



>LSC

Leading learning and skills

the magazine

October 2006

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

Stars shine in
Havering

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Cover photo: Jazz saxophonist Courtney Pine hits the right note at Havering College's dedicated new Centre for Creative Arts

the magazine

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David Hughes

Comment

Welcome to our sixth issue of *the magazine*, which we produce on a quarterly basis to keep partners and stakeholders up to date with LSC-funded activities and changes in strategy at local, regional and national levels.

An exciting new beginning beckons: the 2006/07 academic year has just started; our internal reorganisation process is almost complete; and the decision about the Mayor's powers brings fresh influence to bear on adult skills and employer engagement, from which the LSC stands to benefit. We're all looking forward with great optimism to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In this issue of *the magazine*, you will find a range of local news stories and a feature demonstrating the work we are doing to engage with disadvantaged, 'hard-to-reach' learners across the capital.

Our centre-spread feature again focuses on *Theme 7* and explains the difference our new LSC culture will make for learners, employers and providers. Also included are interviews with recently appointed staff and a handy pull-out map detailing the LSC person responsible for each borough.

Workforce development is the subject of this quarter's *In my view* feature. It's also the driver behind the regeneration activities outlined in the *Making the most of our region's Olympic opportunities* article, which highlights the need to plan now to ensure that, after the sporting events of 2012 have been and gone, we see a permanent reduction in the level of worklessness across our region.

Our regular *Five minutes with...* slot is filled by Andrew Thomson, who heads up the Quality Improvement Agency, an organisation set up to spark fresh enthusiasm for innovation and excellence in the learning and skills sector. We look forward to working closely with Andrew and his team in the months to come.

It's vital that we keep our finger on the learning and skills pulse. Research activities highlighted in this issue include recent reports on leadership in the public sector, a learner satisfaction survey and the importance of language capabilities to global competitiveness.

I hope you enjoy reading *the magazine* and welcome any suggestions you may have for future article ideas.

David Hughes
Regional Director



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund

Mayor heads new Skills Board for London

A new London Skills and Employment Board will champion the importance of skills for our region's future.

Following the Government's review of the powers of the Greater London Assembly, Education and Skills Secretary Alan Johnson announced in July that the Mayor of London will lead a new London Skills and Employment Board.

The Board will operate within the framework of national skills targets, setting the strategy for adult training in the region so that Londoners are equipped with the skills that will best meet the needs of employers, to help drive London's continuing economic growth.

A vital part of the new strategy will be an emphasis on tackling worklessness by integrating skills with business support and by ensuring that people without jobs in London are helped, through training, to gain access to sustainable, productive employment.

Chaired by the Mayor, the Board will comprise 15 members including David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London, and senior business leaders from the region.

Mayor of London Ken Livingstone said: "I welcome the Government's commitment

to establishing the London Skills and Employment Board, which provides us with a great opportunity to work with business, employers and trainers to ensure all Londoners can contribute to and benefit from London's economic prosperity."

Although the Board will have responsibility for the strategic direction of adult skills in London, the LSC will retain responsibility for operational and executive issues, along with management of skills delivery arrangements.

David Hughes commented: "This announcement is good news for London. The Mayor has made it very clear that he wants to work with the LSC to raise the profile of skills in London and to ensure



Mayor of London Ken Livingstone will work with the LSC to raise the profile of skills across the region

that the Olympics create a legacy for London of more people in better skilled jobs.

"I am confident that his high profile will help us raise awareness about the importance of adult skills with the general public, while at the same time influencing and engaging with employers to make this vision a reality."

Learning Agreements target young people in the workplace

The Government is piloting the Learning Agreement, which is aimed at young people aged 16 to 17 who are currently employed in jobs without training. Priority is being given to those who have not attained a Level 2 qualification.

Eight pilots, led by Connexions and delivered in partnership with the LSC, started in April 2006 and will run until March 2008. They arose from the cross-departmental Review of

Financial Support for 16 to 19-year-olds, to test the impact of financial incentives on young people's attitudes to and engagement in learning.

The London East Connexions Partnership is leading the pilot in our region. Partnership members are working closely with the LSC and local providers to procure a variety of appropriate provision for the 2,000 young people in London East who are eligible to take part.

The Learning Agreement is developed by the young person and their learning agreement broker, and is then endorsed by the employer. The young person receives a financial bonus in return for progress against agreed milestones, and the employer may receive compensation for employee training time, as well as a completion bonus.

For more information, contact Elaine Hands-Heathfield on 0208 929 3989 (elaine.hands-heathfield@lsc.gov.uk).

Building for the future

The On Site Training Centre at Battersea Power Station was a hive of activity during the summer months, with candidates from Jobcentre Plus and students from Lambeth College experiencing construction training on a real building site.

Funded by LSC London Central, the project was a partnership between the LSC, Lambeth College (a Centre of Vocational Excellence for Construction), Jobcentre Plus, Wandsworth Borough Council and Bovis Lend Lease, the developer.

As part of the programme with Jobcentre Plus, 400 learners undertook specialist health and safety training before taking their CSCS card (the industry standard in health and safety training and testing), including 66 Polish learners who received additional ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) support. Many have since gone on to gain employment within the sector.

Another part of the programme offered learners, as well as current and future employees on the site, the opportunity to gain Heritage Skills knowledge. Many Lambeth College students were also able to experience skills training in a real work situation.



Philippa Langton (centre) joins students at Battersea laying the foundations of a new career

Philippa Langton, LSC Regional Skills Director for London, attended the official launch of the project at the start of July. She said: "The success of the project is a good example of partnership between the skills sector and industry."

The LSC is working with South Thames College to develop the On Site Training Centre further.

For further information contact Joyce Roberts (joyce.roberts@lsc.gov.uk).

Young Apprentices perform at the Hilton

Students from three Barnet schools gave an impressive musical performance at the third annual Apprenticeship Awards Ceremony, held at the Park Lane Hilton.

The ceremony was organised by the LSC to recognise employers that are successfully using Apprenticeships to help improve business performance, and to celebrate the hard work put in by the apprentices themselves.

The five Barnet students performed a selection of solo pieces during the reception. All of them are undertaking a Young Apprenticeship course in Performing Arts, which will lead on to a BTEC First Diploma qualification. Barnet College has formed a partnership with four local schools to offer the Young Apprenticeship course.

After congratulating the student musicians for what she described as a "fantastic performance", Mary Vine Morris, LSC Area Director London North, said: "The Young Apprenticeship programme acts as a forerunner to the full Apprenticeship. Research shows that 16 per cent of employers are still reporting skills gaps in their workforce, so it's imperative that businesses continue to invest in staff training and skills development along such routes as Apprenticeships."



Barnet Young Apprentices gave a top-notch performance in keeping with the venue



Jazz saxophonist Courtney Pine conducts an enthusiastic youth orchestra

Stars shine in Havering

The atmosphere was electric at the official opening ceremony of Havering College's dedicated new Centre for Creative Arts.

Part-funded by the LSC, the multi-million pound arts centre opened its doors in spectacular style at the start of the summer, with students showcasing a range of creative talents alongside world-class stars including jazz saxophonist Courtney Pine and film composer Michael Nyman.

No stone was left unturned in the quest to make this a truly memorable event. There were stunning musical performances from Eska Mtungwazi and students who performed a song specially composed



A proud artist displays her work

for the ceremony, and from hundreds of local schoolchildren who took part in an ambitious percussion project led by the multi-instrumentalist Orphy Richardson. A cutting-edge fashion show, staged by current students, also added a touch of glamour, grace and originality to the occasion.

The centre boasts a fully equipped television and sound studio, exhibition space, photographic darkrooms and Apple Mac suites. It will offer a range of courses, from Year 10 to degree level, in performing arts, media, fashion, graphic design, music and many other creative disciplines.

Visibly impressed, James Brokenshire, MP for Hornchurch, said: "Practical skills-based learning is essential if we are to prepare the next generation for the challenges of the workplace in the years ahead. I believe this new centre will make an important contribution to meeting this challenge for young people in our local community."



Fashion students supply catwalk glamour

£1,065,000

was contributed by the LSC to help build the new Centre for Creative Arts at Havering College

Urban Cre8ors on TV

An innovative media training programme has inspired 50 disengaged young people from London West to return to learning.

The Urban Cre8ors programme is run by Connections Communications Centre (CCC) and is financed by the European Social Fund through London West LSC. It targets 13 to 17-year-olds who have been expelled or are in danger of dropping out of school and provides accredited training in video, radio and music production so that participants can gain the skills and access the help needed to enter employment in the media and broadcast industry.

As part of the programme, a core group of 14 students worked with a BBC mentor at the CCC summer school to produce a 12-minute comedy sketch show entitled 'Park Life', which was broadcast on BBC2's Learning Zone. Fabio Carrington was one of the students involved in the project and commented: "I enjoyed composing the music on the project and learnt a lot about composition software, camera work and acting skills." He is now on work experience with MTV.



The Urban Cre8ors programme is broadening the horizons of previously disengaged young people

Clare Arnold, Interim Area Director at London West LSC, said: "The work CCC is doing is crucial in reaching young people who have opted out of conventional education for a variety of reasons and encouraging them back into mainstream social and economic life. We need to continue to look for innovative and

imaginative ways to reach these young people and find ways to show them that, through education and development of their existing skills, they can broaden their horizons and thus have real life choices."

To view some of the students' films, visit www.urbancre8ors.tv

Enabling technologies for disabled learners

Colleges and training providers across the London South area have been learning how to make ICT more accessible to students with disabilities and additional learning needs.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) aims to ensure that disabled students are not substantially disadvantaged compared with their non-disabled peers. The legislation requires organisations delivering training to promote disability equality, by anticipating the needs of disabled learners and making reasonable adjustments.

Keen to learn how best to support students with disabilities and additional

learning needs, IT technicians, tutors, special needs support teams and library staff throughout south London took part in informative training sessions delivered by AbilityNet. Several colleges also received ICT Accessibility starter kits, which include hardware, software and an opportunity to discuss specific issues at a later date.

The sessions, which were funded by the LSC, examined ICT accessibility issues and DDA requirements. The training was very well received by participants, some of whom now plan to explore how to use new technology to support learners with varying needs, such as dyslexia and

visual impairment, and how to implement enabling technology strategies that involve all departments.

Val Hancock, Equality and Diversity Manager at LSC London South, said: "This project by AbilityNet was a great opportunity for colleges and training providers to find out more about the DDA, as well as to network with colleagues, discuss concerns and look at possible solutions."

For more information, contact Val Hancock on 020 8929 4790 (valerie.hancock@lsc.gov.uk).

Making the most of our region's Olympic opportunities

London is a great world city and the Games of 2012 offer a unique opportunity to showcase our region's strengths to the rest of the world. A new report outlines a strategy to maximise the skills and employment impact of the Games for Londoners.

London Employment and Skills Taskforce (LEST) for 2012, An Action Plan is the name of a report produced by the LSC and the London Development Agency. This ground-breaking document highlights the capital's low levels of employment, which stand at 70 per cent, compared with a national average of 75 per cent, and its unacceptably high levels of child poverty, which is associated with worklessness. Much of this disadvantage is concentrated in the five host boroughs for the Games.

In keeping with the Mayor's overall vision for London and the east London focus underpinning the London Plan, the Sustainable Communities Plan and other planning documents, LEST's vision is that the Games will help to effect a permanent reduction in the level of worklessness in London, and especially in the Lower Lea Valley.

The LEST report draws on a range of international experience of active labour market policies in general, and the lessons learned from previous Olympic events in particular. Its plan has three main pillars:

- **employer leadership** – this will include sustainable procurement, best practice in the area of employment skills, enabling the business community to play a central role in providing wider opportunities and

driving up performance on the supplier side, and using public spending power to help develop local labour markets and supply chains

- **linking people more effectively to training and work** – this will involve placing people in work experience assignments, engaging employers in training and improving the relevance of training provision
- **a comprehensive communication and engagement strategy** – this is about raising the profile of the value of skills acquisition, work experience and career progression, as well as engaging effectively with all workless individuals and removing barriers to their involvement.

LEST member and LSC Regional Director Regeneration for London Mary Conneely commented: "This report calls for renewed energy, combined effort and new ways of working in the public and private sectors, which should enable us to reduce the number of people out of work in London by 75,000 before the 2012 Olympics. This would go a long way towards bringing our region's employment rate in line with the rest of the country."



Mary Conneely is aiming to reduce worklessness in London

LEST

The 2012 action plan was produced by LEST, which has been meeting regularly since January 2006 and is chaired by Jeremy Long, who is the CEO of European Business, MTR Corporation and a former chairman of CBI London Regional Council.

LEST consists of public and private organisations with a stake in tackling London's worklessness problem and improving the productivity of its workforce. The LEST action plan will ultimately be owned by the Mayor of London, and will be submitted to the new London and Employment Skills Board for sign-off.



Artists' impressions of the transformation of the Lower Lea Valley



Exerting influence

With our regional restructuring process now almost complete, great opportunities lie ahead for the LSC to work far more closely and effectively with all our stakeholders at both the local and regional levels.

The LSC's *agenda for change* is a major transformation programme that is making us a smaller, more dynamic and more customer-facing organisation.

No stone has been left unturned in the transformation process. This includes the LSC itself, which has undergone a dramatic structural change in recent months in line with the requirements of *Theme 7*.

So what are the changes, and what difference will they make to learners and employers in London? We interviewed some of the new postholders (see opposite) and Regional Director David Hughes to find out.

“Here in London we have almost completed our internal restructuring process, which has given us a fantastic opportunity to regionalise the way we provide operational services like finance and marketing, while at the same time putting more senior people into influential positions at a local level.

Although *Theme 7* has resulted in an overall reduction in the number of people on the LSC team, those who remain are all experienced, highly skilled, successful and hardworking individuals committed to the improvement of learning and skills across our region.

All the internal interviews have now been completed, and we are about to recruit externally into around 100 vacant posts, regionwide. This new influx of staff will blend with the existing LSC postholders to help develop a radically different culture: I want us to become far more confident in working with our partners to achieve mutual goals.

Our role is to administer the £1.75 billion we have at our disposal to drive up the

quality of learning and skills throughout London. We have watertight systems and processes in place to achieve this at regional level, but our job locally isn't about money, it's about influencing partnerships to work together in an effective way. To achieve this, we don't need people who can administer money; what we need are senior people who have the confidence, knowledge, experience and influencing skills to build and support relationships with a range of organisations, partners and employers at a local level. I'm confident that the new team we have in place fits the bill.

The work we're doing now includes developing the regional support mechanisms to enable the frontline teams to fulfil their roles. So experts in finance, planning, communications, marketing and regeneration will all be available to pass on the benefit of their knowledge, including a strategic overview, to those who are influencing and partnership building at a local level.

I think the LSC will soon acquire a far more visible presence in local partnerships and relationships with local employers, focusing in particular on 14-19 planning and performance, and on economic regeneration. Crucially, we need to arrive at a point where LSC people out in the boroughs feel empowered to make decisions affecting their local area without feeling the need to request permission at regional level.

We hope to have London's entire LSC team in place by January 2007. The big advantage of the transformation programme is that we are now able to speak with one voice, coherently and consistently, right across the region. But it's important to remember that communication is a two-way street: our next task will be to listen to what our stakeholders tell us about how we are working with them, and then to continue adapting and developing to ensure we meet their evolving needs. ”

David Hughes
Regional Director

David Hughes hopes to have London's entire LSC team in place by January 2007



across the region

"I was previously Director of Strategy and Quality at LSC London East, so I have a good understanding of local needs and issues. A vital part of my role will be to ensure that local people benefit from the opportunities presented by employment growth areas, especially around Canary Wharf and the City.



An initial priority is my role on Tower Hamlets' Education Improvement Partnership, which will be the major vehicle for achieving better joint planning and collaboration for the 14-19 age group, including the delivery of specialised diplomas. I firmly believe that the LSC's new way of working, which brings together local activities, provision and partners, will make a real difference to learners and employers."

Nicole Francis
Partnership Director, Tower Hamlets, the City, Hackney and Redbridge

"My new role is an extension of my previous position as Thames Gateway Skills Director. It involves co-ordinating the activities of the LSC across three area offices (London East, Kent and Medway, and Essex) and representing the LSC in meetings with other government departments, such as the Department for Communities and Local Government.



Trying to manage what is a 20-year regeneration programme for London within the LSC's annual cycle of funding is a huge task. But for me, our greatest challenges are the scale and complexity of the change taking place in the economy and in society, not least because of the opportunities presented by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games."

Jim Lewis
Economic Development Director – Thames Gateway

"The first thing I plan to do is to find out what the people of Croydon need, and what the geographic and demographic issues are. I'll also be meeting providers and establishing myself on the partnership scene, linking in with the 14-19 Strategy Group, the Lifelong Learning Partnership and, of particular significance in Croydon following a £77 million win for enterprise-related activities over the next 10 years, the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative.



In the LSC, we used to work on specific programmes across a wide geographical area. Our new approach is about working with all programmes in local areas, planning and working with partners to make a difference. So Croydon will become my new obsession!"

Garth Taylor
Partnership Director, Croydon

"The LSC has £1.75 billion to spend on London. It's my job to plan what we spend that money on, and to use performance management statistics to check that we have spent it wisely. It's all about lining up planning activities so that regional, local and provider plans all tie in with the money that's available.



The changes brought about by *Theme 7* have put the LSC in a far better position to be able to respond at an appropriate level: we can have real influence on our regional partners, such as the London Development Agency, but at the same time we can provide a local response through our providers and partnership teams."

Alan Parnum
Planning and Performance Director

"I've worked in London West for the last five years, so I know the area, the local businesses and providers. I also live in the patch, which I'm sure helps. Before the reorganisation under *Theme 7*, as London West's Operations Director I played a fundamental role in developing a local provider base that's very responsive to LSC priorities.



I will now be working closely with local authorities, to help develop the greater understanding needed for us to be able to deliver a coherent 14-19 learner offer. I also want to help establish the credibility of the LSC in London West so that our various partner organisations see us as a source of expertise and automatically invite us to get involved in their work."

Clare Arnold
Interim Area Director London West

"My new role involves evaluating the financial aspects of capital projects, delivering annual assurance on the use of LSC funds and leading on financial health and financial intervention issues.



The LSC expects to support the investment of up to £1.5 billion on capital projects in London over the next five years. The investment will be in modernising the buildings that young people and businesses rely on to gain the skills needed for the capital's future competitiveness. The present needs in many local areas are urgent, so the pace of capital investment needs to increase. I recently chaired the inaugural meeting of the Capital/Provider Financial Management sub-group to build up the London Capital Strategy, which stakeholders will be consulted on in October."

Simon Tolaini
Director Provider Financial Management

In my view: skills development

A strong regional approach and closer links with partner organisations are enabling the LSC to respond more effectively to the skills needs of learners and employers throughout London as Jonathan Thorn, Skills Development Director, explains.

Q: What area are you responsible for within the skills directorate?

I'm responsible for developing the skills strategy for London to meet the challenges the capital faces, working with the new London Skills and Employment Board, and regional partners. A key responsibility is to address the extraordinary levels of worklessness and low skills within London, and to meet the higher skills needs of the future. As part of this my team is responsible for understanding the skills needs of employers on a sector basis and ensuring the LSC's resources are best used to meet these needs.

Q: Are adult skills the core part of your work?

Yes, but it's also important to ensure that there is a smooth progression and pathway from 14-19 into adult skills. Without this, the danger is that those young people who are not in education, employment or training become the workless of the future.

Q: Given its size and complexity how do you keep your finger on the pulse of the region's needs?

With great difficulty! Our partners at a regional level, such as the sector skills councils, the Greater London Authority, the London Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus, are a great source of intelligence. In addition, the Train to Gain initiative provides specific information about the needs of employers on a one-to-one basis to enrich these other sources. Armed with this knowledge, we're able to influence and plan future provision more effectively.



Q: You mentioned sector skills councils – surely London must be a priority region for a wide range of sectors?

You're absolutely right. Most sector skills councils see London as a priority region. Our challenge is to find a way of responding to all the sector skills agreements as they roll out over the next few years. We'll have to work closely with the sector skills councils to ensure they

articulate the precise needs of employers in terms of specific qualifications and how they are best delivered.

Q: When you have transformed the learning sector, what will it look like?

A transformed learning sector would be one which is known and recognised by employers as meeting their needs, and which they use as a matter of course.

Good news all round

The findings of a comprehensive national employer survey provide convincing proof that the skills gap is closing, which is good news for business, employees and the economy.

The National Employer Skills Survey 2005, commissioned by the LSC, the DfES and the Sector Skills Development Agency, involved more than 74,500 employers in the most comprehensive analysis of skills in England ever undertaken.

Two important trends emerged from the research, which provides information on the extent, causes and implications of recruitment problems and skills gaps. Firstly, the skills gap is closing: the number of employers with a skills gap in their company has fallen from 22 per cent in 2003 to

“The number of employers with a skills gap in their company has fallen from 22 per cent in 2003 to 16 per cent in 2005.”

16 per cent in 2005; and the number of individuals identified by their employer as having a skills gap has dropped from 11 per cent in 2003 to 6 per cent in 2005.

Secondly, employers are increasingly recognising the critical importance of skills, and are investing significantly in training and development to increase productivity and secure competitive advantage.

Employers in England spent more than £33 billion on staff training last year: nearly two thirds of employers funded or arranged training, and 61 per cent of the workforce received some form of training.

Although pleased with the survey results, David Way, the LSC's Director of Skills, warned against complacency.

He said: “Major challenges lie ahead if we are to continue to bridge the skills gap. Through Train to Gain, our new skills service for business, we will be giving the type of training support employers say they want.

“This will benefit thousands of employers and businesses over the next year.”

To download a copy of the report, go to www.lsc.gov.uk

Expanding the BOSS network

The Building One-Stop Shop (BOSS) initiative has a vital part to play in helping people enter sustained employment within the construction sector. A new BOSS, based in east London, was established in July and formally launched in September.

BOSS London East is based on a simple concept: bringing together prospective employees and employers who are seeking to maximise the opportunities presented in the construction industry as a result of the major development projects, both active and planned, for east London.

Through a network of organisations attached to its 'hub', BOSS London East supports organisations with recruitment, training and business support, and provides assistance to SMEs in the construction supply chain. It also maintains a database that includes information relating to regeneration projects and developments across the area including (when available) timelines of activity which identify skills needs. This data will be used to support sustainable employment for local people and a continuous workforce for the construction industry.

LSC London Region's Karen Olney, who is leading on the project said: “The services provided by BOSS London East fall under three broad categories: training and



BOSS: supporting sustainable employment in the construction sector for local people

development, job brokerage and business support services.

“BOSS London East also aims to influence the type of training on offer, to ensure that provision is timely and appropriate to the needs of employers and employees. Linking with a range of construction organisations, BOSS will establish a vital source of intelligence about the sector, for use in strategic planning and decision-making.”

A number of partners have been involved in establishing BOSS London East, including LSC London East, four Construction Centres of Excellence, four local boroughs, the London Development Agency, Construction Skills, Summit Skills, Jobcentre Plus, Bovis Lend Lease and Building East.

For more information, contact Karen Olney on 020 8929 3819 (karen.olney@lsc.gov.uk).

Reaching out to maxi

A diverse and cosmopolitan city, London is home to a wide range of 'hard-to-reach' groups who require targeted support, advice and training if they are to overcome their personal barriers and fulfil their potential.

Evidence shows that education and training are effective in helping to remove barriers to progression. The LSC is applying this principle in its work with a range of hard-to-reach groups including ex-offenders, homeless people, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities and learning difficulties, Travellers, unemployed people, refugees and asylum seekers, and disengaged young people.

Many LSC-funded learning projects are now taking place across the region. Each one is designed to reach out to disadvantaged groups, to help them acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for them to play a fuller and more useful role in society. Shown on these two pages are just some of London's current projects that target hard-to-reach learners.



Partnership approach: David Hughes shakes hands with Steve Murphy, London Commissioner of Offender Management Services

New responsibility for offender learning

At the end of July the LSC took over responsibility for the planning and funding of offender learning, including seamless provision of learning and skills through a new, integrated Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).

Led by the LSC, OLASS focuses on effective resettlement and employment, as well as minimising re-offending. It targets offenders in prisons, young offender institutions, on probation and in the community, providing them with learning and skills of a standard comparable to provision elsewhere.

David Hughes, LSC Regional Director for London, believes that OLASS will make a significant contribution to the ultimate goal of reducing re-offending.

He said: "All offenders, wherever they are, should have access to learning and skills that enable them to gain the skills and qualifications needed for them to hold down a job, while at the same time performing a positive role in society."

For more information, contact Steve Crow on 020 7904 0640 (steve.crow@lsc.gov.uk).

Pre-OLASS pilot

In preparation for the launch of OLASS, four of London's Skills for Life providers carried out innovative offender learning pilot programmes, commissioned jointly by the LSC and the London Probation Service. Findings included the importance of building up trust between the tutor and the learner, the fact that informal learning is as important as formal learning, and the need to link work to personal gain. Family learning was also seen as an all-round winner, helping to build confidence in the offender's role as a parent, carer or guardian.

The following quotes came from the LLU+ programme at London South Bank University:

"It's nice to be able to do something creative with my mum. It makes us closer to each other, sharing this time."

Child visitor, HMP Holloway

"I wish I had taken this course 10 years ago when my older kids were learning to read. I now know how to do it better for the youngest!"

Father, HMP Latchmere House

"I have found these sessions particularly moving, perhaps the most valuable prison project I have been involved with."

Prison officer, HMP Pentonville

Unleash your hidden potential

Pan London ESF 2 kicks off

Disadvantaged groups across London, including Black and Minority Ethnic groups and women, stand to benefit from new learning and employment opportunities over the next two years thanks to the LSC's Pan London European Social Fund (ESF) Programme 2.

At the end of May the LSC announced that so far 39 regional projects have been selected (subject to contract) to help those in greatest need in the London

13,000+

London learners have engaged in the Pan London ESF Programme 1 since it started in January

labour market. Programme funding to the value of £32.8 million will be allocated to these projects, which recently started and will run for two years, focusing on worklessness and training to Level 3.

In mid-July a further announcement was made by the LSC, confirming that £2.2 million has been allocated to fund seven projects (subject to contract) under the 'On Your Marks – London European Social Fund (ESF) Skills for the 2012 Games Programme', which will be delivered as part of the Pan London ESF Programme 2. This funding will help Londoners raise their skill levels so that they can take full advantage of the economic and social regeneration opportunities created by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Andy Hepburn, Team Manager at ECOTEC, the company managing Pan London ESF Programme 2 delivery on behalf of the



Learners perfecting the art of stonemasonry in an ESF-funded project

LSC, said: "Selected suppliers will now move towards turning their proposals into reality. This Programme will help to address London-wide employment and skills issues, and will improve the prospects of individual beneficiaries and the economic competitiveness of London as a whole."

For more information about the LSC's Pan London ESF Programme 2, visit www.london03.ecotec.co.uk or contact the ECOTEC team on 020 7089 1976.

Transforming lives

It was smiles all round at a summer presentation ceremony for 13 people with learning difficulties involved in a specialist pilot work project run by the Osborne Partnership.

The LSC is responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. A local recipient of LSC funding is the Osborne Partnership, a registered charity with a strong track record for providing employment and work training to people with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or complex needs.

The Partnership's Valance Work and Training Unit is a specialist work pilot project set up for people from Barking and Dagenham with learning difficulties, to help them into work training and onto paid employment. Participants are offered accredited work training and are given an opportunity to gain qualifications, while at the same time building up the skills and confidence needed for them to enter the world of work.

A joint initiative involving Barking and Dagenham Council, local industry, Barking College, Jobcentre Plus, the Osborne Partnership and the LSC London East, the pilot project has enabled more than 50 people to participate in work training since the start of this year. Retention and completion rates are running at an impressive 100 per cent, with 'zero faults' for the manufacturing work completed.

Denis Muirden is the HR Manager at Trelleborg Stanton Ltd, a local automotive parts supplier involved with the pilot. He said: "We are proud to have supported the project and are pleased with the standard of work so far. This subcontract activity is beneficial to us in terms of competitive



Students holding their NVQ1 certificates in Manufacturing Operations and RSA Entry Level 3 certificates in Manufacture, accompanied by local MPs John Crudas (centre back) and Margaret Hodge (far right), with Mayor Cllr Dee Hunt wearing her chain of office

costings and space savings, and provides a good opportunity for us to add value to the local community."

The project is exploring further funding opportunities, permanent premises and offers of manufacturing work from local industry.

For more information about the Valance Work and Training Unit, contact Ian Wall on 020 3244 0149.

Five minutes with... Andrew Thomson

The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) aims to facilitate and champion excellence and innovation in lifelong learning. We asked CEO Andrew Thomson to expand on the role of his organisation and how it links in with the work of the LSC.

Q: What's the purpose of QIA?

QIA is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) that was set up in April 2006 to fulfil three main tasks: to accelerate performance improvements within the learning and skills sector; to encourage a good response to the Government's further education reforms by all organisations working in the sector; and to drive forward a culture of self-improvement.

Q: Why is self-improvement so important for the learning and skills sector?

You can't hope to get very far by imposing improvements on people; the world doesn't work like that. Generally speaking, people serving the public want to be able to serve them well, so QIA needs to look at how we can inspire them to do better. The main way we think this can happen is through self-improvement:

people learning from each other, sharing good ideas and committing themselves to a drive for excellence. QIA can support these processes and the necessary infrastructure.

Q: Your website describes QIA as an honest broker: what does that mean?

It means being able to comment with authority on the pace and progress of quality improvement, the means by which this can best be enhanced and the barriers to be overcome. It means being capable of influencing both policy and practice for the greater good of those we all serve.

Q: What's your relationship with the LSC?

The LSC aims to make England better skilled and more competitive; this complements QIA's drive for excellence in education and training. The national quality improvement strategy, led by QIA, will help us all achieve this. We are working with a wide range of partners; the LSC is, of course, a major partner. As an Agency, QIA will gather a great deal of value from the new regional quality improvement partnerships, which are chaired by the LSC.

Q: How far have you got with the quality improvement strategy?

We're making good progress: we launched the strategy in June 2006 and it's now in the consultation phase, along with the LSC's Framework for Excellence. Everyone working in learning and skills has a big part to play in improving the performance of the sector, to make this the very best system for further education (including all the great diversity of its providers) in the world.



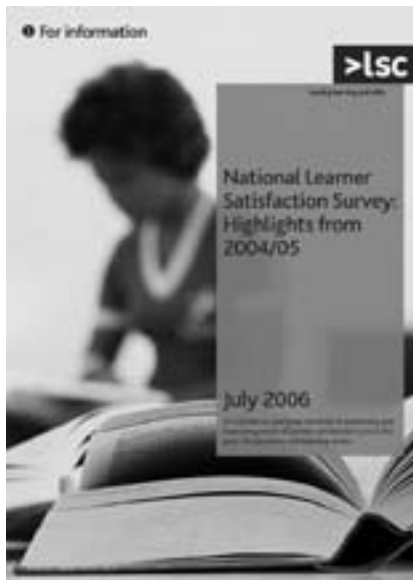
Learner satisfaction levels hit an all-time high

More learners than ever before are 'extremely satisfied' with the quality of further education (FE) they receive.

The LSC is responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training across England, and has pledged to drive up the quality of provision. The National Learner Satisfaction Survey, which has been carried out annually since 2001, provides an important measure of the progress being made towards this goal.

The latest survey, commissioned by the LSC, involved more than 43,000 participants from FE, work-based learning, and adult and community learning. The results make impressive reading, as can be seen from some of the highlights shown above right. Among LSC-accredited providers, learners' evaluation of their teachers rose by at least three percentage points in each of the 10 categories involved.

Melanie Hunt, the LSC's National Director of Learning, said: "The findings of the National Learner Satisfaction Survey are a tremendous achievement for the FE sector. The LSC is delighted that learners' experiences are improving year on year: these improvements suggest that *agenda for change* and initiatives like *Success for All* are delivering significant benefits for learners."



Survey highlights

90% of learners are satisfied with their overall learning experience (27% are 'extremely satisfied' – a rise of four percentage points to the highest level on record)

79% of learners feel their experience has equipped them with skills they can use at work

Bill Rammell MP, Minister of State, Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, added: "This increase in learner satisfaction marks another step forward in the Government's drive towards excellence.

"Everyone in the sector who has been involved should be justifiably proud. It is important that we ask learners what they think about their teaching and learning, and the majority have told us that we are responding to their needs and aspirations."

To download the report, visit www.lsc.gov.uk



Leading by example

A report commissioned by the LSC sheds new light on current leadership good practice in a wide range of public sector organisations across London.

The successful delivery of high-quality, efficient and customer-focused public services requires a combination of inspirational leadership and a committed, talented workforce. Published in July, *Leading in London: The Breakthrough Leadership Project* is a comprehensive study of leadership in public services across our region.

Based on a variety of sources including published reports and in-depth interviews, the report explores how successful leaders of public services overcome the many challenges they face. It also highlights key leadership behaviours and good practice, for the benefit of experienced and up-and-coming leaders.

Maggie Roy, Partnership Manager for LSC London Region, said: "The report focuses on three main themes: developing the talent of the workforce, delivering public services and responding to external scrutiny. These issues will be explored in greater detail through a series of Masterclasses that are planned for autumn 2006 and spring 2007."

To download a copy of the report, visit www.lsc london.gov.uk

Capital investment consultation

The LSC in London is about to consult on its first regional Capital Strategy, which will guide developments over the next five years.

We expect to support an investment of up to £1.5bn by 2011 in modernising the buildings young people and businesses rely on to gain the skills needed for the capital's future competitiveness. LSC Planning and Performance Director Alan

Parnum said: "Our vision is to create a pan-London network of world-class learning environments for all by 2013."

The LSC London Region Capital Strategy and consultation document will be available on the LSC website in October 2006. For more information, contact Alan Parnum on 020 7904 0638 (alan.parnum@lsc.gov.uk).

Take4

September Guarantee

By helping every Year 11 leaver find an appropriate learning programme or employment by the end of September after leaving school, the London September Guarantee is reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Here we provide four different perspectives.

Ayub Khan
Director of Operations
Connexions South London

"The project is a joint initiative between Connexions and the LSC that brings together pre- and post-16 learning providers and London 14-19 strategic partnerships in delivering the Guarantee.

"In South London, the September Guarantee is now in its second year of operation. Essentially, it's an early identification process. We track learners from school into a post-16 option. We also work strategically with further education (FE) colleges where we fund FE-specific personal advisers who work with tutors in curriculum areas with historically high dropout rates during the first few months. We are able to implement a package of support to either retain the young person in the existing institution or refer them to another that may be better suited to prevent them from becoming NEET."

Tobias Fagan
Year 11 leaver

"Before the Merton project, I felt a bit stranded. But now, I've been able to bond with the staff and am more confident in discussing problems with them. I've done lots of different activities, like CV writing (which was new to me), sports and a residential trip, where I learned lots of different things and made new friends.

"All this support has definitely been a great help. I'm feeling much more positive about my future and have enrolled in college to do AS and A levels."

Sean McMahon
Director of Young People's Learning
LSC London Region

"The September Guarantee was launched across the region during the 2005/06 academic year. It's a framework for a number of processes, like tracking learners aged 16 to 19 and targeting information, advice and guidance for them, especially in the summertime.

"In May this year, local Connexions partnerships completed a second phase of sub-regional reports to the LSC on the intended destinations of the Year 11 2005/06 cohort. We use this information to make the supply of learning more responsive to needs. Interestingly, London is one of only two English regions experiencing a drop in NEET figures, and at this moment we have the highest ever number of 16 to 19-year-olds in education and training."

Marie Wright
Connexions Manager, Merton

"Over the last two years the Merton September Guarantee has engaged all the local schools and youth services in identifying young people likely to have barriers to progression post-16 and working out a programme to support and track them.

"Connexions support is provided to all Year 11 leavers. Additional measures are put in place to help those most at risk of becoming NEET, such as highly effective summer programmes with vocational taster sessions. Over 200 young people have completed these programmes and been supported to gain a positive outcome of EET."



Ayub Khan



Tobias Fagan



Sean McMahon



Marie Wright