



>LSC

Leading learning and skills

the magazine

October 2009

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

East London
is home to
a wealth of
construction
training
opportunities
page 8

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Cover photo: numerous construction projects are already underway at the Olympic Park and Athletes' Village sites in east London

the magazine

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Jill Lowery

Comment

Welcome to our 18th – and final – issue of LSC London Region's quarterly stakeholder publication.

As you know, the LSC will be closing down at the end of March 2010, after which 16-18 education funding arrangements will become the responsibility of local authorities (supported by the Young People's Learning Agency) and the new Skills Funding Agency will be responsible for adult learning and skills.

Although we've been planning for these changes for the last two years, the pace is really starting to pick up now. You'll start to see more and more people moving into their new job roles over the coming months, but I'd just like to reassure you that it's very much "business as usual" where day-to-day activities are concerned, so please do continue to use your existing contacts until we advise you to the contrary.

Our weekly e-bulletins will help keep our stakeholders informed about changes that are taking place and any key events that are in the pipeline. We plan to use our annual provider and stakeholder briefing later this year to talk about our regional priorities and the new organisational structure, and will be following up that session with meetings with individual providers in the lead-up to the new arrangements.

Last year our region put in a great performance across the entire spectrum of provision, and credit for this is due to the efforts of our providers. This year, recessionary pressures are creating greater challenges, with strong demand anticipated for both 16-18 learning and adult employer responsive provision that may well surpass the increased level of funding in place. We recognise the difficulties for providers in managing these pressures, and are working with BIS and DCSF to look at ways to potentially release further funding in the current financial year.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our many partners and stakeholders for all the support you have provided to the LSC London Region team over the past five years. We look forward to continuing to work with you during the transition period and in our new roles, once the new structures are in place.

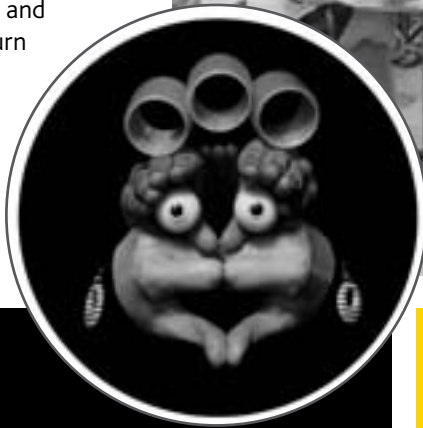
Jill Lowery,
LSC Acting Regional Director for London

A Summer of Skills

As we head into autumn, another successful Summer of Skills campaign is drawing to a close.

This year's nationwide Summer of Skills campaign included a raft of marketing and PR activity to promote the value of skills and break down the barriers to learning.

Colleges and training providers had plenty of opportunities to get local people involved in learning, supported by a range of toolkits, competitions and advertising – including the return of animated character “Beryl” (pictured) to the small screen, to remind the public of the importance of basic skills in helping people to “Get On”, both in the workplace and in their personal life.



London's mobile Careers Advice Service booth gave commuters a welcome opportunity to find out about using skills to keep their working lives moving forward

Resources reminder..

The LSC's campaign resources site provides a handy one-stop shop for all its national marketing and PR activities.

The site is ideal for LSC partners to use when pulling together a prospectus or poster campaign, or when promoting taster courses, open days or recruitment events. The support available ranges from radio scripts and advertising posters – which can be adapted for local campaigns – to key message information and press release templates, to help promote local activity.

Quick, free and easy to use, the site is a great time-saver when working on campaigns that raise awareness of the benefits of skills. Also, by linking local campaigns to nationwide activity, the site helps to ensure that the maximum impact is achieved.

To access the site, visit www.lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources and complete the online registration form. As ever, we welcome feedback – good and bad – about the materials available, and about how they are being used locally, so that we can share examples of best practice with other providers across our region.

Details of the LSC's latest national campaign developments and the marketing/PR materials available on the site are all contained in a monthly *Skills Update* e-newsletter. To subscribe, email skillscampaign@lsc.gov.uk

LSC takes on summer interns

During the summer months, LSC London Region hosted a number of six-week internships.

The internships were organised as part of a programme run by Career Academies UK. This charitable organisation aims to raise the aspirations of 16- to 19-year-olds by giving them the opportunity to venture into the world of work and to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired at school or college.

The interns benefited from their time with the LSC's HR, Marketing and Partnerships teams. Having overcome the initial shock of early-morning starts and eight-hour working days, intern Jeyhan Ceylan said: "I learnt a lot about systems and customer service, and hope to go on to university to study business management in property."

One of the highlights for fellow intern Rosanne Baptiste was being allowed to set up an event "from start to finish" – she feels confident that the experience she gained will "open up many doors" for her in the future.

Figures to date indicate that an impressive 95 per cent of Career Academy graduates go on to higher education or an equivalent level of work-related training. Based on their GCSE performance at the start of the programme, the predicted rate was just 40 per cent.

Tower Hamlets College wins national award

It has long been accepted that the creation of better buildings for learning can inspire better student performance and be a source of great pride for the local community.

That's certainly the case for the National Skills Academy for Financial Services at Tower Hamlets College, which has won the inaugural Sustainability Award at the RIBA/LSC Further Education Design Excellence Awards 2009. The award was presented to Architect Gian Kundi, from the Tooley & Foster Partnership.

The award recognises the commitment to sustainability shown by the Skills Academy and Tower Hamlets College in transforming the former school into a modern learning space, including the restoration of many existing features.

The judges were particularly impressed by the building's improved energy efficiency and minimised carbon footprint.

The Skills Academy helps people return to work through its Employment Solutions service. It also offers a wide



Award-winning team (from left): Therese Reinheimer-Jones, Head of Financial Skills Academy; Gian Kundi, Partner, The Tooley & Foster Partnership; Sheila Bentham, Director of Employer Relations

range of training courses for jobs in, and associated with, the financial services industry, including management, IT and administration. It is

funded by the LSC, European Regional Development Fund, Government Office for London and London Thames Gateway Development Corporation.



50-year landmark for Bromley College

Bromley College is celebrating providing 50 years of further and higher education.

When the college first opened its doors in September 1959, it provided courses in three main areas: engineering, science and commerce. Wind the clock forward to the present day, and the college retains its strong vocational bias, with a huge range of subjects now on offer, including animal care, beauty therapy, business studies and mechanical engineering.

The anniversary celebrations included an open day for ex-students and staff, and an exhibition exploring the history of the campus site from 1706 to the present day. Scores of

photographs, cuttings, student magazines, prospectuses, along with old science equipment and motor vehicle engines, charted the story of the college over the past five decades.

Principal Peter Jones said: "The first college at Rookery Lane opened to offer people courses to help build their careers, and that has never been more important than in today's climate. Our mission is to offer skills and qualifications for working life, and that is what vocational learning is all about."

John Charles, chairman of the board of governors, said: "The college has always sought to respond to the needs of local employers and local people."

Brent's NEET learners deliver award-winning performance

Eleven Brent learners who were NEET (not in education, employment or training) or at risk of being NEET have been inspired by training provider Akademi to achieve a Bronze Level Arts Award – a national qualification that supports young people to develop as artists and arts leaders.

Based in London, Akademi is an organisation dedicated to the practice, understanding and appreciation of South Asian dance across the UK within a contemporary artistic, social and educational context.

Akademi's first cohort of 11 NEET learners from Brent worked with artist tutors for 12 weeks, developing skills identified following taster days and assessments. Among the course highlights was an opportunity to perform in *Urban Vani* (Urban Voice), the



The *Urban Vani* performance was a course highlight

world's first Kathak beatbox choir, as part of Circa at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall.

All 11 learners achieved the Bronze Level Arts Award. It is hoped that the project's activities will also have taught participants some important creative and life skills associated with personal success, as well as inspiring them to undertake further learning in the arts.

Akademi is funded by the LSC and the European Social Fund to deliver projects in Brent, Hammersmith & Fulham, Camden and Islington.

Beacon status awarded to 5E Ltd

Following a rigorous selection process, north London-based training provider 5E Ltd has been awarded Beacon status. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) Beacon status provides public recognition of excellence and innovation within the further education system. It celebrates the delivery of outstanding teaching and learning by providers that are funded by the LSC and inspected by Ofsted.

Over the past 10 years, not-for-profit training provider 5E has delivered a range of programmes financed by the LSC, the European Social Fund, Jobcentre Plus, the London Development Agency and learndirect. Director Raj Doshi said: "Having been awarded Grade 1 (outstanding provision) twice by Ofsted over the last six years, gaining LSIS Beacon status provides the ultimate recognition of 5E's relentless quest and effort to deliver quality and value-for-money services for its learners and service users."



Kevin Brennan, Minister for FE, Skills, Apprenticeships and Consumer Affairs (centre) with 5E team members (from left) Raj Doshi, James Eknam, Jeremy Coulton, Shilpa Desai and Muna Mohammed

And the good work won't end there for 5E, because as trusted partners and a source of expertise, all beacons are required to promote and pursue excellence and innovation. In so doing, they provide a

major impetus for the cultural changes that are needed as the further education sector moves towards greater self-regulation and responsibility for its own quality improvement.

Westminster Kingsway launches £52.5m centre

King's Cross Centre is the latest addition to Westminster Kingsway College's building portfolio.

The brand-new, £52.5 million centre was delivered on time and on budget, with 55 per cent of the funding provided by the LSC under the Government's Building Colleges for the Future programme.

A wide spectrum of courses will be delivered at the centre, including science, health and social care, art and design, and performing arts.

Westminster Kingsway College Principal Andy Wilson said: "We had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create the college in which we had always wanted to teach – a building that acts as a magnet and draws people in from the outside, inviting them to be part of the learning experience we provide.



Andy Wilson (left) and Kevin Brennan MP conduct the official opening ceremony

"The courses we offer are designed to meet our students' highest aspirations for progression to higher education and careers in key sectors of the London economy. We are proud to be able to provide a brand-new FE facility that matches these aspirations."

The college was officially opened by Kevin Brennan MP, Minister for Further Education, Skills, Apprenticeships and Consumer Affairs.



The new centre will inspire students to reach for the stars

How London is ma



82% of employers on the Apprenticeship programme say they rely on it to give them the skilled workers they need for the future



80,617

Londoners have started a Train to Gain course so far this year

As this will be the final issue of *the magazine*, we thought it would be appropriate to provide a regional round-up of recent achievements within London's learning and skills sector.

The last few years have been a time of great change for the LSC, against a backdrop of a challenging economic landscape.

We have succeeded in introducing a new era for skills development, by creating and implementing a more flexible, responsive and demand-led system for learning and funding based on mechanisms like Train to Gain and Skills Accounts. We have also ensured that more learning opportunities are more accessible for everyone.

While striving for continuous improvement, we have been able to reduce much of the bureaucracy that previously surrounded learning and skills, for learners and providers.

In April next year, the LSC will cease to exist. Thanks to the many job-shadowing exercises and "trial runs" that have already taken place across our region, we anticipate a smooth handover of the LSC's existing responsibilities.

There will be two new bodies driving the LSC's agenda from April 2010.

The Skills Funding Agency will work with employers, providers and learners aged 19+ to invest in skills development. It will also house the National Employer Service and the National Apprenticeships Service.

The Young People's Learning Agency will cover 16-19 funding and will support local authorities in carrying out their duties in this area.

Acting Regional Director for London Jill Lowery said: "Last year we saw unexpectedly high levels of demand for our services and programmes from young people, adults and employers across the region. I believe that this is a testament to the quality and relevance of the learning we commissioned.

"The new arrangements that will come into force in April will provide a step change in the way learning and skills are commissioned, delivered and evaluated throughout England. I am confident that the improvements we have made in recent years will provide firm foundations on which to further strengthen the skills offer for individuals and employers across our region."

Creating a demand for learning and skills

Young people

London now has more young people in learning than ever before, with 77 per cent achieving Level 3 by 19.

The effect of rising participation is also reflected in our region's falling NEET (not in employment, education or training) numbers, which dropped by 4.7 per cent in the 12 months to March 2009 – the national average fell by just 1 per cent. London is the only English region to have already exceeded its 2010 indicative target (7 per cent).

The September Guarantee has also played a big part in ensuring that more young Londoners stay on in learning. For the academic year 2008/09, more than 95 per cent of Year 11 students and 78 per cent of 17-year-olds used this programme to remain in learning.

Equally instrumental is www.mychoicelondon.co.uk, our region's complete online course and career website for 14- to 19-year-olds. During 2009, the site received 129,292 hits – an increase of more than 90,000 on the same period last year. Recent site developments mean users now have access to a CV builder, a psychometric test and local job vacancies.

Adults

Basic skills in the capital are continuing to improve, with an increase of 14 per cent in literacy achievements and 48 per cent in numeracy achievements (2007/08).

Learning skills matter



84.2%

of London's 16- to 18-year-olds are in learning (England average: 79.8%)



Better skills, better jobs, better lives

Apprenticeships

The number of new 16-18 Apprenticeship starts in our region is at 5,787. The continued promotion of 16-18 Apprenticeships emphasises this age group as a key target for the National Apprenticeship Service. London has seen a big increase in the number of Advanced Apprenticeships and is expected to exceed the number of completions delivered in 2007/08 (the latest figure is 2,868).

The Adult Apprenticeship statistics make interesting reading. We have already exceeded the total number of 19-24 Apprenticeship starts delivered in 2007/08 by more than 500; and completions are doing similarly well, up by 31 per cent. At 6,241, the number of starts in the 25+ programme is already double what was achieved last year, and completions stand at 1,798, which again compares well with last year.

Train to Gain

Since its introduction in 2006, the popularity of the Train to Gain service has grown at an impressive rate among its client base of small and medium-sized enterprises, and is close to doubling its starts volume between 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Much of the service's success can be attributed to its continual evolution in response to the changing needs of our region's employers, as evidenced by the extended scope of the leadership and management training available and by the introduction of part-funded courses in business-critical areas. Employers also tell us

they value the opportunity to receive bespoke advice from a skills trainer.

Employers from all sectors have been engaging with the service, having recognised the link between improvements in employee skills and the increased business performance needed in order to survive the recession.

OLASS

OLASS (Offender Learning and Skills Service) is entering its fourth year under the responsibility of the LSC. More than £2 million has been invested by the LSC in London's ICT learning infrastructure for OLASS and in capital improvements, such as the motorcycle maintenance workshop at HMP Wandsworth.

The quality and standard of custodial provision has improved in all London prisons, some of which have benefited from the Train to Gain service, thanks to a policy exemption negotiated by LSC London Region. Skills provision for offenders in the community has also developed a much greater focus on the employability skills that will help them get a job and rebuild their lives on release.

OLASS will see significant growth in London over the next few years, with three new prisons being built. Through learning and skills providers Prospects and Kensington and Chelsea College, we expect to align the service more closely with mainstream provision and to play an even greater role in reducing re-offending in the capital.

Responding to the recession

The Response to Redundancy Programme (funded by ESF and Train to Gain) is enabling many of those who are facing redundancy or have been made redundant to minimise the time spent out of work (see back page).

With £30 million allocated to Train to Gain, the ESF programme supporting skills and worklessness is fully committed: 134 providers will deliver £110 million of training and support to over 48,000 Londoners. By September, 10,755 individuals had already started training.

The Employability Skills Programme is the premier LSC-funded offer to Jobcentre Plus clients with literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs. It continues to be a success in our region: operating through 10 LSC providers, in 2008/09 7,708 learners started on the programme (106 per cent of target) and the overall achievement rate was 56 per cent.

Within two districts of London, LSC-funded nextstep and Jobcentre Plus services are now co-located. The objective is to provide nextstep support within jobcentres or shared-service venues throughout the region by August 2010.

VQ Day celebrates an all-time high

VQ Day (24 June) provided an opportunity to celebrate and showcase the diversity of vocational success across the UK – as well as London's very own VQ Hero.

VQ Day was launched in 2008 to raise the profile of vocational qualifications and celebrate the successes of the learners who have used them as a stepping stone to further study, better jobs and enhanced skills.

The VQ Day event for England was hosted by celebrity chef James Martin at Hackney Community College, which is a Centre of Vocational Excellence. Several London colleges were among the many organisations taking part in this national event, which included vocational "zones" ranging from motor sports to hair and make-up, with a strong emphasis on hands-on activities.

The icing on the cake for our region came when Aaron Collins became a national VQ Hero, having won England's Learner of the Year Award.

His story is an impressive one: despite having been excluded from mainstream education, Aaron succeeded in turning his life around at Croydon College, gaining a distinction in the BTEC First Diploma in Art & Design, progressing

to a National Diploma and becoming a student representative. He is now studying for a mentoring qualification, regularly volunteers to support young offenders and has accepted a place at Kingston University to study Architecture.



VQ Hero Aaron Collins with Edge Chairman John Cox and celebrity chef James Martin

Building a future with Olympics projects

As 2012 draws near, a wealth of construction training opportunities are being made available on major projects in east London.

Numerous construction projects are already underway at the Olympic Park and Athletes' Village sites in east London as part of the National Skills Academy scheme, which is sponsored by ConstructionSkills, the employer-led Sector Skills Council.

Contractors across the two sites have committed to providing:

- more than 270 work experience placements
- more than 200 Apprenticeships, in addition to those already in the supply chain
- 500 site visits for local schools, colleges and universities
- more than 1,800 job opportunities
- more than 450 NVQs, to enable the upskilling of the existing workforce.

It is expected that the contractors appointed for fit-out work from 2011 will also make commitments under National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAFC) principles.

Regional training hubs will play a big part in the overall NSAFC plan, by helping the training that simply cannot be completed on a live construction project.

London's three LSC-funded hubs are set to make a big impact at local level, as shown below.

Plant Training Centre, Beckton Park:

- more than 680 trainees have undertaken plant operative courses
- pass rate is more than 80 per cent
- more than 150 local people are now working in jobs helping to deliver the Olympic project
- almost half the trainees come from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Thames House, Newham:

- around 500 learners have been trained at Newham so far
- will cater for more than 100 apprentices
- will offer nearly 2,000 training places programmes based around
 - civils
 - plant maintenance operatives
 - specialist roofing
 - interiors
- will also deliver a range of basic skills and English programmes.

Cathall Road Construction Training Centre, Walthamstow:

- £6 million has been made available to develop the centre into a regional hub
- located just 1km from the Olympic Park and Stratford City
- the local area has some of the highest levels of worklessness in the UK
- will train more than 5,000 residents over at least the next 10 years.

London employers scoop prestigious national awards

At this year's national Apprenticeship Awards, London was a winner in two of the five employer categories.

As a vital component in the Government's economic and employment strategy, apprentices are key to our country's long-term growth plans. By 2020, the Government will fund Apprenticeship places for one in five young people.

London is proud to be at the forefront of Apprenticeship best practice, having won two prestigious national awards: Tube Lines Ltd scooped the Large Employer of the Year Award; and BT was named as the Macro Employer of the Year. Despite the economic downturn, both were praised for having used their Apprenticeship programme to enhance productivity, business performance and innovation to an impressive degree.



The winning Tube Lines team with former England Rugby World Cup Captain Matt Dawson (far left) and his *Strictly Come Dancing* partner Lilia Kopylova (second from right), who presented the award

Tube Lines Director of Human Resources Nicky Belben said: "With some of the largest and most exciting engineering projects taking place in the UK today, there has never been a more exciting time to enter the industry. But we need to enlist more young people to engineering courses to sustain the industry. We recognise the value of apprentices and their importance in developing our company's skill base."

Head of BT Apprenticeships Dave Walsh, who featured in the previous issue of LSC

London Region's magazine, said: "We really believe in Apprenticeships and take our programme above and beyond the basic requirements. We are constantly increasing the types of Apprenticeships on offer and the activities available to our apprentices as we recognise the true value of the programme to our business."

London-based manufacturing specialist Kesslers International Ltd was highly commended in the national Medium Employer of the Year category.

Straight from the horse's mouth

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has launched an informal online mentoring service for apprentices.

Thanks to a new partnership between the NAS and horsesmouth.co.uk, apprentices and those interested in Apprenticeships can receive informal one-to-one advice and support in a safe, moderated online environment.

The beauty of this new arrangement is that the online mentoring and coaching are provided by existing and former apprentices. It therefore provides a less daunting, alternative support service for people who may lack role models or mentors, or who feel less confident about accessing formal information sites.

Horsesmouth is a free, social networking site that connects people seeking support and guidance on a wide range of issues – education, career, work, family and health

– with others who are willing to share the benefit of their own experiences. Site users remain anonymous and must be over 16.

Used in conjunction with the range of careers information and guidance services already available, the Horsesmouth initiative will help people make better informed career decisions by tapping into the knowledge of those who understand their situation.

For more information, visit www.horsesmouth.co.uk and click on the 'Partners' tab.



Five minutes with...

Geoff Russell

In post since the end of March, Canadian-born LSC Chief Executive Geoff Russell certainly has his work cut out. Here we speak to him about his plans for the organisation's final year of operation.



Q Before you joined, the LSC had taken a bit of a bruising over a number of financial and operational issues – so what made you the best candidate to take over the helm?

Having spent the last 25 years working for KPMG in internal and external roles, I have a good understanding of the way businesses and organisations should work – and how to solve problems. I had also completed a two-year secondment as Director of Financial Management Change at the Treasury. So for me there was no great cultural adjustment involved between the private and public sectors; in that sense I was “up and running” from the start.

Q Has the job lived up to expectations?

My overriding view is that it's been fascinating. The first four months in particular were incredibly hard work, with long hours, many meetings and copious amounts of reading material to absorb. But despite being so busy, I made a point of dealing with my emails directly, because I feel it's important for people inside and outside the LSC to know that they can email me with their views and that I'll respond.

Q What's the greatest challenge you face?

For me, it's changing the focus of the LSC and its successor organisations from demand stimulation, to demand management. Our efforts to engage employers and learners have resulted in a huge surge in demand. Regrettably, even though we will be spending more money this year than last year, there won't be enough for everyone. So we'll need to be far more careful, always applying funding where it will have best public value.

Q Has the LSC been successful, in your view?

Yes. There are now more achievements at Level 2 and Level 3 than ever before; we've met or exceeded all our Public Sector Agreement targets; and we met our Skills for Life target three years ahead of schedule.

Although the difficult issues raised over the past 12-15 months have cast a shadow over the organisation's achievements, when viewed over its 10-year existence the LSC has been tremendously successful.

Q How is the transition to the new arrangements progressing?

The transition presents a great opportunity to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the support we provide to employers and learners. We've taken many risk management steps, including work shadowing, and are aiming for a seamless handover to the successor organisations on 1 April. I also want to make sure that as many LSC staff as possible can benefit from the opportunities that are presented during the transition.

Q So with such a busy life, what do you do to relax?

I play with my two dogs; they don't care about the LSC, they just want to be fed, petted and exercised! I like reading and running, and when on holiday I enjoy skiing, scuba diving and sailing. I took a week off in the sun recently and I must confess that I spent a fair bit of time on my Blackberries (I have two) – I am pretty wedded to them, but I'm much calmer when I know there are no smoking guns lurking in the background!

Project set to shape London's learning and skills workforce

Building on the National Skills and World-Class Apprenticeships strategies, the London Assessor Project aims to increase the capacity of our region's work-based learning sector. Funded by the LSC, it aims to identify, recruit and train 1,000 new NVQ assessors and verifiers by March 2010.



To aid the smooth running of the project, a recruitment service dedicated to London's work-based learning sector has been established. This service provides end-to-end recruitment solutions, from sourcing and recruiting trainees to arranging work experience placements and sourcing employment opportunities for those who have completed the programme. The service will continue to operate after the project comes to an end on 31 March 2010.

The project has been running since April. It is being delivered in partnership with training providers across London. So far, more than 100 providers have engaged in the project by offering work experience placements. Their involvement entitles them to a range of benefits including:

- free good-practice workshops delivered by ENTO
- training for work experience mentors

- the opportunity to employ the trainee, once qualified, at no cost
- £75 for each work placement
- £100 for each recruit
- access to a virtual learning environment
- partnership working identified as good practice by Ofsted
- the chance to contribute to the sustainability of a project that was requested by the work-based learning sector.

Judging by the hundreds of trainee applications and the positive feedback from training and workplace providers received to date, the project has already achieved considerable success.

For more information, visit www.londonassessor.com or email charlotte.barrow@wblalliance.org.uk

News in brief

Worksmart+ success story

Yadil Burtally lost his job, home and family because of his drug dependency. Now clean, he has received support from the Leonard Cheshire Disability team through Worksmart+, an LSC Skills for Jobs programme aimed at disabled jobseekers. After an 11-year break he has now re-entered employment and continues to receive support from the team.



Achiever Yadil (right) with his LCD Employment Adviser

Chirpy chippies

Learning difficulties didn't prevent a group of learners from acquiring new skills and knowledge, and completing an innovative new woodwork course at Redbridge Institute. The project involved a two-hour class, once a week for 15 weeks. It was run in partnership with Ellingham Employment Services and funded by the LSC.



The proud learners show off their bird boxes

New £500,000 Kia training facility

Automotive training provider Skillnet Limited has officially opened a new, purpose-built, £500,000 training facility for Kia Motors. Located in Watford, it will be the base for Kia's Apprenticeship programme and dealer network technical training. Part-funded by the LSC, the centre provides a full range of vehicles and diagnostic equipment along the latest classroom technology.

Kia Dealer Training Manager Ian Goswell and Skillnet Director Sam Smith officially open the new training facility



Business Awards event

The North and West London Business Awards 2009 ceremony was held at Wembley Stadium in late September. Fifteen awards were presented during the event, for categories ranging from Best Use of Technology to Outstanding Young Person and Growth Business. LSC London Region sponsored the Apprenticeships category, which was won by Stacey Tear from British Gas.



North & West London Business Awards

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Take4

Response to Redundancy

Eight of our region's colleges and training providers are now offering the Response to Redundancy programme to people who are under notice of redundancy or have recently been made redundant.

Joe Billington
Director of Communications and Diversity
LSC London Region

"The LSC is working with Jobcentre Plus and eight London colleges and training providers to deliver short, flexible courses aimed at people who have just lost their jobs or are at risk of doing so.

"People get the opportunity to update their skills or to start retraining for new jobs. The aim is to get people back to work as soon as possible, and to use time away from work productively: learning new skills for new jobs that are emerging in the recovering economy."

Mark Hutchinson
Learner
Tower Hamlets College

"After I was made redundant from an architectural firm in February, I wanted to focus on using my transferable skills, like project management, to help me get a job. But I found interviews quite daunting. The ReStart Response to Redundancy Programme at the National Skills Academy for Financial Services restored the confidence I needed to prove my ability at interview.

"Within a month I had secured a two-year contract. The programme allowed me to feel confident in my abilities. Everyone should take advantage of this fantastic service."

Raquel Zepeda
Learner
Barnet College

"After losing my job, I decided that I needed to update my skills so that I had something new to offer potential employers. That's why I enrolled on the Forward 4 Work course at Barnet College, which enabled me to update my IT skills. I was also given advice on updating and improving my CV, and on new interview techniques.

"The course has had a really positive impact on my life and made me think more about my career direction. I've applied for jobs that previously I wouldn't even have considered. Employers seem impressed that I've been updating my skills and I've now had two job offers!"

Matthew Davey
Learner

"I left school at 16 but didn't get my first salaried job until I was 18, working for Homebase as a sales assistant, selling furniture and stocking shelves. I'd been there about a year when we were told that the store was closing down – I was really worried about finding another job, especially in the current climate.

"Then the people from Response to Redundancy came in. They spent two days with us, videoing us doing mock interviews, helping us to write a good CV and teaching us how to do things like email and spreadsheets. It made a big difference to my self-confidence and helped me to secure a new job as a kitchen salesman."



Joe Billington



Mark Hutchinson



Raquel Zepeda

London's Response to Redundancy programme is being delivered by:

- Acton Training Centre
- City and Islington College
- Croydon College
- Havering College of Further & Higher Education
- South London Business Ltd
- TBG Learning Limited
- The College of North East London
- Tower Hamlets College.