

London MPs go  
Back to the Floor  
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>LSC

Leading learning and skills

# the magazine

April 2009

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: Joan Ryan MP, Enfield North, learns about car maintenance from apprentices at North London Garages

### the magazine

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David Hughes

## Comment

Welcome to the latest issue of *the magazine*, which provides an overview of recent developments in learning and skills, right across the London Region.

As we all know, the UK is now officially in recession. We've been through periods of recession before but this one is looking a bit different, because it feels like there are far greater numbers of experienced, skilled, qualified people being made redundant from higher-level jobs. Our response has to therefore include retraining as well as upskilling, helping the more highly skilled as well as those with lower skills levels.

One thing's for sure: we'll need to be flexible and fleet of foot if we are to stand any chance of meeting our region's evolving training needs. True, there are some excellent examples of proactive joint working taking place, like the Woolworths project described on page 6. But I have to say that we need this type of responsiveness across the whole of London and we are not there yet.

As highlighted on pages 4 and 5, Apprenticeships have been placed in the spotlight this year by national and regional awareness campaigns. Here in London, we've noticed an increase in demand for adult apprentices, at the expense of Apprenticeships for under-19s. So we will need to continue being flexible and promoting Apprenticeships as an important strategic tool to help companies start preparing themselves for the upturn, when it arrives.

In a year's time the LSC will cease to exist as we all evolve into the new Machinery of Government system. The clock is ticking and we are working hard to prepare for a smooth transfer with our partners. There is a lot more work to be done but I am confident that we will achieve a smooth transfer of 16-19 learning to London's local authorities, as well as helping to establish the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency.

There's no getting away from the fact that these are very challenging times for us all. Strangely, though, to me it also feels like we're at the "Phoney War" stage in the changeover arrangements; just like the citizens of Europe during the six-month lull experienced at the start of the Second World War, everyone's waiting for something to happen...

**David Hughes**  
 LSC London Regional Director



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

# London MPs take a masterclass in Apprenticeships

Five London MPs visited apprentices at their workplaces during Back to the Floor Day, to see for themselves how today's Apprenticeship programmes work and why our region's employers need to offer more places.

National Apprenticeship Week (see pages 4 and 5) served to highlight the importance of Apprenticeships and the fact that all industry sectors can benefit by taking on apprentices.

Six London dignitaries took part in February's Back to the Floor Day by visiting apprentices in industries that are pivotal in their constituencies:

- **David Lammy MP**, Tottenham, didn't have far to go because he had an apprentice working in his office
- **David Evennett MP**, Bexleyheath and Crayford, enjoyed meeting workers and children at a day nursery
- **Simon Hughes MP**, North Southwark and Bermondsey, went to London Bridge



David Evennett MP enjoys a make-believe cuppa at a London day nursery

- **Lord Young** returned to his roots in the telecommunications industry (see interview on page 14).
  - **Malcolm Wicks MP**, Croydon North, visited broadcast and mobile communications company Arqiva
  - **Joan Ryan MP**, Enfield North, met apprentices at North London Garages (see front-page picture)
- The week of activities is part of the Government's drive to increase the number of apprentices. Over the next decade, it is anticipated that one in five young people will start an Apprenticeship programme.



Simon Hughes MP is pleased to see that Tfl Apprenticeships are on the right track



Malcolm Wicks MP discovers that Arqiva's apprentices have a head for heights

# Apprenticeship Week the importance of skills to all sectors

Apprentices from a range of industries were placed in the spotlight during Apprenticeship Week, which underlined the pivotal role apprentices are playing in reskilling and upskilling our region's workforce.

During the last few months, publicity campaigns have promoted a valuable message: skills are essential to surviving in the economic downturn.

Fronted by Sir Alan Sugar, the Apprenticeships campaign launched with television and radio advertising spots that aim to motivate employers to offer

more places. In the ads, Sir Alan talks to apprentices and witnesses the difference they are making to today's business world, with a central message that apprentices "make things happen" and contribute to business success.

February's national Apprenticeship Week served to highlight the many different



Apprenticeships that are underway across all sectors, throughout the country.

It also drew attention to the importance of Apprenticeships in ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the skills needed for businesses to remain competitive, even during the current economic climate.

## London's apprentices create a buzz

Back to the Floor Day (see page 3) was just one of the many activities taking place across London Region during Apprenticeship Week, a selection of which is detailed below.

- At an informal breakfast meeting, Sir Alan Sugar and Secretaries of State Ed Balls (DCSF) and John Denham (DIUS) talked with employers, providers and apprentices to hear about Apprenticeships programmes from their perspective.
- The trio also participated in a Q&A session at a seminar hosted by TV's Moira Stewart and attended by 500 employers, many of whom put forward their Apprenticeship questions to the panel. Attendees then visited an Apprenticeships exhibition, with stands manned by representatives from the LSC, DCSF and DIUS.
- Hamlets Youth Training hosted an Apprenticeships conference for more than 200 young people, parents, teachers and employers.
- The culinary skills of Compass Group were on display at a kitchen demonstration event at Westminster Kingsway College.
- Hackney Council, Hackney Homes and Hackney Community College joined forces to host a celebration lunch for more than 30 apprentices who currently work and train in their organisations, in areas like plumbing, painting and decorating, accountancy and IT.
- Croydon College launched a double whammy: an Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) in Athletics; and the London Apprenticeships Academy.



Refrigeration Apprentice Dean Rae, 20, sat beside Sir Alan Sugar at an informal breakfast meeting. He said: "Sir Alan concentrated on the credit crunch and how Apprenticeships could be improved."

When asked for his opinion, Dean suggested to the millionaire businessman that trained people should go into schools more often to give advice, because a lot of pupils do not know about all the trades available, even though there is a skills shortage.

# highlights

## New service will achieve the perfect match

The new national Vacancy Matching System (VMS), launched in January, looks sure to be a big hit with employers, potential apprentices, parents and carers, advisers and learning providers.

This free service provides a single, web-based location for information on Apprenticeships. Despite its name, the VMS is far more than a mere 'matching system'. It aims to:

- provide a good geographic and sectoral spread of vacancies
- match potential apprentices to employers with vacancies
- track candidates' and employers' progress through the system and identify where intervention is needed
- record all Apprenticeships and the employers that offer them
- provide powerful management information on all aspects of Apprenticeship recruitment, including (for the first time) demand from potential apprentices and take-up by individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Atlantic Contracts Manager Lee Wright thinks the VMS is a great idea because it will make it easier for employers to find good apprentices, and vice versa. He said: "It's important for us to



Lee Wright views his apprentices as the workforce of the future

keep taking on new apprentices every year, because they will be the workforce of the future."

Vic Grimes, London Regional Director for Apprenticeships, said: "The new system offers benefits all round: potential apprentices can now search for vacancies online, by area, by sector and by employer; employers can use it, free of charge, to gain access to a wider pool of talent. It's very easy to use, too.

"The big challenge ahead of us is to make employers aware of this new service and how easily they can access it through our training providers and partner organisations."

## Regional campaign targets employers

Complementing this high-profile activity is a regional campaign aimed at employers and covering Apprenticeships, the Train to Gain service and the Skills Pledge.

As part of the regional campaign, a *Pocket Guide to Beating the Squeeze* is being sent to more than 100,000 London companies, helping to spread the "skills are essential" message to businesses that

have not yet engaged in LSC products and services. The message is also being delivered effectively across the capital by the growing network of Skills for London ambassadors.

Visit [www.skillsforlondon.org](http://www.skillsforlondon.org) to find out more, including information about Apprenticeships, Train to Gain and the Skills Pledge.



# College extends helping hand to ex-Woolies staff

When the Woolworths chain collapsed in January, it sent out a shockwave across the nation.

People across the country were stunned to learn that the company had fallen victim to the credit crunch – after all, it had been part of the bricks and mortar of the

British high street for very nearly a century. And nobody was more surprised than the Woolworths staff, many of whom had previously regarded their position in the company as a “job for life”.

City and Islington College wasted no time in coming to the aid of former Woolworths staff. When the closures were announced, back in December 2008, a team from the college got in touch with local Woolworths stores to offer support.

Since then, the college has set up a helpline number for redundant staff. It has also been hosting a series of workshops that are designed to enable participants to return to working life by equipping them with a range of employability skills including CV writing, interview techniques and job-hunting.

These workshops are funded by LSC London Region as part of the Skills for Jobs programme, which the college runs in partnership with Jobcentre Plus (JCP). The programme was launched a year ago to support those who have been made redundant during the credit crunch.

Some of the former Woolworths staff attending the workshops were referred by JCP. Georgette Budhran, Senior Employment Engagement Manager for JCP



Former Woolworths branch manager Tony Lock (pictured with Teresa Esan) says the workshops at the college have helped to take away the fears about finding new work

Central London, said: “We have directed clients to the college for pre-employment training to make sure they are ready for the jobs market.”

Teresa Esan, the college’s Director of Employability and Employer Engagement, said: “We can support staff at all levels, and across all areas of Woolworths’ business, from retail, warehousing, transport and management, through a range of employability programmes and other training courses.”

## Triple whammy for CNWL

The College of North West London (CNWL) has added to its already impressive awards track record by winning three more FE accolades.

- **The new Training Quality Standard (TQS) quality kitemark for training providers** – CNWL achieved a whole-college award, with excellence in two specialised areas: Construction and Building Services Engineering. It was the only London FE college to gain a double excellence rating. The TQS replaced the Centre of Vocational Excellence programme and confirms how well a provider is meeting the employer needs.
- **The overall Customer Service Excellence (CSE) hallmark accreditation** – this was awarded to CNWL for looking after its students to the highest standards. Only three general FE colleges received this, throughout England and Wales – CNWL was the only recipient from the London and South East regions.
- **Re-accreditation as an Investor in People (IIP)** – this standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation’s performance through the management and development of its staff. CNWL’s previous accreditation was awarded in 2004.

“We are delighted with these awards,” said Deputy Principal Maggie Pulle, “because they cover the whole range of people with whom we interact: employers, students and staff. We are also proud of our employer links, which have led to extensive customised training provision, and we have expanded our Train to Gain workplace learning to make it even more flexible.”

## Top marks for Family Learning

Newham Council’s Family Learning Programme is proving a big hit with local parents and carers.

Funded by LSC London Region, the programme has two key objectives: to equip parents and carers with the necessary skills to support their child’s learning effectively; and to enable them to improve their own skills while gaining qualifications.

During 2007/08, more than 1,600 parents took on learning and completed studies through the programme. They were spoilt for choice, with an impressive 162 courses on offer, including literacy, language, numeracy and ICT.

At an event held to celebrate the achievement of parents and carers through the programme, Councillor Quentin Peppiatt awarded certificates to 300 parents. He said: “It’s never too late to

learn new skills. Qualifications like those offered by the Family Learning Programme have a range of benefits, from having a positive impact on a child’s learning, to improving career prospects.”

Parent Uma Tiwari joined the Family Learning programme soon after moving to Newham from India. She said: “The course helped improve my confidence when speaking English and gave me the opportunity to make new friends when I was new to this country. I enjoyed the first course so much that I took further classes and achieved literacy qualifications at Levels 1 and 2. I really enjoyed working with the group and used what I learned in class at home with my son. This boosted his confidence when settling in to his new school.”

For more information, contact Sheila Weeden at LSC London East (sheila.weeden@lsc.gov.uk).

# High five for CONEL

The College of North East London (CONEL) has become only the fifth general FE college in London to gain Learning and Skills Beacon status, which is awarded to establishments that can demonstrate excellence and innovation.

The Beacon award reflects the findings of a recent Ofsted report, which described the college as "outstanding" in many areas. It also confirms CONEL's status as one of the leading colleges in the UK.

Siôn Simon MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for FE, presented the award at a ceremony hosted by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. He said: "This is an outstanding achievement. In today's economic climate, the more we can all do to promote and celebrate the excellence that exists in further education and skills, the better."



Siôn Simon MP presents the award to CONEL Principal Paul Head, accompanied by (left to right); Jane O'Neill, Vice Principal; Judy Bax, Vice Chair of CONEL's Governors; Muni Omar, former Student Union President; Keith Brown, Chair of CONEL's Governors; Ahmed Abdalla, current Student Union President; and Chris McCutcheon, Vice Principal

On receiving the award, CONEL Principal Paul Head was keen to stress that the college's performance was very much a team effort: "This is a significant public recognition of the outstanding performance of the college and the contribution of its governors, staff and learners."

CONEL's 14,000 learners were represented at the ceremony by Muni Omar and Ahmed Abdalla. Ahmed, who is studying Accounting, said: "Employers and universities will now know that we're one of only five Beacon colleges in London. It's like being the Oxford and Cambridge of colleges."

## Five-year landmark for Merton nurse cadets

Merton College's nurse cadet programme recently welcomed its latest cohort of new starters. The nurse cadet programme was established five years ago in conjunction with the South West London Strategic Health Authority and is now funded by a learner-responsive 16-18 grant from LSC London Region.

The cadet scheme is a two-year course during which time learners study for a BTEC National Award and NVQs in Health and Social Care. All the cadets have clinical placements in either Epsom Hospital, which is part of the St Helier and Epsom Hospital Trust, or with Mayday University Hospital Trust, Croydon.

A nurse cadet tutor from the college supports the cadets on their ward placements, helping them to adjust and cope with an acute nursing environment as well as teaching and assessing clinical skills.

The programme prepares young people who wish to pursue a career in nursing for both the academic and practical aspects of a Nursing Diploma at University.



Merton nurse cadets are getting a great start to their careers

Students who do not have the mandatory literacy and numeracy qualifications for university entry have the opportunity to combine these with the main programme. This provides a non-traditional and alternative route into nursing.

At present, 30 nurse cadets are undergoing training. Since 2004 a total of 120 young people have enrolled on the programme and the learners from the first cohort will qualify as registered general nurses this year.

# London formulates a response to the econ

Our region's Joint Action Plan sets out how London's employers and individuals will be supported during the recession. As its name suggests, the plan is centred on a joint approach to service provision.

The Government has set out its high-level response to redundancies and the worsening economic situation.

The three major government departments responsible for jobs, skills and business

## Our guiding principles

London's Joint Action Plan is informed by the Mayor's Economic Recovery Action Plan. It is an important component of the Joint Investment Plan that the LSC, DWP, Jobcentre Plus and the London Development Agency (LDA) have been charged to develop by the LSEB. And it will feed into the work of the London Higher Economic Group, which is co-chaired by the Minister for London and the Mayor.

The Joint Action Plan is underpinned by four key principles:

- when appropriate, a single, co-ordinated point of access to support the employer or individual
- a clear employer and individual offer
- partnership working between the pan-London lead agencies and local partners
- a commitment to evaluation of effectiveness.

## £17 million

of Train to Gain and additional ESF funding is under tender and will be used to provide retraining for Londoners who are under notice of redundancy or have recently been made redundant

(DWP, DIUS and BERR) have agreed to work together. They have tasked their agencies and organisations to develop joint action plans at a regional level, aimed at supporting employers and individuals as effectively as possible during the economic downturn, while also ensuring that their region is in the best possible shape to face future challenges.

LSC London Regional Skills Director Philippa Langton said: "This joint working approach is nothing new for our region. Through our work with the Mayor and the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), we have already been working hard to develop a very clear offer to employers and individuals, along with an integrated system to deliver the support required. So we have a distinct advantage over some other regions, because all the various partners involved know and trust each other, and have experience of working closely together.

"However, with the recession beginning to bite, there is now an urgent need among



Philippa Langton believes that London's Joint Action Plan offers a blueprint for our region's future

all the partners involved to 'sort out the wiring' as soon as possible. It's all very well having plans, but unless people and agencies work together, they won't amount to anything but a pile of paperwork.

"I believe that London's Joint Action Plan, published in February, offers a blueprint for our region's future. Its success depends on us ensuring that we identify the needs of employers and individuals quickly, and that we address those needs in a highly effective, joined-up way."



The clock is ticking: there is now an urgent need among all London's Joint Action Plan partners to "sort out the wiring" as soon as possible

# joint regional omic downturn

## Our four target groups

In developing the Joint Action Plan, all the partners involved were keen to ensure that it would be a very practical document.

Given that London is a complex region where the skills needs are as diverse as its population, this was no easy task. However, rather than adopting a "scattergun" approach to support, it was agreed that the Joint Action Plan should seek to address the needs of four target groups: "at risk" employers and individuals; redundancies; those furthest from the labour market; and new entrants to the labour market.

For employers and individuals at risk of redundancy, the support needs to be delivered quickly and effectively. So the LDA, its Business Link Service (including the skills brokers and the Train to Gain service), the LSC and providers will work together to help businesses avoid redundancy situations altogether, or minimise the number of redundancies.

In the case of confirmed redundancies, the support on offer is based on a

regional, partnership-based approach, with the Mayor determined to help bring together the work of Jobcentre Plus, the LSC and the LDA. The Joint Action Plan details the processes partners will follow to provide effective support in response to:

- **significant redundancies involving 20 or more people** – where the ramifications for the workplace and for the local community will be significant
- **small-scale redundancies** – it is likely that London's redundancies will be spread across a very large number of workplaces, with fairly small numbers covered by each
- **individual redundancies** – which usually only come to light when a person signs on at their local Jobcentre.

There is a significant risk that the economic downturn will divert attention and resource away from those people who are furthest from the labour market. However, London has taken steps to ensure that it will not fall into this trap. For example, as part of our region's preparation for the Integrated

**28.5%** more names have been added to London's Jobseeker's Allowance register\*

**35.9%** fewer vacancy details have been received by Jobcentre Plus (JCP)\*

\* Source: JCP data, January 2008 to January 2009

Employment and Skills (IES) trials, one of the avenues being explored is the development of **nextstep** support arrangements based around groups of clients with similar needs, such as ex-offenders and people with mental health problems.

Last but not least, there is real concern that new entrants to the labour market will face considerable difficulties, with noticeably fewer job opportunities on offer to young people. The Joint Action Plan aims to tackle this by adjusting the support provided through a number of existing initiatives to increase their effectiveness. For example:

- the September Guarantee will continue, but with particular emphasis placed on the nine London boroughs that failed the 90 per cent benchmark in 2007/08
- the pan-London 14-19 prospectus will be extended to include a suite of information, advice and guidance tools
- through the London Apprenticeship Task Force, the number and range of Apprenticeships in our region will be increased – the Mayor is leading by example, having committed to take on 1,000 apprentices a year within the Greater London Authority family.

Philippa Langton said: "In the London Region, there is now a firm commitment to partnership working. One thing's for sure: no single agency could do it all alone."



With fewer job opportunities to offer young people, the number and range of Apprenticeships in our region needs to increase

# In my view: the transfer of 16-19 commissioning to local authorities

By September, all LSC regions will have handed over responsibility for the funding of 16-19 provision to local authorities. Mike Pettifer is leading LSC London Region's transition work, so we asked him for an update.



**Q: What are the three main challenges you face in your current role?**

Firstly, the transition to the new arrangements needs to happen so smoothly that the learners don't notice it and the providers are clear about where they fit in. Secondly, we want to remain focused on success: our NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures have dropped below 6 per cent for the first time ever; and our 16-19 participation rate is the highest in the country. Finally, it's vital that our staff feel informed about and involved in the transition so they can make the right decisions going forward. As soon as I know something I want to make sure they know it too.

**Q: Do you and your counterparts in England's nine LSC regions share information and best practice?**

Yes. I meet up regularly with my colleagues from other regions who are leading in this area, so that we can all share emerging ideas and experiences.

**Q: So is each region required to follow the same approach?**

We all have the same timetable and, when the new way of operating goes

live, we will all be working within the same national planning and commissioning framework. We should see consistency in approach but diversity in outcomes – to reflect local commissioning decisions that meet the needs of local communities and learners. In the outline plans submitted to the DCSF in September 2008, London was the only region to have proposed a "dry run", prior to the live roll-out.

**Q: What is London's dry run and why are we doing it?**

We're delighted that all 32 boroughs have signed up to the dry run. Broadly speaking, it has two objectives: to familiarise local authorities with our providers and the range of our work; and to ensure that the new London model is as effective as possible, from September 2010 – we hope to achieve this through joint working between LSC

and local authority staff and by trialling key aspects of the new system before it goes live. We view the dry run as a low-risk pilot; it's running in parallel with the LSC allocations process, so enables us to get things wrong and then put them right, ready for when it really does count. The dry run finished at the end of March, and will be formally evaluated in April so that any lessons learned can help inform the planning for the transition year.

**Q: How will you know that London's transition has been successful?**

I'd say there will be three key outcomes: the right staff are in the right place at the right time to make things happen according to plan; the providers receive the right funding at the right time; and, last but not least, there is continued improvement in the success of our young people and in the quality of our providers.

# Tackling the transition

The transition from compulsory education to post-16 learning is a critical time. While most young people make that move successfully, a small – but significant – minority do not. Not only do they miss the opportunity to get the skills and qualifications they need, but they are at greater risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

However, there are more resources available to young people now than ever before. On this page we look at some of the projects helping those in the 14-19 age bracket to make the positive decisions that can shape the rest of their lives.

## Making the right Choice

*Choice* is the first online course prospectus for 14-19 year-old Londoners. In the six months following the June 2008 launch of *Choice 3*, the [www.mychoicelondon.co.uk](http://www.mychoicelondon.co.uk) site received 93,371 visitors, who spent an average of 11 minutes viewing information. That represents a comparable six-month increase of more than 100 per cent.



London's online course prospectus is proving very popular

A critical issue for 2009 will be the delivery of *Choice 4*. New online features will include:

- a Hot Courses facility highlighting places available for Diplomas, Apprenticeships and HE January Starts
- a search button enabling providers to reuse their *Choice* data on their own websites
- enhanced pathways, a career-matching quiz, a CV builder and an action planner
- better data reporting so that boroughs can easily "curriculum audit" their local post-16 offer.

When *Choice Jobs* is launched in June, *Choice* will absorb the Connexions

Core Plus London Opportunities and Information System (LOIS) database on job vacancies.

There will also be a formal link to the national Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching System. The overall effect of these changes will be to create a more holistic and exciting offer to young people.

For more information on *Choice 4*, contact Peter Williams at [peter.williams@londonconnects.gov.uk](mailto:peter.williams@londonconnects.gov.uk); and to find out more about *Choice Jobs*, contact Marcelle Neil at [Marcelleneil@connexionsru.org.uk](mailto:Marcelleneil@connexionsru.org.uk)

## September Guarantee

In 2005, the 14-19 Implementation Plan made a commitment to offer, by the end of September, a suitable place in post-16 education or training to all young people in the year they reach the compulsory education leaving age.

This "September Guarantee" was extended to 17-year-olds in 2008 to give those who had enrolled on one-year or short courses, or who had left their previous activity, a further opportunity to participate.

Last year, London was 1 per cent better than the national average for offers made to 16-year-olds, and 31 of the region's 33 boroughs hit the 90 per cent benchmark. The new Guarantee for 17-year-olds proved a little more challenging in its inaugural year, and London performed 1 per cent below the national average.

LSC London Region has developed a unique support package for 16- and 17-year-old learners who do not gain an offer of a place in post-16 education or training. The September Guarantee Voucher Scheme provides young people with a bursary of up to £2,000, which is spent on a personalised package of support negotiated with a Connexions Personal Advisor. The scheme will support up to 750 young Londoners to find a place to learn or work in 2008/09.

More information is available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

## Partnership campaigns

Building on the huge success of the 2008 summer and winter partnership campaigns with radio station KISS FM, LSC London Region will be embarking on the third phase of its joint working programme, incorporating Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and 16-19 Apprenticeship messages into the 14-19 focused activities throughout 2009.

For more information on LSC London Region's 14-19 marketing activities, contact Ryan Ansah at [ryan.ansah@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:ryan.ansah@lsc.gov.uk)

## Fast facts

- London continues to outperform the rest of the nation on NEET by 1 per cent.
- The capital's NEET rate has fallen to 5.8 per cent (November 2008) – the lowest ever recorded – while the rest of the country experienced an increase.
- This represents a fifth consecutive year-on-year decline for London.

# ESF – money well spent

Now that LSC London Region's 2005-08 ESF programmes have come to a close, here we reflect on the many achievements resulting from this important source of funding.

The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.

Here in London Region, more than £170 million of ESF was applied over three and a half years across a total of seven programmes: one in each of London's five sub-regions and two operating across London.

In all, more than 620 projects received funding, which resulted in support being provided to more than 145,000 Londoners (nearly 15,000 above our target), of which:

- **56 per cent** were female
- **60 per cent** were from black and minority ethnic groups
- **11 per cent** had a learning difficulty and/or disability.

A key aim of ESF is employability: assisting those people who are considered to be furthest from the labour market to gain the skills needed for them to move into the workforce; and helping those people who are in work but with low skill levels to advance their prospects.

LSC London Region's ESF programmes have certainly delivered against the employability objective. Among the 145,000 beneficiaries:

- at least **11,000 people** who were previously unemployed or economically inactive moved into work
- **46,000 people** moved into other positive outcomes such as further training or voluntary work – this is a significant achievement, because many ESF participants are not job ready and may need to make an extra step before moving into the labour market
- more than **53,000 individuals** gained a recognised qualification.

External evaluation reports assessed how well London's ESF programmes met their regional and sub-regional objectives. They highlight a number of strengths, including our success in engaging beneficiaries.

The reports also confirm that the provision of more intensive assistance through ESF, such as one-to-one support and mentoring, has inspired participants to commit to their learning programme and acquire skills.

Project delivery has now started under LSC London Region's 2007-10 ESF programme. Good practice developed during the 2005-08 programmes is being applied to the new projects, so we look forward to sharing some good news stories from that programme with you soon.

For more information about ESF, visit [www.esf.gov.uk](http://www.esf.gov.uk). The external reports on the effectiveness of London's 2005-08 ESF programmes are now available online at: [www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/ESF/2000-2006Programme](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/ESF/2000-2006Programme).

## Serving up more than coffee

A group of 15 Caffè Nero assistant managers gathered at the company's training centre in Long Acre in February to celebrate achieving their NVQ Level 2 in Team Leading.

The programme is funded through the Train to Gain service and delivered by Hawk Training. There are currently 60 managers on the programme across London and the South East.

Lina Jureviciute of Caffè Nero said: "It is great as an employer to offer NVQs to key people in our business. We strongly believe that working with Hawk will strengthen our existing training programme and add value to our business."

As well as gaining professional accreditation, the managers have benefited from independent advice about how to enhance



60 assistant managers from Caffè Nero are learning about team leading, financed by Train to Gain

their customer service skills. The results have been impressive, with managers already developing their careers within the company.

Several have decided to support the training and development of their colleagues by becoming a "Maestro" – a key ambassador, responsible for buddying

new team members and completing their induction training, as well as offering support once the person is ready to work behind the bar. Others have taken the important step of progressing to the position of "MIT" (Manager in Training), which is the route employees follow before taking on responsibility for their own coffee shop.

On your  
marks,

get set,  
**GO!**

Dame Kelly Holmes, SkillsActive Chief Executive Stephen Studd and AASE Athletics Apprentice Jack Green believe AASE Apprenticeships combine sporting excellence with the qualifications needed to develop a second career

In a bid to bridge the £40 million funding gap announced by UK Sport, at the end of February Dame Kelly Holmes joined SkillsActive in calling all National Governing Bodies of Sport to engage with the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) programme.

At a celebration event organised by SkillsActive – the Sector Skills Council for

Active Leisure and Learning – Dame Kelly took more than 100 AASE apprentices through a series of practical activities as part of her motivation workshop.

Dame Kelly believes that providing young athletes with a future after sport is essential. She said: "To reach world standard you need to dedicate your whole life. When your career finishes it can leave a

massive gap and you are forced to refocus. The AASE programme provides athletes with the qualifications needed to develop a second career."

SkillsActive would like to see all Olympic and Paralympic sports delivering the AASE programme by 2010, in order to give Team GB its best chance of achieving UK Sport's target of fourth in the 2012 medals table.

## Adult skills campaign hits the bullseye

Across London, adult skills campaigns are engaging with potential learners in their own environment, to get them thinking about the importance of improving their skills base. The target audience is people who have skills below NVQ Level 2, who are unemployed or who are economically inactive.

One such campaign, which took place in Thamesmead, was TASTER (Thamesmead Adult Skills – The Education Route). Packed with a range of exciting activities, it gave Thamesmead shoppers an opportunity to participate in 'taster' sessions for skills such as CV writing, literacy and numeracy.

One of the week's highlights was 'Smart Darts', a magnetic darts game that is designed to encourage parents to brush up on their numeracy skills with their children.

Former darts world champion and local hero Andy Fordham was on hand to test the maths skills of Thamesmead residents, young and old.

The Smart Darts event was sponsored by LSC London Region. Trust Thamesmead provided an enquiry and referral service throughout the campaign, and Greenwich Local Labour and Business provided an employment support service for local residents aboard their mobile bus.

Alec Brand, Head of Marketing at Greenwich Community College, which helped run the campaign, said: "It was fantastic to see so many people taking part in the taster sessions, which aimed to raise the awareness of learning and job opportunities available to Thamesmead residents.

"As a result of the campaign, since January we have been running an LSC-funded Adult Literacy and Numeracy class for 15 local residents in a community hall in Thamesmead. A further 10 residents have also expressed an interest in learning and we are in the process of referring them to appropriate courses to suit their training needs."

# Five minutes with... Lord Young

As Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills and Apprenticeships, Lord Young is responsible for engaging employers in the Government's skills agenda. Here he shares his views about Apprenticeships.

**Q: What are your top priorities in your current role?**

In the current circumstances, they are to continue sustaining and nourishing Apprenticeships, and to keep employers focused on the importance of training. I want employers to get the message that if they don't train their staff during the economic slowdown, they are 2.5 times more likely to fail than employers that do.

**Q: What experience do you bring to the table that will help you meet these challenges?**

In the '50s, I did a telecommunications Apprenticeship with the GPO (now BT). I remember feeling that I was equipping myself with the skills needed to meet the challenges of my job, and that I had a career ahead of me. I also remember the important part my mentor played in my training. These same principles hold good today. My experience as a trade union official, and then as the General Secretary of the National Communications Union, is useful too, because I spent a lot of time in negotiations about training. As you can see, I've had a continuing interest in skills.

**Q: Why have Apprenticeships been singled out in your job title?**

Because they are a key part of our strategy to meet the targets set in



Lord Young enjoyed getting the lowdown from BT apprentices during Back to the Floor Day

the Leitch review of skills and in our own *World-class Skills* report. We've already come a long way. Back in 1997, there were only around 60,000 Apprenticeships across the country, with a completion rate of just over 20 per cent. In today's scenario, we have more than 250,000 Apprenticeship starts and a completion rate of 66 per cent. It's a huge success story.

**Q: What impact will the economic downturn have on Apprenticeships?**

Sustaining Apprenticeship numbers during the downturn is a huge challenge. That's why the Government is funding an additional 35,000 apprentices across the country next year: 15,000 in the private sector; and 20,000 in the public sector, including 7,500 in local authorities. Although London's local authorities are aiming to

take on 2,000 apprentices over the next few years, I'd like to see them take on a more challenging target.

**Q: So how will you get employers more involved in Apprenticeships?**

I don't want to underestimate the challenge, but there are a lot of good things going on. The National Apprenticeship Service should help, because it's a very straightforward, one-stop shop for employers, parents and would-be apprentices. We're also offering extra funding for large employers that agree to act as an Apprenticeship host for the companies in their supply chain, and the Group Training Association will play a similar hosting role for SMEs. As I see it, Apprenticeships offer a welcome beacon of hope in these very difficult economic times.

# Plan sets out future investment in London's skills base

LSC London Region's annual *Learning and Skills Plan summary*, published in March, sets out how we will use our biggest-ever budget to meet skills needs across the capital.

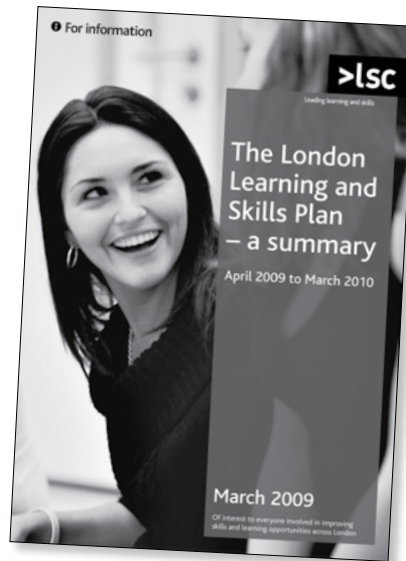
As was the case last year, we have established a robust set of priorities for 2009/10, informed by meticulous planning, a strong understanding of the current learning and skills agenda, and a clear strategic direction. Our recently published *Learning and Skills Plan summary* sets out how we will commit £1.75 billion to achieving our goals.

London was again the top-performing region in terms of participation in education and training among young people aged 16 to 18 during 2007/08.

For the coming year, in addition to preparing for the transfer of post-16 learning to London's local authorities, we aim to push the participation bar even higher. We have also set ourselves a number of stretching targets, including:

- narrowing the gap in educational achievement between young people from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers
- reducing the number of Londoners who drop out from learning at 17 and become NEET (not in education, employment or training) at 18
- improving the quality and accessibility of impartial information, advice and guidance to young people
- raising quality and attainment at Level 3 – essential to meet the demands of London's high-skilled economy.

Our objectives for adult Londoners are equally ambitious and are aligned with the London Skills and Employment Board strategy, which we played a leading role in developing. The key to success in this area lies in an integrated approach to commissioning programmes, using the resources available from the three main



delivery agencies: the LSC, Jobcentre Plus/ the Department for Work and Pensions, and the London Development Agency. The objectives of our Joint Investment Plan include:

- investing consistently in the same priorities and co-ordinating them more effectively
- identifying and enabling co-commissioning arrangements to maximise added value
- creating a mechanism and framework for directing expenditure
- providing clarity on responsibilities between partners, for external audiences
- better co-ordination of commissioning/ management arrangements, to reduce bureaucracy and its associated costs for providers
- supporting the case for additional resources.

To view the summary online, visit [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/London/London\\_Learning\\_and\\_Skills\\_Plan-\\_FINAL.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/London/London_Learning_and_Skills_Plan-_FINAL.pdf)



Students at Southgate College are gaining an invaluable and practical understanding of broadcasting

## News in brief

### Frank McLoughlin awarded the CBE

In February, the Queen awarded City and Islington College Principal Frank McLoughlin the CBE for services to further education. "This is a great honour for me and the college," said Frank. "It is



recognition of the huge contribution that colleges make to their local communities, and a tribute to the hard work and dedication of our exceptional staff."

### Walthamstow vocational tasters

Year 11 pupils from Walthamstow School for Girls were given a taste of life at Sir George Monoux College. The girls who visited the college had the chance to participate in a number of academic and vocational taster sessions, including Performance Studies, Philosophy, Economics and Travel/Tourism. The visit provided the girls with a valuable insight into the diverse choices available within FE.

### State-of-the-art Power Centre

Kingston College and Carshalton College have joined forces to help meet the growing demand for Gas and Electrical training. The new Power Assessment & Training Centre, based at Carshalton College, is a dedicated state-of-the-art assessment and training facility for adult learners. It is also delivering a Water Regulations course, which is assessed by Thames Water – the qualification on offer is a prerequisite for plumbers wishing to become nationally approved.

### Southgate College goes on air

Media students from Southgate College are to launch their own radio station, which will deliver monthly broadcasts using podcasts and Bluetooth technology. There will be five types of show on offer: talk,

playlist, interview, unsigned student talent and sport. As well as providing participating students with invaluable media experience, it is hoped that the station will help build a community within the college.

# Take4

## Skills Pledge

The Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment by the leadership of a company to support all its employees in developing their skills up to a minimum of NVQ Level 2. Here we find out more about why the Skills Pledge has proved so popular across our region.

**Dan Francies**  
**Skills Development Manager**  
**LSC London Region**

"Of all the English regions, London has the highest number of employers signing the Skills Pledge, and the highest number of employees represented by their commitment.

"Employers of all sizes and from all sectors are committing to workforce development through the Skills Pledge. They like it because it's a straightforward process, with hardly any paperwork involved; because they receive support in developing action and training plans that are tailored to meet their organisation's needs; and because they can receive advice on whether the business is eligible to tap into government funding, to help cover their training costs."

**Cliff Stephens**  
**Vice Principal of HR**  
**Croydon College**

"There is a direct link between staff training and the achievement of learners. The Skills Pledge plays a key part in helping to deliver professional development and improve the college's performance – all training is connected to our seven strategic priorities.

"It helps us provide staff with development opportunities, both at the start of their careers and in order to meet changing circumstances. Through the Skills Pledge process, 50 staff have been linked to formal courses directly related to their roles. In addition, we are working to support all staff to achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications as part of our Skills for Life strategy."

**Jo Munroe**  
**Senior HR Manager**  
**Deloitte**

"Around 90 per cent of our employees are graduates on a structured professional career path. However, just as essential to Deloitte are our many non-qualified employees, who typically work in admin functions like the mailroom, switchboard and records management.

"The Skills Pledge has provided a fantastic opportunity for these people to gain an external, work-related qualification. So far, 30 employees have worked towards their NVQ Level 2 in Customer Service, IT or Business Administration. Their performance at work has improved, their motivation and self-confidence levels have increased and at least half have been inspired to move on to a Level 3 in Team Leading."

**Alex Dawson**  
**Learning and Development Manager**  
**Breast Cancer Care**

"The Skills Pledge is an opportunity to expand our commitment to learning and development. We want to broaden the scope to include informal training and knowledge sharing through job shadowing and mentoring, plus smaller bite-sized formal training such as one-day workshops and seminars.

"There's currently a trend in the charity sector towards sharing resources, so increasing our people's skills through Train to Gain will enable us to do that. It's therefore about community and extending our network with other organisations."



Dan Francies



Jo Munroe



Cliff Stephens



Alex Dawson