

Construction skills boost

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>LSC

Leading learning and skills

the magazine

April 2006

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: Mayor John Mylod with a student at Havering College's new Construction Centre (see article on page 6).

the magazine

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David Hughes

Comment

Welcome to our fourth issue of *the magazine*, our quarterly newsletter for LSC London Region's partners and stakeholders. I hope you will find it an interesting and informative read.

Our centre-spread feature in this issue focuses on *The London Learning and Skills Plan* for 2006-07, which was published towards the end of March and states clearly how we will meet the skills needs of the capital's employers and its workforce.

It's time for change. I know this because I have seen at first hand how London's employers are clamouring for employees with high-level skills, yet half the workforce within our region does not even have basic numeracy skills. Meanwhile, a quarter of Inner London's working age population is not in employment. The plan sets out how we will raise our game in these respects, right across the region.

Looking forward, London has many opportunities in the pipeline including, of course, the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. By working in partnership with the Olympic Delivery Authority, the London Development Agency and the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, we will be developing plans to ensure that Londoners are equipped with the skills they need to benefit from the investment in the Games and reap the benefits of its legacy.

Also featured in this issue of *the magazine* is a round-up on the latest developments in our radical *agenda for change* programme, which is starting to make its mark throughout our region's learning and skills sector.

As with any major transformation exercise, we will undoubtedly encounter difficulties along the way and have to make some tough decisions. However, I remain convinced that by stretching ourselves and our partners to meet the exacting requirements of *agenda for change*, we will succeed in creating a new, vastly improved world of learning and skills. This will enable us to deliver an LSC for London that operates at a more effective and consistent level, both locally and regionally.

David Hughes
Regional Director



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund

£35 million ESF launch

More than 16,000 Londoners will benefit from a new European Social Fund (ESF) programme launched by LSC London Region in January.

Under the Pan London 2 programme, LSC London Region will distribute £35 million of ESF to support strategic employment and skills projects across the capital.

Of the total funds available, around £24 million will be directed at helping unemployed and inactive people to enter employment. One of the key priorities for the programme is to improve the prospects of this target group by creating opportunities for training, giving people an incentive to take up these opportunities, and ensuring that they are encouraged to find work.

The second key theme of the programme is to increase the supply of Level 3 vocational training to employees. This will help

contribute to the higher-level skills and qualifications needed by Londoners in order to compete in our knowledge-based economy.

James Plaskitt MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Work and Pensions, said:

"This programme will have a huge impact on Londoners' lives, giving people chances they may not otherwise have had, which in turn will strengthen communities and give job opportunities to more people than ever. Projects developed as a result of this funding will provide the potential for people to obtain qualifications to find a job.

"This investment by ESF supports the Government's strategy to achieve employment opportunity for all, therefore building a fairer and more inclusive society."



James Plaskitt MP speaking at the ESF event

14,439

people have gained a qualification through LSC co-financed ESF projects in London since 2002, and more than 4,300 have found employment as a result

Big picture

The atmosphere was electric at the February meeting of LSC London Region's Business Alumni.

Alumni member The Maybourne Hotels Group hosted this fun, interactive event at Claridge's Hotel. It required all 50 attendees to work as a team and use all the communication, networking and creative skills they could muster in order to produce an impressive 32-piece canvas depicting the capital, shown below.

Delegates also heard a powerful business improvement story from Geraldine McKenna, CEO of Maybourne.

The Business Alumni programme seeks to encourage excellence in learning and development. To find out more, contact Raymond Kinsella on 020 7904 0765.

£29.5 million

from the first Pan London ESF programme was used to help more than 8,000 Londoners into training



Inclusive approach

In January LSC London Region held a conference to explore the LSC's future provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The LSC's vision for a transformed post-16 learning and skills sector, outlined in the *agenda for change* programme, includes a firm commitment to secure the very best education and training for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

LSC London Region's *Through Inclusion to Excellence* conference disseminated the recommendations contained in the steering group's report on the strategic review of the LSC's planning and funding of provision for this group of learners.

Peter Little OBE, Chair of the steering group, discussed the national policy

framework for the review and encouraged delegates to provide feedback on its recommendations during the consultation period, which ended on 28 February.

LSC Regional Director for London David Hughes then spoke about our recent strategic area review of provision, which involved discussions with providers, partners and stakeholders across the region, and enabled us to identify the challenges and opportunities surrounding our work with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (a summary of London's key priorities is shown below). A lively question and answer session then gave delegates

the opportunity to find out more about the LSC's strategy for future provision.

During the afternoon, delegates listened to speeches from two experienced practitioners. They also took part in breakout sessions, which gave them an opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, showcase innovative and interesting practice from across London, share their experiences of provision and take back lessons.

To download the *Through Inclusion to Excellence* report, visit www.lsc.gov.uk

Key priorities

The priorities for LSC London Region in working with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities include:

- addressing the current lack of specialist provision, including residential provision
- reducing "repetitive learning", whereby learners attend a succession of similar courses at broadly the same level but ultimately fail to progress to higher levels of study or appropriate employment
- working in a multi-agency context to provide holistic, person-centred programmes of support
- recognising that some learners may take longer to achieve qualifications and skills than their peers – this is important for planning and funding purposes
- considering the development of a "centres of excellence" model for learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the region
- enabling learners to fulfil their full potential in terms of education, training and accessing appropriate and sustainable employment
- looking at this area in the context of the LSC's wider equalities work, which includes race and gender.

Transforming the sector

Much good work is already underway across the London Region to help achieve the necessary transformation of the learning and skills sector so that all learners have the opportunity to achieve their goals and to progress to the maximum possible level of independence and activity in their communities and in employment. Shown here is a selection of projects taking place in the capital.

- The Empowerment to Employment project, jointly financed by the LSC and the European Social Fund (ESF), targets people in central London with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Participants have the opportunity to develop life plans, along with the skills and confidence needed to carry them through.

Learner Ingrid Jones said: "I have for the first time in my life got a CV and gained a qualification. I am working towards becoming a trainer. I am disabled because of an accident and am glad to say that this project has helped change my life completely."



Left to right: Circles Network Project Worker Petra Hendrikse, learner Ingrid Jones and LSC ESF Contract Manager Kofi Asante



LSC London Region is committed to securing the very best education and training for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- Late last year and for the first time ever, LSC London West commissioned ImpAct Theatre Group to develop a drama presentation and workshop for young people, aged 14-18, with moderate learning difficulties.



The lively ImpAct performers impressed their youthful audience

The drama presentation aimed to raise awareness of the importance of staying in learning and the options after Year 11. It also gave valuable information on how college differs from school and where young people could get help and guidance.

The workshops were tailored to match specific needs highlighted by the schools. Aimed at Year 11 and Year 12 students, they focused on practical issues such as being independent, planning their day, doing homework and making new friends.

All of the schools in the area with students with moderate learning

difficulties booked the performance. It clearly went down a storm: feedback indicates that their teachers were equally impressed – one described the show as “a really creative way to tackle quite a difficult and specific topic in careers.”

- The Twining project, jointly funded by the LSC and ESF, is improving the employability of adults with mental health problems in the London South area by enabling them to gain Level 2 accredited qualifications and to improve their soft skills. All beneficiaries can also access Twining’s

CoVE update

Since its introduction in 2001, the national Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) programme has gone from strength to strength.

The national CoVE programme aims to increase the number of adults qualified in economically important vocational skills at Level 3; encourage greater collaboration among providers; secure better vocational learning opportunities for all; drive up employer/provider engagement; and establish 400 CoVEs across England by March 2006.

A total of 60 CoVEs – some with full status, others with interim status – have so far been granted to London-based providers keen to address the region’s vocational skills needs. Within this figure are 12 new CoVEs approved in November 2005, including the Hackney Community College CoVE in Small Business and Enterprise Skills, and the BAA Heathrow CoVE, which focuses on two sectors vital to the airport’s operational and commercial success: engineering and retail.

In addition, following the recommendations of the National Employers’ Panel Report last year, a new London Entrepreneurship CoVE will be launched in April by Lambeth, Newham and Kingston colleges to help develop the skills of ethnic minority groups.

accredited Nextstep service, e-learning/ basic skills provision, and specialist vocational services.

A learner who gained employment following the course commented: “Having become frustrated at barriers encountered during various approaches to returning to work, I found Twining’s flexible, holistic approach and support to be just what I needed.”



Ruth Kelly MP with John Spindler, Director of City and Islington Centre for Business, Arts and Technology, and a fine arts student

Learning milestone

City and Islington College's new Centre for Business Arts and Technology was formally opened by Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in January.

The latest milestone in City and Islington College's £60 million accommodation strategy, the Centre for Business Arts and Technology has transformed the face of education and training for adults and young people throughout Islington and the surrounding area.

Work on the £15 million new-build and major refurbishment contract started in

Ruth Kelly MP cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony



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October 2003 and the centre opened its doors to new students in September 2005. The project was funded by the sale of some of the College's older buildings and a grant of £4 million from LSC London Central.

The centre offers courses for young people and adults at all levels, from basic skills to foundation degrees. Vocational courses include business, management, hospitality, travel and tourism, computing, network engineering, media, performing arts and visual arts. Courses in ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) and a programme for students with learning difficulties are also available.

According to Principal Frank McLoughlin, the college opening was a very proud moment. He said: "We had a vision of what we wanted to offer the communities that we serve and we have achieved that vision. City and Islington College now has five superb specialist centres, united in a common purpose of offering excellent education and training."

Another part of City and Islington College's accommodation strategy, the Centre for Applied Sciences, is featured on page 13. For more information about the college, visit www.candi.ac.uk

Construction skills boost

A new £500,000 facility in Hornchurch will equip local students with the practical training and skills they will need to build a successful construction career.

Havering College's new Construction Centre boasts IT-equipped classrooms, model rooms for practical work and the very latest industry tools. It has already attracted nearly 300 students, all keen to make the most of the construction job opportunities being created through the 2012 Olympics and Thames Gateway projects.

The LSC will be funding training from NVQ Level 1 to Level 3 in site carpentry, bricklaying, painting and decorating, plastering and many other construction disciplines.

Simon Foot, the college's Area Head for Construction, said: "The construction industry has been identified as potentially the biggest job creator in the next 10 years for the London Region. There is a very clear demand for highly skilled individuals in this area, so the expansion of the construction field within the college comes as a big boost for our students and local employers."

Targeted delivery

LSC London South is funding the delivery of 60 training courses designed to improve the skills of those working in London's clubs, pubs, restaurants and bars.

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) is a leading provider of informative courses in the field of wines and spirits. It has been delivering numerous one-day courses during the first quarter of 2006, enabling attendees to receive a straightforward introduction to wine and gain an entry-level qualification.

Aimed at employees who lack experience within the hospitality and retail sectors, the course is designed to help boost their professionalism, competence and confidence at work, which in turn should result in increased customer satisfaction levels and business growth.

“Wow” factor event

Over 450 representatives from around 325 businesses got lots of tips and ideas for improving performance at *Better People, Better Business*, the largest HR and training event in west London, which was organised by LSC London West in partnership with West London Business at the end of November.

Rod Kenyon, Chair of LSC London Region and LSC London West, opened the unique event, which combined a specialist exhibition with free training sessions. It also featured leading business speakers Cyrus Todiwala MBE from Café Spice Namasté and networking guru Jamie Moodie, who shared their insights and experiences on how investment in staff development improves business performance.

LSC London West Executive Director Peter Pledger said: “We are really pleased with the outcomes of *Better People, Better Business*. The event provided a forum for employers to access advice and guidance, to see for themselves the range of training and development opportunities on offer, and to find out more about funding available through the LSC. Almost eight in 10 visitors said that they would act on advice received in the seminars and workshops to develop their workforces – which is an excellent result.”

Delegates were certainly spoilt for choice. Included within the event programme were:

- a breakfast masterclass explaining the Employer Skills Offer and the funding available
- an exhibition featuring more than 50 companies specialising in workforce development and related services
- 28 one-hour seminars focusing on staff development areas ranging from team working to maximising the potential of supervisors
- workshops
- training videos
- a lunchtime Investors in People masterclass
- opportunities to speak to LSC representatives and training providers about services and support.



Rod Kenyon joins Frank Wingate at the unique west London event

Feedback indicates that the event was a success, with 92 per cent of delegates stating that they would attend another *Better People, Better Business* event.

Frank Wingate, Chief Executive of West London Business, said: “It was fantastic to see the public and private sectors working together. The fact that it was so convenient and extensive gave it the ‘wow’ factor when people arrived.”

Winning in art

A recent ‘Art and the Environment’ competition organised by LSC London North saw two schools from Barnet and one from Enfield scoop awards.

The competition, which culminated in an exhibition, was open to students aged 16 to 19 who are currently studying towards an art and design qualification at a college or sixth form in Barnet, Enfield, Haringey or Waltham Forest.

The event was organised to celebrate the artistic talent of young people in north London and proved to be a storming success with more than 200 people attending.



Philippa Langton, Executive Director at LSC London North and member of the judging panel, said: “In total 65 entries were received. The standard of all the entries was extremely high and made the judges’ decisions extremely difficult. I was also delighted at the turnout on the night of the exhibition.”

The winners were Frances Liddane, from Queen Elizabeth School for Girls, Kerri

Furlow from Highlands School and Adam Roche of Ashmole School.

Each won a Nano iPod and Frances also picked up an Apple Digital Media Case Powerbook for her sixth form as overall winner.

The trio will also have their work exhibited in their very own summer exhibition thanks to the Enfield Arts Partnership.

Leading learning and skills in London

“The LSC in London is leading the region’s learning and skills agenda. Our Learning and Skills Plan outlines the actions we plan to take to address our priorities in London over the coming year.

Equipping people with the right skills to move into work is no easy task, particularly because our region faces a unique set of challenges. For example, a quarter of the Inner London working age population is out of work; half the current workforce does not have basic numeracy skills; and employers tell us they are experiencing great difficulty in recruiting people with high-level skills. We will address all these issues through carefully planned investment in education and training, and through the enthusiasm and ability of our partners.

Many more challenges and opportunities lie ahead, the most prominent being the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are already working with key agencies and partners to maximise the vital legacy benefits resulting from these events.

I am confident that by using learning to address economic and social needs, the LSC in London will ensure that our region’s economy remains competitive in the longer term.”

David Hughes
Regional Director

Launched at the end of March, *The London Learning and Skills Plan* demonstrates how the LSC in London is delivering effective learning and skills.

The LSC in London has a budget of £1.75 billion for the period running from April 2006 to March 2007. We will focus our resources on education and training that meets the skills needs of the capital’s employers and their workforce.

The London Learning and Skills Plan outlines our seven priorities and sets out how we plan to tackle them by working effectively with our partners. It details key activities and targets for the coming year, a selection of which is shown below.

1 Improve educational opportunities for all young people

- We will fund an additional 1,258 places in learning for 16 to 18-year-olds, which will raise our participation rate to 81 per cent (two percentage points higher than the national average).
- From September 2006 all young Londoners will have access to Level 1 and Level 2 Apprenticeships in at least seven occupational areas.

2 Tackle London’s skills gap

- 5,190 employers will sign up for the new Train to Gain programme, with 17,820 employees studying for a first Level 2 or Skills for Life qualification.
- We will increase our investment in Level 3 skills by over £15 million.

3 Integrate skills with regeneration

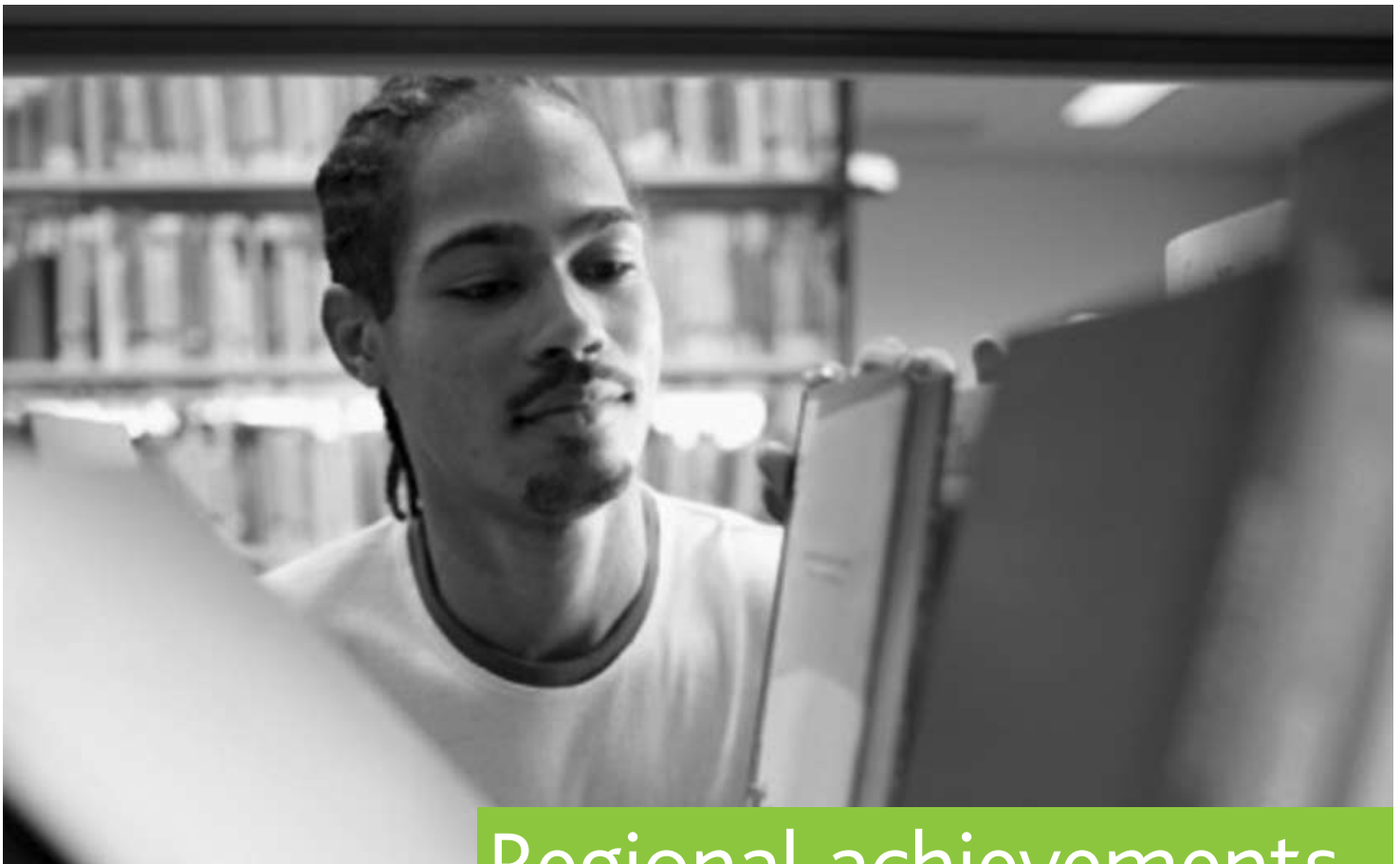
- We will launch a new offender learning and skills service for offenders in custody, and will commission education and training for offenders in the community.
- Delivery on a new £27.5 million package of European Social Funding will commence in September 2006. This will enable us to tackle worklessness in partnership with the London Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus.

4 Equip Londoners with skills to benefit from investment in the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

- As a member of the London 2012 Skills Employment and Skills Taskforce, we will identify and deliver the skills needs for Londoners to reap the long-term benefits of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

5 Upskill the public sector workforce

- In response to high levels of demand, we will expand the London Public Sector Apprenticeship pilot so that 600 Apprenticeships are in place by the end of 2007-08.



Regional achievements

Given our successes over the last year, there is every reason to expect that the targets outlined in *The London Learning and Skills Plan* are both realistic and achievable.

Young people, adults and employers across London benefited from our investment in education and training last year. Some of our key regional achievements are shown below.

enabled us to help 64,000 people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, and 80,000 disadvantaged adults gain skills towards employability.

Providing opportunity for young people

- The number of young Londoners in learning is higher than ever before.
- Success rates for young people at our further education colleges have gone up from 53.5 per cent in 2000/01 to 65.8 per cent in 2003/04.
- The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in London has fallen by 1 per cent over the last year to 7.7 per cent.

Improving the skills of the workforce

- More than 12,700 employees from 1,325 firms benefited from London East's Employer Training Pilot, which was the forerunner to the Train to Gain programme.
- £16 million was invested in Level 3 qualifications at CoVEs across the region.
- London's CoVEs delivered 121,000 Level 3 qualifications and 8,000 Level 4 qualifications last year.

Skills for adults

- More than 200,000 learners achieved transferable Skills for Life qualifications by the end of 2004/05.
- Last year more than 510,000 adults took part in LSC-funded learning.
- Across the region, we have matched and allocated £230 million from the European Social Fund, which has

Buying quality provision

- We have invested £84 million in quality learning facilities over the last four years.
- We have 60 CoVEs in place across the region.
- Eight of London's further education colleges have been awarded Beacon status by the Secretary of State for Education.

6 Transform the learning and skills sector through agenda for change

- We will improve the quality of providers through the implementation of the regional quality strategy. It details the stretching targets we have agreed, along with the support we will provide to colleges to help achieve them.
- More than £50 million will be invested in capital projects to help provide world-class teaching and learning facilities.

7 Improve our effectiveness at a regional and local level

- We will implement our Race Equality Scheme Action Plan, including analysing underperforming groups, for whom we will agree challenging equality and diversity impact measures.
- We will create new partnership teams to deliver first-class leadership and management, supported by new business processes.

You can download a full copy of the plan on www.lsclondon.gov.uk, or telephone 0845 0194144 to request a hard copy.

In my view: regeneration

As the capital's first ever Regional Director Regeneration, Mary Conneely is responsible for ensuring that Londoners and their employers derive long-term benefit from the LSC's investment in training and skills.

Q: Regeneration – what does it mean for you?

For most people, the word 'regeneration' is associated with the major construction projects and extensive London area improvement programmes. But for the LSC, it has a much deeper meaning: it's about the extent to which our training and skills investment will enable people to change their lives so that they become more fulfilled and more productive in the long term. Ultimately, it's this that will enable London to compete more effectively within the global economy.

Q: I take it things have never been so busy?

You're right. London is a real hive of activity at the moment, what with Heathrow's T5, the new Wembley Stadium, the Powerhouse at Battersea and all the rebuilding work taking place at Feltham and Hounslow, to name but a few major of the projects that are currently underway. And then, of course, there are the high-profile 2012 Olympics to factor in to the equation – although it's worth remembering that the projects connected to the Games represent only 3.5 per cent of London's total investment in construction that's projected to 2020.



Q: What's the main challenge you face?

We need to ensure that everybody involved in regeneration works together in co-ordinated and sustained partnerships, with each partner delivering their own successful outputs as planned, so that sustained change is felt by local people and is clearly visible.

Q: Are there any examples of good practice emerging?

Yes – lots! One that springs to mind is Heathrow's Centre of Vocational Excellence, which features a unique combination of the retail, hospitality and logistics sectors, and is enabling a steady stream of trained airport

employees to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills directly in the workplace.

Q: Any exciting new strategies in the pipeline?

Yes. We are developing a regional childcare strategy, to help combat the effect that lack of affordable and available childcare has on London's poorest families and their ability to access work opportunities. As part of that strategy, we want to drive up standards of childcare and nursery provision across London by training the workforce. To me, that's an exciting prospect.

Higher, stronger, faster!

A forum event in early February brought together the key players involved in developing skills for employment for the capital in preparation for 2012.

London's successful bid for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games was based on the creation of a sustainable social and economic legacy that will last long after the athletes have packed their bags and returned home.

Held in Windsor Castle, the *Skills in London: Preparing for 2012* event provided a welcome opportunity to view the Games in the round. Representatives from a broad range of organisations took part in this important meeting of minds, including the LSC and its delivery partners, the London Development Agency (LDA), the DfES, the Department for Work and Pensions, the TUC and London First.

The event focused on the inter-connected areas of education, skills and employment, and on the need to devise a collective approach to addressing them. Key issues covered during the meeting included:

- the importance of early planning and co-ordination, if we are to get the social and economic legacy right
- how well local labour supplies will match forecast demand in industries ranging from construction through to garment manufacture, printing and event management
- procurement and the importance of spending public money wisely.

Also taking part were members of the newly created London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce, which includes representatives from the LSC, the LDA and the Greater London Authority. It will



Preparing for 2012: (left to right) Jim Lewis, Skills Director Thames Gateway; David Boyer, London 2012 Project Manager; and Yvonne Folkes, Strategic Partnership Manager/Skills Manager Newham 2012

be the primary vehicle for planning a collaborative approach that maximises the employment benefits of hosting the Games for Londoners, so the forum proved a useful platform from which to draw up a business plan timetable.

By the end of the event, all those attending had a far clearer idea of the magnitude of the work ahead. In addition, they had gained a better understanding of the real and potential contributions being made by the various organisations involved in preparing for the 2012 Games.

"The onus is on organisations like the LSC to deliver not just the Games themselves but an effective long-term regeneration strategy too," explained Jim Lewis, the LSC's Skills Director for the Thames Gateway project. "We're determined to create not only the outstanding athletics venues and the happy crowds that have become standard requirements for the Olympics, but also to change the aspirations of our young people and communities, seeing that they enjoy long-term jobs in competitive businesses."

Olympic research

LSC London Region and the LDA have jointly commissioned research into the lessons that can be learned from previous Olympic and Paralympic Games, and from other large-scale regeneration projects.

The research project stems from the joint LSC/LDA skills dialogue meetings held last year with local authorities, education providers and sector skills councils. The meetings identified numerous 'knowledge gaps', which the research findings will fill, including:

- timescales for ensuring that London has people with the right level and type of skills to help deliver the Games successfully
- how other cities have managed the skills training process
- how the policies of other host cities and regeneration projects have maximised the benefits to local citizens.

The research findings will be available in April 2006. They will be shared widely and will inform the work of the London 2012 Employment and Skills Taskforce in developing a model of best practice for regeneration.

£3.6 billion

is the estimated public cost of hosting the Games in London

Times of change

With record numbers of young people in learning, more apprentices than ever before and improving success rates, there's a definite buzz in the air within the learning and skills sector at present.

It's an exciting time for learning and skills. LSC Chief Executive Mark Haysom describes *agenda for change* as "the sector's own way of making itself part of the solution". The radical reform programme will transform the post-16 education and training sector to meet a huge challenge: to develop the workforce skills and learning for individuals required in order to meet the aims of greater social mobility and increased economic competitiveness.

Achieving the *agenda for change* vision will not happen overnight, but we have already made substantial progress in the first six areas, right across the country.

Skills for employers – in partnership with employer groups and training providers we have developed a draft set of quality standards, which is now in the testing phase. The idea is that all colleges and providers who demonstrate excellence in the delivery of training solutions to business will be awarded a new national quality mark.



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Champion appointment

With 25 years' experience in the learning and skills sector and a proven leadership track record, Ray Dowd was the obvious choice for the LSC's *agenda for change* champion.

"I believe that the post-16 education sector is on the cusp of a tremendously exciting period," said Ray. "My role as the *agenda for change* champion will enable us as a sector to influence current thinking on the further education reform agenda."

Ray joins the LSC team from Wirral Metropolitan College, which as Principal

Ray Dowd



and Chief Executive he succeeded in transforming from a debt-laden, failing institution to a thriving organisation boasting strong financial management, increasing student numbers and a significantly improved inspection profile.

Quality – we produced the *Planning for Success* framework for quality in January 2006 after consultation with the sector. We are also running eight peer referencing pilot projects that bring together groups of colleges and providers keen to work together on self-assessment and self-improvement activities.

Funding – having talked to the sector, we are now moving towards a funding system where money is allocated on the basis of annual development plans agreed between

colleges, providers and their LSC in line with local priorities. Thirty colleges began a new funding formula trial in January 2006.

Data – we are delivering the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) programme, which involves 42 sector organisations. Projects include the development of a common set of data definitions to be used by everyone and the introduction of a unique learner number for every individual in education and training.

Business excellence – we have developed a basic benchmarking framework, which we will be testing during the second quarter of 2006. We will also be accelerating our capital expenditure plans, having already supported more than £2bn of national investment plans across the sector.

Reputation – following the findings of independent research to establish the current reputation of the sector, our action plan for 2006 includes promoting outstanding examples of best practice and encouraging college principals to be active locally in marketing their services, brand and vision.

For more information, the national *agenda for change* prospectus can be downloaded from the LSC's website at www.lsc.gov.uk

National Science Week

A huge variety of science, engineering and technology events took place in London during National Science Week, giving people of all ages the opportunity to participate in scientific activities, experiments and discussions.

London was a hive of activity during National Science Week (10-19 March), with around 150 events happening across the region, all designed to raise people's awareness, appreciation and understanding of science, engineering and technology.

Activities ranged from a seminar about the balanced business scorecard measurement system for large firms to an evening with the stars at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, and even a boat trip for Islington schoolchildren to learn how the Islington tunnel was built and how canal boats float.

National Science Week highlights the enormous impact that science, engineering and technology have on our lives. Shown on this page are just some of the ways in which the LSC offers support in these areas, right across the London Region.

National Science Week has been running each year since 1994. It is co-ordinated by the British Association for the Advancement of Science and supported by the Department of Trade and Industry. To find out more, visit www.the-ba.net



State-of-the-art facilities

LSC London Region provided 25 per cent of the funding required for the ambitious £60 million expansion project at City and Islington College, where the Centre for Applied Sciences combines a well-established applied optics programme with increasingly popular courses in forensics, sports sciences and bio-medical sciences.

provides students with hands-on experience of the very latest detection methods.

In partnership with the Metropolitan Police and Queen Mary University of London, last autumn the college launched a Foundation Degree in Crime Scene Investigation.

When the BTEC National Diploma in Forensic Science was introduced in Autumn 2004, more than 600 applications were received for the 40 available places on the course. This level of demand is not surprising, given the quality of the state-of-the-art facilities available, including electrostatic footwear detectors, fibre and hair microscopes, a Superglue fuming cabinet and even a scene-of-crime flat that

New centre

Double Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes delivered an inspirational speech at the opening of a brand new Sports and Science Centre at John Ruskin College, Croydon. The building project was funded through a partnership between the LSC, Croydon Council and John Ruskin College.

Health Science 14-19 Sector Pilot

A two-year pilot exercise will soon be helping London East's 14 to 19-year-olds learn the skills needed for them to embark on a career in the health and sciences sector. It aims to increase post-16 participation and reduce the number of young people within the not in education, employment or training (NEET) category.

The pilot, taking place in Tower Hamlets, will include a range of courses, such as a BTEC National Diploma in health science and a

Foundation Degree in health. A calendar of events will promote careers in the health and sciences sector and there will also be a programme designed specifically for aspiring medical students. The health-sciences pathway has been developed in consultation with the NHS, North London Strategic Health Authority, Barts and Kings College London. For more information about this work and other similar projects, visit <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/londoneast/Corporate/14-19sectorpilots.htm>



Dame Kelly Holmes opens the new centre

Five minutes with... Kathryn Osborn

LSC London Region's training providers are helping us to transform the capital's learning and skills sector by playing a key role in driving up quality across the region. We spoke to Hawk Training's Organisation Development and Training Manager Kathryn Osborn to find out about the work of her organisation in quality management.

Q: Where does Hawk Training's expertise lie?

We specialise in work-based training and vocational qualifications, which we have been delivering for more than 18 years. Our latest inspection result was really strong, with no areas of weakness identified at all, reflecting our belief in quality provision.

Q: How many young people do you work with each year?

We currently receive funding from the LSC to deliver Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships to young people in south London aged between 16 and 24. Last year we successfully delivered 134 Apprenticeships across eight subject areas, and we also have a further 314 apprentices who are currently going through the programme.

Q: After 18 successful years in the training business, are you still finding ways to improve what you do?

Very much so. For example, last year we introduced a new software package called *Frame up*. It allows us to analyse our data, effectively plan learning objectives and generate meaningful reports. The reporting function of *Frame up* enables us to engage more effectively with employers in reviewing learner/employee progress.

Q: You have a reputation for innovative training and development solutions – are there any in the pipeline?

Yes. We were awarded single entity Retail Centre of Vocational Excellence status at the start of this year, so have been working with retailers in London South to improve skills levels among their people. We are also liaising closely with Skillsmart Retail to help raise the profile of retail as a fulfilling career and to ensure that the training we provide meets identified industry needs.

In April we will be opening the Hawk Business Academy, which aims to bridge the gap between education and employment for 16 to 18-year-olds. The Academy will provide a four- to six-month learning and development programme, where learners will develop knowledge and skills in Business and Administration. Existing links with local employers will provide employment placements where the young person will then complete their Apprenticeship in Business and Administration.



In December 2005 the LSC published *Planning for Success* – a framework for planning and quality, which sets out changes to the LSC's development planning process, making it simpler and more responsive. To access the document visit <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/quality/goodpractice/planning-for-success-framework-for-planning-and-quality.pdf>

STAR Awards

If you know of a STAR performer, nominate them now!

The 2006 STAR Awards celebrate the work of truly outstanding individuals and support teams within the learning and skills sector who, in their various roles, have a transformational effect on learners and colleagues alike.

Anyone can nominate a STAR for one of the 17 award categories. To be eligible, nominees must work in the learning and skills sector, in an organisation or institution that receives LSC funding.

Television celebrity Stephen Fry commented: "The many unsung heroes working within the learning and skills sector are highly deserving of public recognition, which is why I am delighted to support the STAR Awards. As a young man some time in the mid 17th Century I studied for A-levels at City College Norwich and therefore have a personal experience of those working within the Sector helping



Supporting the STAR Awards:
Stephen Fry

students to achieve and exceed their learning goals, setting them on a path to future achievement. Without their passion, flair, charm, patience and belief I would never have gone on to university and the squalid career that followed!"

The closing date is 21 April 2006. You can nominate online at www.dfes.gov.uk/starawards or you can request a nomination form from the Awards Helpline on 0800 652 0528.

Knowledge base

LSC London Region is to create a knowledge base that will become the first port of call for LSC staff seeking information about learning and skills issues in the capital.

The new regional knowledge base will be called the 'Front Door'. Quality-assured data and information will be readily available, enabling LSC staff to make accurate, evidence-based decisions. There will also be links to LSC partner agencies and existing sources of information.

The knowledge base will be built around standards recommended by the e-Government Unit and will use the existing LSC IT infrastructure, meaning that there will be no significant costs or risks involved.

In a related move, LSC London Region has also linked up with the Greater London Authority, so that LSC documents will be available to the public on its citizen access web portal at www.yourlondon.gov.uk

For more information about Front Door, contact Andy Holt, Regional Policy Manager, on 020 7904 0757 (andy.holt@lsc.gov.uk)

Diary dates

The Mind Gym
– 25 April

Practical skills will be delivered in bite-sized chunks through three workshops at this Business Alumni event: Influence and Persuade, Networking and Great Feedback. By invitation only.

Enterprise Challenge Final
– May

Teams of budding young Year 10 entrepreneurs from schools across London are busy competing in local heats of the Enterprise Challenge competition. The local heat winners will go on to compete in the Regional final, to be held at Canary Wharf in May. For more information, email imtiaj.patel@lsc.gov.uk

Awards ceremony
– 15 June

The winners of the 2006 National Apprenticeship Awards will be announced at the Park Lane Hilton on 15 June.

Latest documents

Listed below is a selection of recent LSC documents, along with details of how to download them.

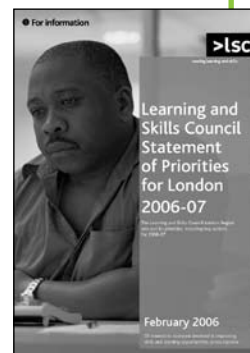
14-19 Forum News

This new monthly e-newsletter will enable all professionals involved in 14-19 learning within the region to learn about the activities of the 14-19 London Forum and its major sub-groups.

To subscribe to this free e-newsletter, visit www.14-19news.org

LSC Statement of Priorities for London 2006-07

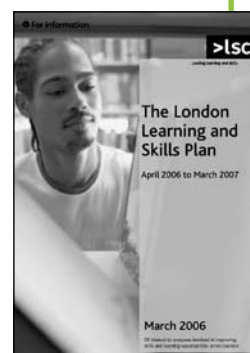
Published in February, this important strategic document sets out our regional priorities and key actions for the coming year.



To download the document, visit www.londoncentrallsc.gov.uk

Local plans

The *London Learning and Skills Plan* (see centre pages) is underpinned by five local plans setting out clearly how the local offices will play their part in raising the level of skills, knowledge and understanding of all adults and young people in their area, while at the same time widening participation, raising achievement and improving the quality of learning provision.



The local plans are being finalised and will be available to download from the web shortly.

Take4

Social care workers

Following the recent news in the media regarding the lack of training for social care workers in care and residential homes for the elderly in England and Wales, *the magazine* highlights how LSC London Region's NVQ programme is helping to ensure that they acquire the necessary skills.

Adunni Akindude
Strategic Skills Broker
LSC London East

"The NVQ courses, which were set up in partnership with the NHS, are proving to be very effective, as confirmed by the inspection report we received from network partner the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

"For more than three years LSC London East has made the health and social care sector a priority and has invested more funding to meet the skills gaps, particularly on the social care side. Working in partnership with the NHS North East London Strategic Health Authority has given us an edge in translating the NHS Policy into operation. The programme and partnership have definitely met our expectations."

Marlon Patten
Day Centre Officer and learner
Russia Lane Day Centre for
Older People

"I work with people with dementia and Alzheimer's, which at times can be very demanding. I've recently completed an NVQ Level 2 in Social Care, which has been very rewarding and is vastly different from the previous NVQ in Social Care I did in 1992.

"I prefer the improved modern approach as it's more practical and allows further time with assessors. I was shocked when I heard the news in the media regarding the lack of training for care workers because at Russia Lane, we are all confident and professional employees. I believe all care workers should have the opportunity to take part in an NVQ programme because it ensures carers across the board work at a consistent recognised level."

Marianne Bond
Centre Manager for Mariner &
Arragon Day Centres
London Borough of Newham

"As a mentor I ensure each member of staff has an appraisal twice a year. In that appraisal there is a training analysis, which requires employees to take responsibility and ownership for their training. It motivates them and is instrumental in giving individuals the tools to enhance their work practice and knowledge as well as to develop their careers.

"I believe the programme has been a success. I have one member of staff who started her career in day care as a welfare assistant. She is now a day care officer. The NVQ programme has given her confidence and has also highlighted areas where she needs support. In the time I have worked with the NVQ programme in Newham I have seen a tremendous improvement in standards of work practice."

Jane Winter
Assistant Director
North East London Strategic
Health Authority

"The Partnerships bring together local training providers, the statutory sector in health and social care, employers, LSC and other stakeholders to discuss how the training needs can be identified and met.

"Care homes and domiciliary care agencies have been a priority for training. With the new Knowledge and Skills Sets from Skills for Care, which include medication, we are considering making this competence a necessary component of the NVQ. We are also making a 'bite size' programme on medication available in the near future."



Adunni Akindude



Marlon Patten



Marianne Bond



Jane Winter