the group brings together leaders from across the sector with the aim of enhancing its national reputation. Alison Birkinshaw, Chair of the Further Education Reputation Strategy Group (FERSG) and Principal of York College says 'Further education offers a range of options for those who are looking for flexible, high quality education and training. In today's difficult economic climate it's no surprise that we're seeing a rise in participation as more people seek to boost their employment options'.

Success rates for young people in FE funded provision (aged 16- 18) were also up 2.6 percentage points from 2006/07 at 79.9%. And with 7.8% more young people achieving full level 3 qualifications in the 2007/08 academic year, this means almost 160,000 more young people with the skills employers need are either entering the labour market or going on to gain higher level qualifications. In addition to this, positive results in apprenticeships have shown a major increase in new starts during the first 6 months of the academic year (1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> January) and a further increase in achievements. Alison Birkinshaw says: 'These results highlight the role of further education in delivering outstanding work-based learning as young people take advantage of the increase in available apprenticeships'.

Further research into the reputation of the sector will be available later in the year.

- Ends -

**Notes to editors:**

- For further information about the Further Education Reputation Strategy Group, please see: <http://fersg.lsc.gov.uk/>
- To view the full list of statistics please see: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000838/index.shtml>

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