



>LSC

Leading learning and skills

the magazine

October 2007

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

Train to Gain
– one year on
Centre pages

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Cover photo: staff at The Courier Service (Same Day) Ltd now feel confident in operating the forklift, thanks to the Train to Gain programme (see centre pages)



Comment

I hope you enjoy reading the October issue of our quarterly stakeholder magazine, which aims to give you an overview of recent developments within the learning and skills sector, both regionally and nationally.

As you'll see, there's plenty going on across London at the moment, what with the restructuring of government departments and the implementation of Lord Leitch's recommendations. And all that's on top of the Comprehensive Spending Review outcomes, the new funding systems that are coming in and the constant mantra about change.

But what I'd like to focus on here is the valuable work being carried out by the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB). As you may remember from the January issue of *the magazine*, the LSEB was set up towards the end of last year to address two major issues for our region: worklessness and employer demand for higher skills levels.

Throughout this year we have been discussing London's priorities with the employers who make up the LSEB as well as with Jobcentre Plus, the London Development Agency and employer organisations. We've been doing some really interesting analysis of the region's challenges. One of the key areas of focus is the workless population, which now stands at around 1.2 million, and the association with the low employment rate, which is around five percentage points below the national average.

Employers seem to have picked up on these statistics. This is very encouraging, because it ties in with what we have been promoting with colleges and training providers around employability skills. The bottom line is that, as well as qualifications as a critical outcome, the focus in future has to be on getting people into jobs and enabling them to progress at work. Achieving this will require collaboration with many partners, including local authorities, health, the voluntary sector and employers, but I believe that it is the key to unlocking London's potential.

The LSEB's draft adult skills strategy is due to be published this autumn and I look forward to discussing its implications with you.

David Hughes
LSC London Regional Director

the magazine

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A new era for skills

At the start of the summer, Prime Minister Gordon Brown created two new departments: the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

The DIUS brings together functions from the former DTI and the former DfES. It is responsible for strengthening the UK's economic performance and transforming the ambitions and life chances of millions of people.

John Denham, Secretary of State for the DIUS, said in a letter following his appointment: "I want the DIUS to translate the UK's research – which is world class – into applied innovation; to break down the



Photograph courtesy of Ken Mears, Waltham Forest Guardian.

John Denham is pictured with (from left): Emily Towers, LSC London Region Communications Manager; Sazlye Ahmet, CLaSS Apprentice; and Julie Coulson, Customer Service Manager, Waltham Forest Direct

barriers between universities, colleges and business; and to foster greater engagement between education and employers."

The DCSF is responsible for improving the focus on all aspects of policy affecting children and young people, as part of the Government's aim to deliver educational excellence. It is headed up by Secretary of State Ed Balls.

The LSC will continue to be a key partner within the new structure. "Over the past few years we have increasingly moved towards two big agendas: 14-19 and employment-related skills," said David Hughes, LSC London Regional Director. "Having two cabinet ministers rather than one will provide a sharper focus from the Government to help progress the reforms that are needed in both areas."

Changing attitudes to learning

The Skills Campaign aims to inspire people and businesses to improve their skill levels. It was launched in July at

a celebratory event attended by more than 150 further education and skills stakeholders.

Speaking at the launch event were Secretary of State for the DIUS John Denham, Minister for Further Education Bill Rammell and LSC Chairman Chris Banks.

Former Apprentice Shaun Anderson introduced the Skills Campaign advert by talking passionately about the "huge impact" his Apprenticeship has had on his career and self-esteem. Chris Banks added: "This campaign is about trying to bring about a change in attitudes to learning. It's about trying to effect a change in culture. That, of course, isn't something done overnight, which is why the campaign will run for between three and five years. So we're in this for the long haul."

Early indications are that the campaign has struck a chord with adults throughout the country, including in London.

For more information about the Skills Campaign, visit www.inourhands.lsc.gov.uk



Launching the Skills Campaign (from left): Chris Banks, Shaun Anderson, John Denham, Bill Rammell, Lord Leitch and Mark Haysom

Supporting employability and inclusion across London

London's Employability Demonstration Pilot (EDP) programme is trialling new approaches to training provision, to provide a more integrated and demand-led skills and employment offer.

Eleven large further education colleges within the London Region are each to receive additional LSC funding of £200,000 over a two-year period to help them test out innovative skills and employment interventions as part of the EDP programme.

Alan McChleery, LSC London Regional Skills Development Manager, is confident that giving the 11 colleges the freedom to experiment with different approaches will reap long-term benefits for the capital. He said: "The colleges taking part in the EDPs have been given flexible funding, with no strings attached to PSA targets.

"We want them to adopt a can-do approach to provision that encompasses buy-in from their senior management teams, partner involvement at an early

stage, establishing links to integrate skills and employment to other programmes – including those not funded by the LSC – and the ambitious vision as set out by Lord Leitch's review of skills."

Each college has identified specific client groups to target through their EDP, including offenders, lone parents and adults with long-term barriers to employment. Employment sectors have also been identified, including catering, health and social care, art and design, engineering, finance, construction, creative industries, retail and hospitality.

"The pilots seek to start to address the change required in the mainstream offer



Hospitality is one of the employment sectors that will be participating in the EDP programme

and organisational culture," said Alan. "I see this as a great opportunity for the colleges to positively engage in the post-Leitch employability agenda.

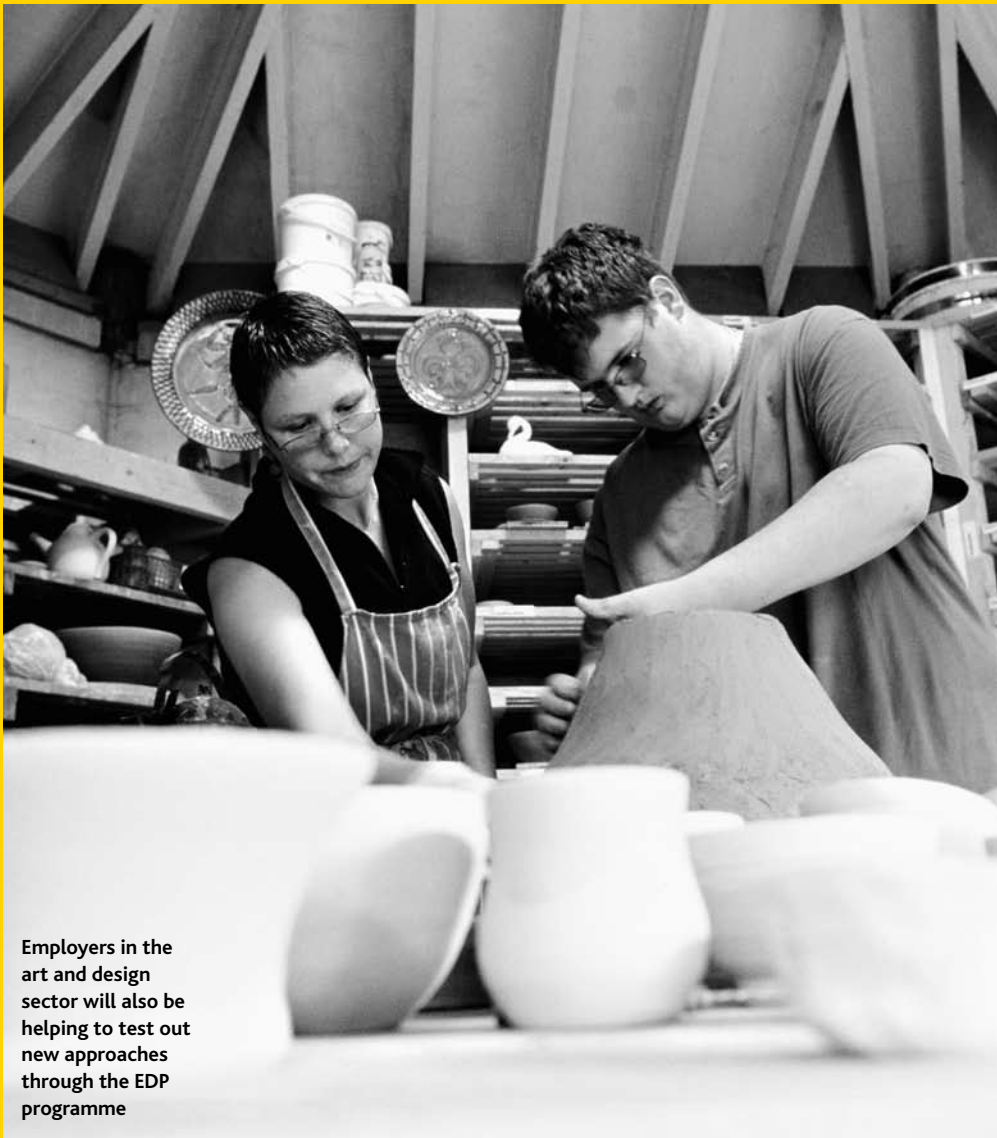
"The adult skills journey can be a complex one, involving a range of organisations working towards a common goal, but not always agreed priority groups. As public servants, we share a responsibility to use the funds allocated to us through Parliament as shrewdly as possible."



The colleges involved in London's EDP have targeted specific client groups, including adults with long-term barriers to employment

Our 11 EDP participants

- Capel Manor College
- City & Islington College
- College of North East London
- College of North West London
- Croydon College
- Hackney Community College
- Lambeth College
- Merton College
- South Thames College
- Southwark College
- Tower Hamlets College



Employers in the art and design sector will also be helping to test out new approaches through the EDP programme

The principles underpinning the pilot programme include:

- high-level commitment to a demand-led skills and employment offer to those individuals furthest from the labour market
- looking at provider organisational structures to improve the curriculum offer to workless adults
- the development of tailored programmes and interventions to cater for particular client groups
- the establishment of pathways to enable people to move into work, stay in work and progress in work
- relationship building and collaboration with external agencies and organisations (see below for a great example of this in practice at Merton College).

Conference highlights collaboration

A one-day 'Employability through Partnership' conference, hosted by Merton College, brought the EDP to life by bringing together project managers and other employability practitioners to discuss collaboration and improved outcomes for pilot projects.

Delegates – including representatives from the LSC, the London Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus, 10 colleges, and other important agencies and partners – heard a keynote speech from Philippa Langton, LSC London Regional Director of Skills. She said: "London is working toward an integrated employment and skills service but the London labour market presents a particular challenge because our region's employers can recruit the skills they need from elsewhere. The Employability

Demonstration Pilots therefore need to focus on the business case for employers to recruit from the local labour force.

"It is important to provide a range of support for workless people in a way that makes sense to them. The Government's support for an adult careers service is important but there is a need to involve a whole range of intermediaries.

"Colleges need to develop sustainable strategies so that the pilot programmes do not become short-term initiatives but become part of the mainstream initiatives such as Skills for Jobs and Train to Gain."

The college representatives gave brief presentations about their individual projects to set the context, while partners

and agencies contributed by sharing an overview of their contributions to the employability agenda in London.

Delegates broke into small discussion groups to share experiences and ideas under the headings: employer engagement; partnership working; and mainstreaming and sustainability. They discussed what had worked, lessons learnt and key barriers and ways of overcoming them.

Evaluation of the conference showed it was an extremely useful event that promoted dialogue between the colleges and partners and enhanced the individual projects.

A follow-up event is planned for November.

Jamel's Apprenticeship is a dream come true

Former junior plasterer Jamel Miah is on cloud nine after realising his long-term ambition of working as a mechanic within the motor vehicle industry.

Having worked in the plastering trade for some time, Jamel knew that this wasn't the career for him. What he really wanted to do was to work as a mechanic in the motor vehicle industry.

In order to undertake a Motor Vehicle Apprenticeship, Jamel needed to be employed by a garage, but he had no luck in this area. He was close to abandoning his dream when he met with London East Connexions Learning Agreement Pilot Broker Amina Begum, who helped turn his life around.

Amina drew up an action plan with Jamel as part of the Learning Agreement, advised him how to research and target specific garages for employment or work experience and looked for an appropriate course of study.

Just two weeks later, a Train to Gain broker alerted Amina to a new Motor Vehicle Apprentice vacancy that had just arisen at Spectre Motors. She spoke to the employer about Jamel's many proven qualities and set up an interview.

Jamel subsequently undertook a full-day trial at the garage. His performance and attitude were so impressive that he ended up with an offer of a Motor Vehicle Apprenticeship, which he gratefully accepted. Since then he has settled in beautifully to life at the garage, is thoroughly enjoying his job and his course, and has never been happier.

Good news travels fast: Jamel has recommended the Learning Agreement to all his friends, describing the opportunity he was given as "a dream come true".

Young offenders get creative

LSC London West's Hounslow/Hillingdon Partnership team has helped enhance the arts and media curriculum at Feltham Youth Offenders Institution (FYOI).

Working closely with Kensington and Chelsea College and FYOI's learning and skills team, the Partnership used the Local Intervention Development Fund to:

- modernise the institution's radio station, with match funding provided by the Prison Service
- review the curriculum and how programmes delivered to young people in custody could offer them progression in the community, following their release
- produce an arts and media brochure detailing potential opportunities
- hold one-day workshops for young offenders who are interested in arts and media to take action, when released.

LSC London West plans to fund a range of workshops to expand its existing offer for young people.

European project comes to Orpington College

The Grundtvig Project aims to engage the most disadvantaged and disaffected members of the community in lifelong learning.

Colleges across Europe are taking part in the project. This summer, Orpington College played host to representatives from the UK, Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic and Romania.

The group met the Mayor of Bromley and visited the College's Mountfield site, where it is pushing forward the education agenda for the Gypsy/Traveller communities by developing innovative ways of delivering learning, based on local needs. The trip ended with a conference which enabled the various international college representatives to discuss the project's progress to date.

For more information about the Grundtvig Project, contact Janis Kent on 01689 878291.



In full regalia: the Mayor of Bromley meets Grundtvig Project participants

Pioneering pupils succeed in workplace tests

Ten pupils from Lilian Baylis Technology School in Kennington have passed the first stage of a two-year pilot Young Apprenticeship programme for 14 to 16-year-olds, initiated and financed by the LSC.

The pupils' first year on the programme focused on the hospitality industry and involved them spending two days a week doing vocational training and work experience at the hotel. Parents, employers, teachers and trainers joined the 10 pupils at a certificate-giving ceremony held at St Giles Hotel, where they were awarded NVQ Multi-skilled Level 1, Food Hygiene and Health and Safety awards at Level 2.

Their second year will cover various activities including reception, conference and banqueting, professional cookery, concierge and housekeeping, and will result in an NVQ Level 2. The programme is being delivered by HIT Training in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College.

350 pupils from London's inner city boroughs are currently involved in the programme



Professional cookery is among the many activities on the menu for the pilot Young Apprenticeship programme

Early signs indicate that the programme is having a positive impact on participants. HIT Training's Adele Oxberry commented: "Employers and teachers are saying how it has made a big difference to their attitude and maturity in comparison with other pupils. And the pupils themselves are saying how much they've benefited from it."

LSC London Region's pilot Young Apprenticeship programme aims to broaden pupils' pathways into careers by offering them high-quality, vocational work experience as well as academic courses. It aims to develop vocational courses in schools that attract academically able

pupils. Around 350 pupils from London's inner city boroughs are currently involved in the programme.

Sean McMahon, LSC London Region's 14-19 Director, believes this is important, because it gives pupils the choice to continue their academic study or enter the world of work. He said: "Many people who join an organisation as an apprentice progress to become senior managers. So not only will this training help young people gain more control over their future, it will also help businesses and organisations become more productive, which in turn will help the growth of London's economy."

CLaSS visit for Denham

John Denham, the new Secretary of State for the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), recently visited learners and staff at the Waltham Forest Community Learning and Skills Service.

Denham talked to young apprentices from the area about the advantages of



John Denham (third from left) discusses educational issues during his visit to Waltham Forest

getting on-the-job training and discussed wider issues about education in Waltham Forest with Head of CLaSS Anne Perez. Denham said that the adult skills centre is

"helping people to take those important first steps towards learning and training, to gain valuable skills employers want. It is a great service for the local community."

Train to Gain – one year on

One of the country's most ambitious programmes to date, Train to Gain is a service designed to help businesses get the training they need to succeed.

Based on the highly successful Employer Training Pilots, Train to Gain is a Skills Brokerage service managed and funded by the LSC that helps employers find the training they need for their employees.

Train to Gain links employers with independent skills brokers who work with them to clarify employee training needs, devise a training plan and then help find the training needed for them to develop more competitive businesses.

It is a key component of the national Skills Campaign, which was launched in July, and the Skills Pledge, through which hundreds of London employers have already made a public commitment to supporting their employees in achieving essential qualifications, including in numeracy and literacy.



"This investment in our staff has allowed us to broaden our remit and given our people the additional skills with which to help the business increase efficiency and productivity."

**Emmet Smith, Director,
RH Wilkins Engravers**

London's targets

"It's true that London has made a fairly slow start when it comes to Train to Gain," said David Hughes, LSC London Regional Director. "Some people might see the introduction of Train to Gain across the capital as unsuccessful, because we haven't reached our targets.

"I don't see it that way. I believe that what we have achieved is pretty impressive: within the first year, we succeeded in inspiring more than 21,000 Londoners to embark on a completely new training programme, including a high take-up rate from Black and Minority Ethnic individuals.

"In total, 7,060 employers engaged in the programme, 74 per cent of which were hard-to-reach (had not engaged in training during the previous 12 months).

"During this time, our existing providers have been building their expertise in delivering work-based training. And we now have a raft of additional providers coming on board to help meet demand.

"Far from describing that as a failure, I'd call that the start of a really successful



"Train to Gain has opened up new possibilities for our business."

**Simon Robinson, Managing Director,
SIMON & SIMON International Ltd**

programme. The results achieved to date give me confidence that we will continue moving in the right direction and will be hitting our targets in the future."

Looking ahead

The number of quality-approved training providers eligible to deliver the Train to Gain programme has increased to 119, including 71 new providers. To keep up the momentum, LSC London Region has approved a 2007-08 capacity-building programme for providers, valued at £4 million.

LSC London Region is also planning to undertake a substantial amount of work with the TUC and various Trade Unions to engage with their membership and increase the number of employees gaining Skills for Life or Level 2 qualifications.

The local partnership teams in each area office are now taking a much greater role in the management of Train to Gain. They are now tasked with contract managing providers in line with their existing relationships. This movement from a regional focus to a local one will ensure

"Doing this course has given me more confidence to carry out my duties."

**Radomir Spasic, Charge Hand,
Medirest, Ealing Hospital**



Our
future.
It's in
our hands.

A promising start

London Region's Train to Gain initiative achieved a great deal during its first year, evidenced by the following statistics:

7,060 London employer engagements

74 per cent of total engagements (national rate: 72 per cent) were accounted for by hard-to-reach employers

20,990 learner starts, including 3,230 in July, which is the highest level of starts achieved in London since the programme began.

much closer working relationships between the LSC and its partners, while at the same time freeing up the Regional Team to focus on policy and driving up the performance of the overall programme.

The Employers' Guide to Training Providers website (www.egtp.co.uk) details all approved Train to Gain providers. An internal area of the site enables brokers to search the database according to courses and will shortly include a new tool that allows brokers to track referrals.

LSC London Region has now approved its action plan for 2007/08, which includes performance management, the skills brokerage service, sector engagement, marketing, capacity building, processes and regional governance.



"I genuinely think it has made us a more considerate workforce, not only to passengers but also to colleagues. I don't think you can lose with Train to Gain."

Jean Drayton, Training Officer,
Menzies Aviation

Maximising women's potential

LSC London Region is financing a pilot project that offers skills training for women, to enable them to attain a full Level 3 qualification.

The pilot is aimed primarily at women in under-represented areas such as engineering and manufacturing, construction, transport and logistics, business administration and finance, and ICT. Women who are working in management positions or who have recently returned to work after a career break may also be eligible to participate.

Unlike the mainstream Train to Gain programme, the pilot can offer funding to women regardless of their existing education level.

740 Level 3 learners have so far engaged on the women's pilot programme

A marketing campaign will soon be launched to help recruit 6,147 more women during 2007/08. Management of the programme has been moved to the local area offices to ensure that the pilot remains a priority right across London.

More about the women's pilot will be published in a future issue of *the magazine*.

In my view: ESF

As London embarks on the next round of the European Social Fund (ESF) programme, we ask Mary Conneely, LSC London Regional Director – Regeneration, to give us the low-down on this vital source of finance.

Q: When and why was ESF set up?

It was established by the Treaty of Rome, which was signed 50 years ago, back in the days of the EEC. One of its original aims was to ensure that the market economy of Europe would not just be about business, but would also enable citizens to benefit from the new enlarged European markets.

Q: What is LSC London Region's role?

We are a co-financing partner, the largest in London. Our other partners are the London Development Agency, as the overall body managing ESF on

behalf of the Greater London Authority, the Department for Work and Pensions on behalf of Jobcentre Plus, and London Councils.

Q: Is this how things work across the country?

No. London is different from all the other English regions, where regional skills partnerships (RSPs) have led the development of Regional Frameworks. We have no RSP because we have the leadership of the Mayor of London and the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), which is now responsible for the ESF programme in our region.

Q: How successful was the previous funding round?

Our 2000-2006 ESF programme had a very powerful impact on many hard-to-reach groups, including Black and Minority Ethnic communities, women returners and homeless people. We used the funding to add value and to move people out of unemployment and up the 'skills escalator'.

Q: What is the thrust of London's new ESF programme?

The new round of funding covers the period from 2007 to 2013 and London has £324 million to spend. Its main purpose is to improve regional competitiveness and employment. The ESF money will be used to continue extending employment opportunities for people who are unemployed and inactive, and to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce. I believe that one of the biggest challenges will be enabling people to compete in a more globally demanding environment.

Q: Will you be using ESF for Olympic skills projects?

Yes. We have already put £5 million of mainstream LSC funding into the Olympics. The money has been spent on a range of projects, including Apprenticeships, hospitality and leisure training, and capacity building for construction training. A key area for local community groups is the Pre-Volunteer Programme (PVP), which aims to give the most disadvantaged members of society the skills and confidence to apply for jobs and work. Ultimately, PVP graduates will become 'Games time volunteers'. London currently has 11 PVP pilot areas, so we'll be looking to use ESF to help us enhance the programme and broaden it to many more areas within our region.



Preparing for ESF 2007-13

LSC London Region held a briefing event on the upcoming tendering round for the ESF 2007-13 funding programme.

More than 650 organisations interested in delivering skills, training and employment initiatives within the region attended the briefing, held at Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge stadium.



Backing a winning programme (left to right): Daniel Quinn, Account Manager, Bravo Solutions; Sue Coan, LSC Regional Contracts Director; Mary Conneely, LSC London Regional Director – Regeneration; and Paul Crosswell, ESF Partnership Manager

The e-tendering process is in two stages: a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) followed by an Invitation to Tender (ITT). This approach applies to both the mainstream 2008/09 funding and the initial funding opportunity made available through the ESF 2007-13 programme.

The priorities of the programme are to extend employment opportunities and create a skilled and adaptable workforce. Priority groups include lone parent and low income single earner households, those with health issues, those most disadvantaged within Black and Minority Ethnic groups,

London's refugees, and new migrant communities who are outside the current education and training system.

The briefing event was followed up by five local events hosted by LSC London Region throughout September.

Case study: Roots and Shoots

Roots and Shoots is a charity that aims to help disadvantaged young people, mainly from Lambeth and Southwark, to prepare for the world of work.

Established in 1982, each year the charity gives up to 20 young people an invaluable opportunity to develop the skills and confidence they will need to enter employment. The Roots and Shoots project received funding from the LSC and the ESF.

In 2005 Roots and Shoots offered a 40-week course, leading to an NVQ Level 1 in Horticulture. Two young participants, Wayne and Robert, performed exceptionally well during their training, which included successful placements at The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, the Grosvenor Estate, Belgrave Square, Eaton Square, the Royal Hospital Chelsea and Buckingham Palace.

Determined to succeed, Wayne and Robert put in a lot of work towards their NVQ, the Preparing for Employment Certificate and improving their skills in English and Maths. At the same time, they also carried out work for a local contract gardener.

Both young men completed the course with flying colours. Described as "natural gardeners" they have since been offered Apprenticeships with parks maintenance organisation Quadron and attend Capel Manor College one day a week as part of their studies for an NVQ Level 2 in Horticulture.

For more information visit www.rootsandshoots.org.uk

The project has enabled many young participants to discover an innate talent for gardening



Photograph courtesy of Roots and Shoots and Ian Carruthers

A helping hand for adult learners

The LSC's Adult Learning Grant (ALG) was launched during the summer as part of a government initiative to improve vocational and academic skills levels across the country.

The ALG is a new service from the LSC. Its launch this summer represented the culmination of a highly successful three-year pilot programme spanning 24 areas of England, including London West.

Similar in many respects to the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), ALG is a weekly grant designed to help adults with the costs of learning. The ALG is an income-tested benefit, with weekly payments ranging from £10 to £30.

Eligible adults who are studying full-time (450 guided learning hours) towards a first Level 2 or first Level 3 qualification can apply for the new grant. Learners who receive council tax benefit, housing

benefit or working tax credit are eligible; those receiving out-of-work benefits such as the Jobseeker's Allowance, and those participating in Apprenticeships, New Deal or Train to Gain are not.

The LSC has briefed all London's providers about ALG and provided application packs for their learners to complete. Applications will be processed centrally by government contractor Liberata, which will also be managing EMA payments from 2008. As with EMA, providers will be required to submit attendance statistics on a weekly basis.

A regional marketing campaign will be launched in London towards the end of 2007 to position this new LSC service

ALG

ADULT LEARNING GRANT

National pilot key findings:

- 16,200** learners achieved a first Level 2 or 3 qualification
- 20 per cent** of those who received the grant for Level 2 went on to study at Level 3
- 15 per cent** would definitely not have embarked on their course without ALG
- 17 per cent** would have dropped out of learning, had ALG not been available

within the wider adult offer. This will assist our region in achieving its target take-up figure of 1,735 within the first year.

For more information, visit www.direct.gov.uk/alg

BT wins national Apprenticeship Award

In the previous issue of *the magazine* we highlighted some of the many Apprenticeship success stories from across London. We promised to let you know of any national winners from our region and are pleased to confirm that BT went on to win the Large Employer of the Year category.

Apprenticeships are at the heart of BT's business and recruitment strategy. Its 99,000-strong workforce includes 862 apprentices and numbers are expected to rise to 1,364 later this year.

"This award is recognition of all the work we have invested in Apprenticeships and a real team effort," said Dave Walsh, who heads up BT Apprenticeships. "Apprenticeships are a fabulous opportunity for individuals to come in and develop their life, academic and technical skills."

David Hughes, LSC London Regional Director, said: "BT is a major employer within the London Region and I'd like to offer my warmest congratulations on winning this prestigious award. Well done, too, to the hundreds of apprentices who are using BT's programme to help them fulfil their potential in the workplace."



BT's Dave Walsh receives his award from television personality Nick Knowles

Collaboration holds the key to economic development in London

The LSC is working with a range of partners to ensure that London's economic development activity addresses regional and local priorities.

Two key frameworks, Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and City Strategy Pathfinders (CSPs), have been driving the development of a new, matrix style of working. This will help us to work more effectively with regional partners to determine strategy, areas of responsibility and how we can best align funding streams to contribute to economic development.

The matrix will be used in conjunction with a capacity-building programme to deliver

Local Area Agreements

The primary objective of an LAA, which is delivered by local authorities, is to integrate funding streams to achieve better outcomes for local people. As a key partner with an obligation to cooperate and respond to this requirement, the LSC has produced a framework for London so that we can work effectively with other agencies to map, steer and influence the use of resources in order to meet targets and local priorities.

the LSC's new approach to collaborative working. Both initiatives will enable LSC London Region to work with its partners, to focus resources on disadvantaged and marginalised groups – critical at a time of tightening public expenditure.

City Strategy Pathfinders

CSPs will deliver a sustainable increase in the number of local residents in employment and a reduction in child poverty. London has two Pathfinders, covering the Olympic boroughs in the east and the six west London boroughs. Both are charged with improving the coherence and effectiveness of the structure of local services, to be achieved by working in partnership across borough boundaries. The LSC is a key player in both partnerships and is working with agencies to generate local solutions to worklessness. We have already contributed to a joint bid for a childcare project that will encourage lone parents to participate in LSC programmes, and to a multi-agency project to develop local outreach IAG services aimed at target groups.

Strengthening skills provision

To strengthen the supply side of the skills market, LSC London Region is seeking to expand its range of providers. Two pilots are currently exploring ways to work more effectively with the third sector, including building the capacity of social enterprise organisations to engage in the learning and skills agenda.

Third sector providers excel in accessing many social groups who are under-represented in the workforce. However, they often encounter difficulties in obtaining funding, so the LSC is responding to demand from within the sector by offering a package of support that includes mentoring and encouraging collaborative ventures with other organisations to form consortia.

Social enterprises will be supported in reaching out to disaffected young Londoners. They will provide employment linked to an Apprenticeship place that will



offer each young person an opportunity to increase their skills within a locally based ethical business. Through its pilot, the LSC is working closely with social enterprise employers to increase the number of Apprenticeship places and the skills within the sector.

The LSC pilot will support social enterprises in reaching out to disaffected young Londoners

Five minutes with...

David Lammy

Minister for Skills David Lammy takes time out of his hectic schedule to talk about the importance of learning and skills to future economic growth and prosperity.



Q: What is your top priority in your new role?

Currently our country has 6.2 million adults in the workforce who are without Level 2 qualifications; 5 million people who are not functionally literate; and 6.8 million people who have serious difficulties with numbers. We can't afford to ignore this immense challenge, not least because by 2020 many of our low-skilled jobs will have gone overseas to countries like China and India. This is a moment when we have to upskill and reskill our country, and that is my number one priority.

Q: And the main challenge facing the LSC in London?

Although London is the financial capital of the world, there are certainly skills challenges that we are working hard with the regional bodies, sector skills councils and all our partners to meet: we have historical populations that are still unqualified, and many people arriving here from overseas without skills. The 2012 Games offer a real opportunity for those who live and work in London to share in the benefits that the Olympics will bring. Working with the London Skills and Employment Board, the LSC is a key partner in making this happen.

Q: So how do you think the Olympics will impact on the capital?

It's a 500-acre site in the poorest part of London. In some ways, once the Olympics is complete, we end the legacy that was the war, when the East End was torn apart by bombing. There's no doubt about it: the Olympics is a huge opportunity for London, its businesses, communities and young people. It's also a chance to say to the world what London is in the 21st century, which will be key to our economy and our skills base.

Q: What do you see as the employer's role in skills training?

Training is absolutely fundamental because it helps employers' bottom line. When you skill up your own staff, they are more confident in the workplace, they are usually more customer friendly and retention improves. It's not the Government saying this, it's employers of all sizes who have signed up to the

Skills Pledge and committed to getting their staff qualified to Level 2 standard, with a full public subsidy. I encourage employers to join that skills journey; it's hugely important if you want to remain competitive in a global economy.

Q: Are there any skills you wish you could learn?

Time is a bit of an issue for me at the moment but there are absolutely skills that I am determined to acquire over the course of my life. I've recently thought that I'd like to gain a Level 1 FA Football Coaching qualification, so that I can play a role in my local community. I'd also really like to take a Level 3 language qualification, to perfect my pidgin French.

GCSEs add value to starting salaries

To help demonstrate the link between higher qualifications and a higher starting salary, the LSC has calculated the added value of each GCSE at grade A* to C – or the vocational equivalent.

Research conducted by the Office of National Statistics suggests that people without essential qualifications have limited earnings potential and run the risk of becoming unemployable. By 2010, it is predicted that three out of every five people without essential qualifications will be unemployed.

In light of these findings, young people are being urged to take their future in their own hands and remain in or return to learning, in order to gain essential qualifications.

It's never too late to learn. After health setbacks forced him to drop out of education, 19-year-old Jayan George resumed his studies at City of Westminster College while



Jayan George provides living proof that it's never too late to learn

at the same time holding down a full-time job as a practice manager at St Mary's Hospital. Now 22, Jayan has just achieved three good A-levels and an AS-level, and has won a place at Peninsula Medical School, Plymouth. A remarkable achievement by a very determined young man.

£2,261 per year is the additional amount recruiters will pay to new staff with the minimum set of qualifications, compared to someone with no qualifications. This averages out at more than £450 per GCSE



LSC annual report

The LSC's annual report and accounts covering the financial year up to 31 March 2007 has now been published.

The report, entitled *Better skills Better jobs Better lives*, includes a review of LSC activities carried out during the year in England, along with the accounts for the same period.

To download the report, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/annualreport/annualreport0607.htm

News in brief

Regeneration in London East

Financial support from LSC London East and Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG) has enabled Greenwich Community College, working in partnership with AEG, to open a state-of-the-art 'Preview' business centre, located at The O2, formerly the Millennium Dome. A tailor-made pre-employment training (PET) plan will ensure that local people looking for opportunities at The O2 are job ready and well-placed to benefit from jobs being created in the borough.

Award-winning student

Having attended Bromley College one day a week for two years as part of the Key Stage 4 Increased Flexibility programme, student Robert McNeil was recognised as one of south London's best learners at a House of Lords event. Equipped with a City and Guilds qualification in Vehicle Servicing and Repair, he has applied for an Apprenticeship at a local garage.



Robert (pictured above on the left), received his award from sculptor Alison Lapper MBE

Selling Apprenticeships

John Denham, Secretary of State for the DIUS, will be speaking at an event to promote Apprenticeships in the retail sector, hosted by Skillsmart Retail and the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network. The event will be held at The Royal Exchange, Threadneedle Street, on Tuesday 20 November.

For more information, contact anne.mccaffrey@centrica.com

Take4

Demand-led provision

Four London colleges tell *the magazine* how they are becoming more responsive to the needs of local employers in light of the government report *World Class Skills: implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*.

Chris Avis
Deputy Principal,
Learning and Enterprise
Southwark College

"We knew the FE landscape was changing. So in the summer of 2006 we embarked on a full restructure of the college, based on four key strategic themes, each led by a director: employer engagement; functional skills; teaching, training and learning; and young learners. Since then we have redefined our 10 schools to align them with the new strategy, and have integrated the responsibility for demand-led learning.

"We have also built an Enterprise Unit. Its commercial sales team ensures that this college reacts to the demands of employers and learners to a high professional standard."

Sheila Bentham
Director of Employer Relations
Tower Hamlets College

"Five years ago we developed a local recruitment programme in partnership with the Financial Services Authority (FSA), based on intensive employability training followed by a mentor-supported work placement. This model has formed the blueprint for other employer-led programmes and last year over 140 people gained employment in the finance sector with major companies, many also achieving industry-based qualifications. Through the National Skills Academy for Financial Services, we're expecting that figure to double in 2008.

"We are also focusing on other priority growth areas in east London, working with employers in health and what we call the Olympics cluster, widening the local recruitment pool up to and beyond 2012."

Maggie Pulle
Deputy Principal for Partnership
and Development
College of North West London

"Our mission is to lead in the provision of knowledge and skills for work, in support of London's economic success. Our Responsiveness Board includes our main partner, Brent in 2 Work, and the chair of a local employer forum – listening to their needs helps to inform how we set our work.

"Since 2002 our business development unit, Fusion, has been working with local employers to help identify and meet their skills needs. In partnership, during the first year of the Train to Gain programme, we delivered 435 outcomes. We have also adapted our ESOL curriculum so that local people can pick up employability skills while improving their English."

Christina Conroy OBE
Principal & Chief Executive
Richmond Adult Community College

"Employer engagement is a pan-London proposition for Richmond Business School, our training arm. To help address the region's skills shortage, we have targeted particular industry sectors like cleaning, customer service, care, business, IT and security.

"Our approach is based on offering employers short, customised courses to start with, and then working with them to get their low-paid staff up the skills escalator to Level 2 and Level 3. We have also been able to help them identify further development needs and opportunities for their workforce. Providing a complete training package in this way has enabled us to build strong partnerships with employers."



Chris Avis



Sheila Bentham



Maggie Pulle



Christina Conroy