

NINE IN TEN LEARNERS SATISFIED WITH THEIR FURTHER EDUCATION

Over £35 billion investment in FE until 2011

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The FE system continues to make a significant contribution to the skills of the nation, with success rates in FE at record levels (78 per cent) as shown in the LSC's *Annual Report and Accounts for 2007-08 Learning and Skills: changing lives, improving work* and learner satisfaction remaining high at over 90 per cent.

The Annual Report catalogues the success stories in engaging young people, adults and employers in raising their ambitions, developing their skills and improving their careers and life opportunities:

- More than 350,000 adults (a 16 per cent increase on the previous year) have taken part in a Skills for Life programme during the academic year 2006/07;
- From the roll out of Train to Gain in April 2006 to the end of March 2008, the service engaged with 88,000 employers and 420,000 learners;
- Completion rates for Apprenticeships have increased to 63%, up from 53% in 2005/06;
- Almost 2.3 million people have achieved the first qualification in literacy, language or numeracy;
- In March 2008, *Building Colleges for the Future* strategy announced a £2.3 billion programme to renew and modernise the FE estate and to ensure all new facilities are zero-carbon by 2016; and
- More than 1.5 million young people are in education and training.

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC said, "The LSC is determined to improve on the solid foundations and investments already made in the FE system since 2001 – particularly to develop a system that is increasingly responsive and able to govern itself. The expectations of the system have never been higher as FE is sustaining high levels of satisfaction and increasingly seen as vital to economic prosperity and supporting social inclusion.

Haysom continued, "We still have a huge job to do before any new legislation is put in place as a result of the Machinery of Government changes announced in summer 2007. So the LSC will continue to make sure that the investment in FE, £35 billion over the next few years, is focused on renewing the FE estate with more great buildings, increasing the participation of 14-19 year olds as well as their achievement levels, and ensuring that the goals for Train to Gain and Apprenticeships are achieved."

Chris Banks, Chair of the LSC said, "Real progress has been made to reach out to the people who need our help most so that whatever their background they have the opportunity to succeed in work and in life. Crucially, record numbers of young people continue to take part in learning and 88,000 businesses in 2007-08 worked with a skills broker through our Train to Gain service. It is heartening to see the effects of our skills campaign starting to emerge – it is so vital that we give as many people as many ways possible to take control of their lives through learning and skills."

Also published today, the LSC's fifth National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS) 2007 confirms widespread satisfaction amongst learners with their learning experience, the quality of teaching, and learners believing that their courses are giving them the skills needed for work and progression in their careers. About seven in ten learners would speak highly of their training providers, suggesting that good levels of satisfaction translate into learner advocacy.

Welcoming the LSC Annual Report and Accounts, Minister of State for Further Education and Lifelong Learning Bill Rammell said, "We're now seeing more learners than ever achieving good results and acquiring the skills they need to get work and get on at work. This is a real boost to our objective of achieving a world-class workforce, and I am very grateful for the commitment of the LSC and its staff. The LSC has continued to make very good progress in driving up participation and attainment across all age groups, particularly among those adults who previously lacked basic skills. The widespread satisfaction of learners in the quality of further education and work-based provision is a reflection of the excellent work undertaken in partnership with colleges and providers."

Responding to the NLSS findings, Chair of the FE Reputation Strategy Group and Principal of York College, Dr Alison Birkinshaw said, "We are delighted that over nine in ten of our learners are satisfied with their experience of further education. The signs are there that this improving trend will continue as FE works to respond to feedback from learners. We know that FE changes lives for learners at all levels, acting as a catalyst to build skills and confidence to move on to the next stage in their careers. The FE sector is working closely with employers and schools to ensure that advice and guidance is timely and appropriate, so that this area of the survey will show improvements next time."

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Requests for interviews and images, please contact the LSC Press Office:

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Notes to Editors:

The LSC is a publicly-funded organisation and invests in people to give them the skills they need for success in work and life. It is our job to build a dynamic and successful further education system in England. By funding high-quality education and training for young people, adults and employers, we are contributing to economic and social success. In 2008-09 we will invest £11.6 billion focused on increasing participation among young people and adults, developing learner support and building great buildings in further education. www.lsc.gov.uk

The **National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS)** is a large tracking study of LSC-funded learners aged 16 and over. It gives the LSC and its partners a wealth of data on learners' satisfaction with their learning experience over time, including detailed information on three key aspects of the learner journey: initial choice and information; support during learning; and benefits of participation. There have been five national surveys since 2001 (undertaken annually between 2001 and 2004, and biennial from 2007). Since 2003, each survey has comprised over 43,000 telephone interviews with learners. <http://research.lsc.gov.uk/>

The main factors that influence learner satisfaction include teaching staff making the subject interesting and enjoyable, support given to learners, well planned lessons, and regular feedback between teaching staff and learners about the coursework undertaken and quality of the training offered. Key findings in the NLSS include:

- Over 80 per cent in FE and over 90 per cent in work-based learning said it gives them skills they can use in a job or helps them move forward in their careers – recognition of the positive impact of learning on employability;
- 85 per cent in FE said they are likely to undertake further learning;
- Over 70 per cent would speak highly of their college and the learning they receive - measured for the first time, a high number of learners would advocate further education.

Matthew Boulton College, a landmark nine-story building in Birmingham, is an inspiring learning environment and makes excellent use of space according to the judges of the prestigious LSC/RIBA FE Design Excellence Awards. It acts as an impressive beacon and a challenge to the traditional view of FE. The College has seen a huge increase in student numbers since the building was opened – testimony to the vision to 'inspire learning and achieve excellence'. A full copy of the case study is available on pages 22 and 23 of the LSC's Annual Report and Accounts 2007-08.