

Learning and Skills Council Local Area Statement of Need

Northumberland

2008 - 09

January 2008

Of interest to everyone involved in improving skills and learning opportunities across Northumberland and the North East Region

Introduction

We are delighted to present this Local Area Statement of Need for Northumberland. The document highlights our local response to the challenges set out within the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) national statement of priorities and in the North East Regional Commissioning Plan.

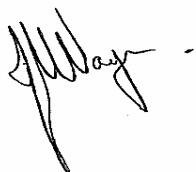
The year ahead will see significant change within the county; the move towards single unitary status will provide the opportunity to review structures and partnerships and to ensure that learning and skills are firmly embedded within the new arrangements.

The LSC will contribute to this on several fronts with our key priorities for this year including; taking forward the next stages of 14-19 reforms; raising participation in learning; a rapid expansion of the Train to Gain service and a significant increase in Apprenticeships. We will continue to work with partners to drive forward a real change in culture so that more employers and adults invest in learning for their own success and well being.

For young people the LSC will use the new funding system to support the 14-19 reforms and encourage collaboration across the infrastructure to meet demand from all young people in the area. For adults and employers more funding will be routed through Demand Led Funding systems which will provide incentives for high performing providers of learning to increase capacity and better develop responses to learners and businesses.

The continuing challenge is to improve the qualifications and skill levels of the local population, driving economic competitiveness and making a real difference to the people who live and work in the county.

We can only achieve this ambition through strong collaboration with our partners and providers and we look forward to building on our collective achievements to achieve success for Northumberland's people and its economy.



John Wayman
Area Director, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear

Challenges, key actions and measures of success for Northumberland

<p>National priority 1: Creating demand for Learning and Skills</p>	
<p>Challenge 1: Minimise the number of young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the implementation of “Whatever It Takes” the County-wide holistic strategy for collective action to tackle NEET. • Focus attention and funding on this issue through inclusion of the NEET target within the Local Area Agreement for Northumberland. • Target LSC managed funds to increase engagement of young people • Contribute fully in local NEET groups ensuring specific action is taken for individual NEET young people. • Evaluate and embed the revised Entry to Employment offer. • Work with the Connexions Service to ensure that the September guarantee at age 16 is met and work towards a guarantee for 17 year olds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in 16-18 NEET percentage • E2E take up meets targets and progression to employment and further learning is increased • The September guarantee is met
<p>Challenge 2: Ensure robust arrangements are in place for delivery of the 14-19 entitlement.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the revision and delivery of the county’s Children and Young People’s plan and associated 14-19 Education Plan. • Take a lead role within the 14-19 Strategy Group and drive the current review of Northumberland’s 14-19 strategy and structures. • Implement agreed structural changes as a result of the review taking account of the County’s specific access and transport issues. • Support and challenge local consortia to ensure high quality submissions to the Gateway and effective implementation of Diplomas. • Support local action in working towards the delivery of the full 14-19 entitlement and in preparing for the raising of the compulsory participation age. • Establish effective working arrangements with the new provider of the Connexions Service in the County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised 14-19 Strategy published and widely communicated • 14-19 Education Plan is in place by September 2008 • Continued improvement in County’s rating within 14-19 Progress Check

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with 14-19 partnerships to ensure a smooth transition of responsibility for work related learning. 	
<p>Challenge 3: Increase availability and take up of work-based learning opportunities.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development and implementation of a Northumberland strategy to increase employer engagement. • Raise the profile and awareness of work-based learning opportunities with schools, parents and learners. • Ensure that the procurement of work-based learning provision in the region takes account of the specific challenges of delivering such provision in Northumberland. • Enhance vocational progression routes e.g. from Entry to Employment and pre-apprenticeships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the uptake and achievement of Level 2 Apprenticeships • Increase in the uptake and achievement of Level 3 Apprenticeships • Increase in progressions from E2E to further learning or employment with training
<p>Challenge 4: Increase demand and ensure employers have access to responsive provision.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local providers to implement the regional Train to Gain growth plan and introduce the new employer offer including at level 3. • Continue to improve the performance of the Train to Gain service by challenging and supporting local providers. • Implement the employer responsive funding model. • Use sector intelligence to influence the curriculum, pattern of provision, development of specialisms and to inform the local response to employer needs. • Encourage local providers and partners to respond to the skills needs of key sectors in the Regional Economic Strategy. • Support providers to build understanding of sector needs and use this understanding to inform local responses. • Raise awareness and encourage providers and partners to champion the Skills Pledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers reach or exceed all Train to Gain targets. • Increase in number of employers accessing Train to Gain and other local provision • Skills Pledge take-up is increased including among public sector employers • Local provision reflects sector needs and the skills agenda
<p>National priority 2: Transforming the FE system to meet demand</p>	
<p>Challenge 1: Develop world-class learning facilities across the County.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a detailed mapping of existing learning facilities and identify gaps in coverage. • Agree a County-wide strategy that takes account of current and planned arrangements including Diploma developments, “Putting the Learner First” and the college 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The map is completed and shared/agreed with partners. • New and existing facilities are developed in line with

<p>property strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement LSC capital investment strategy to improve quality and capacity of learning infrastructure in the County with particular emphasis on Northumberland and Berwick/Alnwick proposals. • Support providers to develop specialisms and work collaboratively to deliver world class facilities. 	<p>County-wide requirements for delivery of new entitlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital proposals are taken forward within agreed timescales
<p>Challenge 2: Maintain focus on priorities through informed dialogue with providers and intelligent commissioning of provision to address local needs</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the balance and mix of provision of each provider in the context of needs of local learners, communities and employers. • Agree key delivery volumes and funding with all providers for 2008-09. • Encourage a dynamic response to new challenges in the way provision is structured and organised both for the collaborative 14-19 agenda and the demand led approach for adults. • Support, influence and encourage providers to make appropriate shifts in the mix and balance of provision in line with priorities identified by the network of Sector Skills Councils and to support priorities of the Regional Economic Strategy. • Identify market failure to respond to particular needs. • Use local intelligence about needs to inform the commissioning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern of local provision meets needs of learners employers and communities • 14-19 partnerships offer collaborative provision with appropriate pathways • Provision is responding to the needs of sectors, including priority sectors in the RES
<p>Challenge 3: Eliminate poor quality provision and ensure continuous improvement.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review and challenge the performance of learning providers. • Use Minimum Levels of Performance and Notices to Improve to drive improvement and remove under-performing provision. • Encourage all providers to develop robust post-inspection action plans. • Work with the local authority to deliver the school 6th form “challenge and support” agenda. • Raise awareness of Framework For Excellence and the New Standard. • Identify opportunities to share good practice between local providers. <p>Promote the continuous development of FE staff to build a fully qualified workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality provision is eliminated • All providers continually develop the quality of their provision • Providers understand and are preparing for Framework for Excellence

Challenge 4: Ensure high-quality learning opportunities are available for LLDD learners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand high quality local provision to reduce the need for out of area provision. • Support partnership work to share expertise, strengthen quality and develop progression routes. • Play an active role in ensuring priorities in the Learning for Living and Work Strategy are implemented. • Ensure the LLDD sector and agenda is appropriately represented in 14-19 partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of learners needing to travel to provision out of the area • Effective local delivery of the objectives of the LLDD Strategy Learning for Living and Work • LLDD sector and agenda is appropriately represented within new 14-19 structures
Challenge 5: Ensure that Learning and Skills issues are central in the development of Single Unitary Authority arrangements for Northumberland.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain active involvement with Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) through the transition period to ensure key Learning and Skills issues are included. • Undertake proactive dialogue with the County's Joint Implementation Team to ensure LSC is up to date on and in a position to influence developments. • Align the Northumberland Partnership Team with new partnership arrangements at County and Characteristic Community level that emerge from the re-organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Skills issues feature prominently within new arrangements
National Priority 3: Delivering better skills, better jobs, better lives	
Challenge 1: Strengthen social inclusion, address worklessness and support entry to the labour market	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join up skills and employment services by implementing the regional joint delivery plan with JobCentre Plus across the County. • Work with partners to ensure that the adult learning offer meets local needs, including those of disadvantaged communities and people seeking to enter the labour market. • Raise awareness of local providers of the opportunities presented by the Foundation Learning Tier to prepare for full implementation in 2010. • Encourage local providers to target LSC investment on priority groups of learners e.g. first level 2 and Skills For Life. • Improve co-ordination of adult safeguarded and Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives of joint delivery plan with JobCentre Plus are met • Principles of the Regional Employability Framework are incorporated in the strategies and activities of local partnership and third sector providers • The needs of priority groups of adult learners are met • Increase in the number of adults who are not in work engaged and supported back into the labour market • Continued support for those

<p>and Community Development Learning through active involvement in the local PCDL partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities funding locally for Skills for Jobs activity to gain sustainable employment for workless people. • Champion the Regional Employability Framework(REF) to help ensure the REF principles are incorporated into the activity of all local providers and partnerships. • Increase the engagement of FE providers to support the employability agenda under the Skills For Jobs banner. 	<p>entering the labour market through Train to Gain</p>
<p>Challenge 2: Identify and address diverse community needs</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the LSC's Single Equality Scheme with providers in the County. • Encourage all providers to implement local equality and diversity impact measures • Maintain ESOL provision • Work with local providers and partners to understand and respond to the specific needs of particular faith and ethnic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers are aware of and comply with SES duties and responsibilities • Provision meets the diverse needs of local communities • Appropriate levels of ESOL is in place

Partnership Working

The LSC is proud of the effective partnership working that we are involved in throughout Northumberland and of the success that these partnerships have brought in improving opportunities for young people and adults and addressing the needs of the economy.

Northumberland is undergoing several changes that will impact on partnerships in the county over the next year. Perhaps most significant of these is the move from a two-tier structure to a Single Unitary arrangement for Northumberland. Whilst existing districts will be removed, three “characteristic” or area communities, broadly covering the North, West and South East of the County and 26 “belonging communities” will provide a mechanism for community cohesion and communication. The LSC has worked hard to develop and maintain effective partnership arrangements at both district (LSP) and County (NSP) levels. We will need to ensure that we are fully involved in the changes and align the Partnership Team resource in the most appropriate way to support economic regeneration and strengthen the links between learning, community development and neighbourhood renewal. We remain committed to strengthening our links with the Voluntary and Community Sector. Alignment of priorities and actions will continue through a focus on the Local Area Agreement.

Major change is also anticipated in the 14-19 Partnership structures in the County. The existing network of six 14+ partnerships and the county-wide strategic group and associated management group is currently the subject of a root and branch review. The outcomes, coupled with the delivery of the Connexions Service through a new provider, will again require an effective response to maximise the collaborative benefits.

Joint working with Jobcentre Plus is crucial in addressing the Employability Agenda. Through the Regional Skills Partnership and implementation of the Regional Skills Action Plan we will together with One NorthEast and other partners maintain a co-ordinated and structured approach to strategic planning to help unemployed people access training opportunities and employment.

Active involvement in the Tyne and Wear City Region partnership will continue to contribute to the development of employment and skills opportunities and will inform the collaborative work of regional and sub-regional partners.

Through the work of the regional skills team we will develop a strong interface with Sector Skills Councils to understand and respond to the needs of sectors within the region. Through effective strategic planning processes and strong partnership working we will commission provision and qualifications to meet the needs of key sectors.

This is a year of change and we will seek to maximise the benefits that these changes present and build upon the strong foundations we have built with all of our partners and providers.