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Leading learning and skills

The Future of Learning in County Durham

A Summary of Recommendations and Actions
for Post-16 Education and Learning

Our mission is to:

- Maximise the contribution of learning to economic and social regeneration in County Durham
- Improve the knowledge and productive skills of the current and future workforce
- Raise participation and attainment through high quality learning tailored to individual need

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Foreword



Like you, I am passionate about the future of learning in County Durham.

That is why I am delighted that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) County Durham is able to present this summary outlining **The Future of Learning in County Durham**. It sets out a plan that is essential to the future prosperity of our County. It turns a period of thorough analysis, consultation and debate into actions that all partners of the LSC County Durham can and should embrace to ensure that we are able to prepare the workforce of the future here in the County. I am very grateful for the thoughtfulness, expertise and commitment shown in the many contributions we have received during this process.

The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for ensuring that post-16 education and learning matches the needs of learners and employers at a local and national level. We accept with enthusiasm the responsibility of leadership for this task, but we cannot do it alone. We are using this document to secure the support of all our partners and funded providers.

You will see that at the end of the document we ask all of you to formally sign up to the actions stated here and to recognise the contribution that your organisation can make to the future of learning in County Durham.

We know that governors of schools and colleges and leaders and boards of private training providers and voluntary and community organisations will want to be involved in this process, as it sets out the recommendations and actions that will impact upon each of us, and those for whom we provide learning opportunities.

We have been eager to ensure that our partners contribute to and accept a shared ownership of the important changes outlined here as they will provide the foundation for learning across the County for the future. The actions described are the result of extensive activity with our major partners in the County Durham Strategic Area Review (StAR) Executive Group. The StAR Executive Group will continue to play a key role in overseeing these actions so that we continue to meet the needs of young people, adults and employers within the County.

We know there is an appetite and eagerness for change across the County. We will work with our partners to provide ambitious and innovative solutions in building a learning society in which everyone has the opportunity to go as far as their talents will take them. I hope you will find that the actions proposed here live up to this goal and trust that you will join us wholeheartedly in its pursuit.

By working together, we can transform the future of learning in order to deliver sustainable economic success throughout County Durham.

James Ramsbotham
Chairman
Learning and Skills Council County Durham

Introduction

The Future of Learning in County Durham outlines our recommendations and actions to meet the needs of the three vital elements of our business:

- Young People – aged 14-19
- Adults – all adults aged 19 and over
- Employers

Young people, adults and employers are at the heart of our proposals. Each group is essential to the long-term economic and social success of County Durham.

By taking collective action with our partners to transform the learning infrastructure to meet the demands of young people, adults and employers we will continue our commitment to making a real difference to the lives of people in County Durham.

This document presents the recommendations, actions and outcomes agreed by the StAR Executive Group. We will be producing a supplementary technical document that will present the baseline position for our outcomes.

Taking Forward the Recommendations and Actions

We make no presumption about the best mix of institutions to deliver the actions described here, as the outcomes of the Area Inspection of 14-19 provision, The Skills White Paper "Getting on in business, getting on in work" and other ongoing developments will have an important influence upon

the local learning infrastructure. Nevertheless, we confirm that it is important that learner and employer needs will determine the learning infrastructure in each local area and across the County. Our task is to demonstrate that County Durham can be amongst the best at partnership working across statutory and institutional boundaries.

The LSC County Durham will lead the way in ensuring that we meet our goals, but this can only happen through a partnership approach. In order to achieve the best possible results for learners, employers and providers, we will work with all our strategic partners to develop an effective collaborative approach that will put learners first and focus on the learning and skills requirements specific to County Durham.



We will achieve collaboration by:

- Creating capital protocols between the LSC, Local Education Authority (LEA) and Diocese and ensuring that "Building Schools For The Future" and LSC capital funds are aligned to meet the needs of learners locally .
- Developing model agreements that will enable institutions to allow teachers and assistants, lecturers and trainers to break the mould of previous conventions by planning learning together, delivering in each other's premises, sharing resources and jointly managing learners' curriculum. This will be supported with specific outcomes to improve participation and achievement.
- Requiring Area Advisory Groups (see annex A) to ensure learners across the County have an appropriate choice of learning provision in their local area, based on need, that meets our agreed County Learner Entitlement and ensures its implementation.
- Incorporating the recommendations from 14-19 Area Inspection (June 2005) into the development of an action plan with clear outcomes that will combine contributions of schools, colleges and work based learning providers into a clear complementary programme of learning.
- Engaging with governing bodies of schools, colleges, boards of work based learning providers, voluntary and community based learning groups and highly skilled professionals to embrace and deliver the Joint Learner Entitlement.
- Developing ambitious goals with providers that set challenging and achievable outcomes to ensure high quality learning provision.



Opposite: Bob Waller, left, and advanced engineering apprentice David Coverdale show members of the Chinese delegation, from left, Mr Li Changming, Mr Wu Mengfei and Mr Wang Xingguo, the operation of the centre's five axis machining centre, South West Durham Training Ltd, Newton Aycliffe

Above: Anthony Grossi, Apprentice Electrician, Building Services Division, Service Direct, Durham County Council

Below: Geoff Spuhler assisting a colleague in the learning centre at Walkers Snack Foods Ltd, Peterlee





Above top: Pamela Ford, Hippitots Day Nursery with Carol Chambers, Tarka Limited, Coxhoe

Above: Jill Lewis, A Level student, New College Durham

The Strategic Area Review Process in County Durham

Success for All, the Government’s strategy for reforming further education and learning, was launched in 2002. In County Durham we have taken a partnership approach to the Success for All strategy by undertaking thorough research and consultation, conducting detailed analysis of findings and developing our Agenda for Action document, which was published in September 2004.

By looking at these drivers and key challenges and identifying how they impact on young people, adults and employers, this document outlines

recommendations and actions to transform learning provision across County Durham.

With the publication of **Agenda for Action**, we formed the StAR Executive Group, (see annex B) which is made up of key partners from the learning and skills sector in County Durham. Its members bring together their expertise to ensure that key actions arising from the StAR process are based on informed judgement and reflect the views of partner organisations from across County Durham.

Agenda for Action identified the four key challenges highlighted below:

Drivers	Key challenges	Success criteria
Stimulate demand and meet needs	Economy Meeting the needs of the economy and employers	People and employers in County Durham are able to actively participate in economic growth and compete effectively
	Individuals Meeting the needs of individuals and communities	There is a step change in improvement in participation and achievement at all levels
Improve the quality of supply	Entitlement Delivering learner entitlement	People have a choice and can access provision to meet their needs as a learner in each part of the County
	Infrastructure Delivering effective, efficient and high quality infrastructure of learning provision	Our learning infrastructure collaborates to deliver the learner entitlement, performs well on all external measures of quality assurance, is effective on measures of performance and efficient in utilisation of resources

Recommendations and Actions

This document outlines our recommendations and actions, together with outcomes, to transform learning in County Durham for the benefit of young people, adults and employers.

Young people



LSC County Durham's vision for Young People states:

All young people will be able to select high quality learning opportunities appropriate to their needs. They will have the chance to succeed and to progress into higher education and/or employment with training.

We have identified two key recommendations that we will focus on in order to improve the provision of learning for young people across County Durham.

1. To deliver the Joint Learner Entitlement

What does this mean for young people?

All young people will:

- have access to a responsive curriculum with flexible pathways to further learning and employment opportunities
- have a rewarding experience of learning which raises their aspirations and commitment to continued learning
- be enabled to choose learning that best fits their needs and be supported in making their choices with effective independent information and advice
- have the chance to gain skills to enable them to access high quality employment opportunities.



Above: Alfie Lashi, MF Engineering, Newton Aycliffe

Actions

We will:

- develop a minimum of five new vocational diplomas that will be accessible to all young people in County Durham. These are:
 - Construction and the Built Environment
 - Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
 - Health and Social Care
 - Engineering
 - Creative and Media.
- broaden young people's access and choice through providing a wider range of AS/A2 subjects in County Durham
- re-align the choice and range of provision with clear progression routes relating to the needs of individual young people
- ensure that Area Advisory Groups design an offering which combines the contributions of schools, colleges and work based learning providers to ensure clear progression pathways up to level 3
- work with schools, colleges and work based learning providers to develop a comprehensive and transparent system of learner tracking backed up by impartial advice and guidance on the learning options available to young people
- promote opportunities that enhance access to Further Education and Work Based Learning for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by producing new models of provision
- collaborate with other relevant agencies working with care leavers to enable more young people in or leaving care to continue in post-16 learning.

Outcomes

- by September 2007 all 14-19 year olds will be able to choose from at least five vocational diplomas
- all young people will be entitled to choose from a minimum of 20 AS/A2 subjects by 2007
- an increase in the range and scope of pre-entry, entry and level 1 provision by December 2007
- clear progression pathways up to level 3 for 19 year-olds by September 2007
- a County wide common application form and prospectus supported by a standard induction programme by September 2006
- the development of a shared learner database to measure achievements, participation and progression and enable the tracking of learners
- all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be able to progress into post-16 learning by December 2008
- an increase in the proportion of young people in or leaving care progressing into post-16 learning.

2. To raise the participation and achievement of young people in learning throughout the County

What does this mean for young people?

All young people will:

- be able to compete for high quality employment opportunities
- have raised aspirations for further progression in learning beyond age 19
- be able to place their learning and skills development in the wider context of economic change.

Actions

We will:

- provide the opportunity for effective dialogue between teachers, parents and learners to encourage young people to fully explore the range of learning options available from age 14 onwards
- work with partners to develop learning provision pre-16 that improves retention, promotes progression and leads to higher level skills in the local economy
- work with partners to develop further the range of pre-16 vocational pathways for learners
- increase the range and number of high quality Apprenticeships in the six priority sectors in County Durham of construction, health and social care, public sector, manufacturing and engineering, tourism and leisure and retail
- ensure all young people are able to progress to suitable learning whether they choose academic or vocational routes by increasing the range and number of high quality Diplomas and Foundation Degrees in the six priority sectors of the economy.

Outcomes

- the proportion of young people aged 16-18 known not to be in employment, education or training (NEET) will be reduced from 12.2% in November 2004 to 10.5% by November 2006
- by December 2007 County Durham will achieve the following targets:
 - i. 85% of 16 year-olds in structured learning
 - ii. 55% of 16 year-olds achieving a level 2 qualification
 - iii. 85% of 19 year-olds achieving a level 2 qualification
 - iv. 60% of 19 year-olds achieving a level 3 qualification
 - v. 33% of 19 year-olds progressing to Higher Education (HE).



Above: Michelle Beckley, Elite Hair & Beauty, Bishop Auckland

Opposite: Apprentices Bev Vickers and Gary Winter, Durham University



Adults



We are committed to providing all adults in County Durham with guidance and high quality learning through a broad range of pathways including clear progression in continued learning and/or future employment.

The development of a Charter for adults will support the commitment from partners to meeting the needs of adults County wide.

We have identified two key recommendations that we will meet in order to improve the provision of learning for adults in County Durham.

1. Improve levels of literacy and numeracy

What does this mean for adults?

All adults will:

- be able to access flexible and high quality learning in their local area
- have a rewarding experience of learning which raises their aspirations and commitment to continued learning
- be enabled to choose learning that best fits their needs and supported in making their choices with effective independent information and advice
- be able to access more rewarding employment opportunities by improving their literacy and numeracy skills.

Actions

We will:

- develop and implement an Adult Charter that will ensure that all adults are able to access high quality learning through a broad range of flexible pathways to enhance their skills
- work with all providers, including the voluntary and community sector, to develop a targeted approach to tackling numeracy and literacy issues in their local area
- develop new kinds of non-assessed learning that encourages learners to progress on to learning with formal qualifications
- develop an integrated package of support to enable Skills for Life learners to progress to level 2 and beyond.

Outcomes

- 14,600 adults will achieve a Skills for Life qualification between 2001 and June 2007

2. Raise the level of skills

What does this mean for adults?

All adults aged 19 and over without a good foundation of skills for employability (i.e. those without a first level 2 qualification) will have access to free learning.

All adults will:

- have access to effective independent information and advice about learning opportunities
- be able to learn the skills they need to be employable now and in the future, placing emphasis on accredited learning and progression
- have access to provision which is flexible enough to attract adults who are re-entering learning
- have access to learning with clear and positive progression routes.

Actions

We will:

- develop a co-ordinated approach across the County to the provision of independent information and advice about learning opportunities
- work with partners to develop an integrated package of support for adults aiming to achieve a first level 2 that will combine information and advice with financial support
- agree a single joint plan across County Durham for Adult and Community Learning to ensure that learning progresses to further learning and accreditation
- improve access to flexible job-specific learning opportunities for people who are economically inactive by working with Jobcentre Plus and the voluntary and community sector.

Outcomes

- 1,300 adults without a level 2 qualification will receive advice about learning opportunities by April 2006
- an additional 7,500 adults will achieve a first level 2 qualification by April 2007
- a reduction in the proportion of economically inactive people from 30% of the adult working age population to 25% by April 2008.

Employers



We will deliver an employer offer that puts employers needs centre stage in the design and delivery of training in support of the skills strategy.

We want to help more of the County Durham current and future workforce to gain the skills they need to improve their employability and employers' productivity to support the local economy.

We have identified one key recommendation to meet the needs of employers in County Durham.

The Learning and Skills Council County Durham has identified six priority sectors of the County's economy. These priority sectors are:

- construction
- health and social care
- public services
- manufacturing and engineering
- tourism and leisure
- retail.

These priority sectors either provide a high proportion of current employment in County Durham or show a projected growth in employment in the near future. Whilst we aim to meet the learning and skills needs of all employers in County Durham, these sectors will be the focus of our actions.

1. Provide flexible and responsive skills provision that meets the needs of employers

What does this mean for employers?

All employers will:

- **be able to access high quality learning designed and delivered in flexible ways that meets their working practices**
- **be able to choose from learning packages supplied by a choice of approved quality providers**
- **be able to improve business performance by having access to a more highly skilled and productive workforce in the future.**

Actions

We will:

- use the key messages from sector skills agreements and focus on the priority sectors to reform the learning in which we invest in the County
- work with colleges and all learning providers to ensure that they make "responsiveness to employers" core to their business
- raise the level of skills in the public services workforce through skills development activity in health care, local authorities and the children's services workforce
- develop additional high quality Apprenticeships in priority sectors to support the demand for skills
- streamline the way in which employers secure suitable skills training by involving them in developing provision and providing an effective brokerage network
- increase employer involvement and collaboration with schools, colleges, all learning providers and the local community
- support the development of the knowledge economy in County Durham through a focus on ICT skills and higher level learning.



Above: Chris Noka, Alfie Lashi, MF Engineering, Emma Thompson, Sedgefield Borough Council, Iain Warbuton, MF Engineering, Newton Aycliffe

Outcomes

- a measurable increase in skill levels in the construction, health and social care, public sector, manufacturing and engineering, tourism and leisure and retail sectors across County Durham by 2008
- 400 public sector employees to participate in learning to achieve a first level 2 by May 2006
- 20% more employers will be involved in learning activities by December 2007 with a particular focus on the needs of smaller employers in the priority sectors
- 10% more employers will be actively offering Apprenticeships by September 2007 with particular focus on the priority sectors
- high quality work experience places will be made available to 92% of pre-16 learners
- 100 tutors and trainers will be involved in a new development programme to support training in the workplace by December 2006
- by 2007 a minimum of 500 new learning opportunities linked to major regeneration projects e.g. Netpark, will be created across County Durham.

Summary

This publication sets out our recommendations and actions for leading change in the Future of Learning in County Durham. Its recommendations place young people, adults and employers at the heart of our proposals as their involvement is vital to ensure the long-term economic and social success of County Durham.

Each of these groups has specific needs that we will look to address through our recommendations. These are summarised below and explained in detail elsewhere in this document.

Young People

- To deliver the Joint Learner Entitlement, and
- To raise the participation and achievement of young people

Adults

- To improve the levels of literacy and numeracy, and
- To raise the level of skills

Employers

- To provide flexible and responsive skills provision that meets the needs of employers

Making a commitment

It is highly unlikely that any one single institution will be able to deliver the actions set out to meet the needs of all three of these groups.

We must each take responsibility for implementing the actions outlined in this document and in working together for the future of County Durham. As governing bodies, boards of private learning providers, community and business leaders and highly skilled professionals we have a collective responsibility to take ownership of this plan. If we achieve our outcomes, we will have the highly skilled workforce needed in the future with the skills and ambition to match the best in the world.

Below: Vicky Howard, Student, Durham University



As a key partner:

We are asking you to make a commitment to work together with the Learning and Skills Council County Durham and its partners by signing the Statement of Intent. This is not a legal statement, but it emphasises your desire to work with the recommendations outlined in this document.

We will publish a list of our committed partners in addition to the supplementary technical document that will be produced after the County Durham 14-19 Area Inspection.

By working together and committing to these actions, we will be able to make a real difference to the lives of young people, adults and employers throughout County Durham.



Above top: Vicky Hindmarsh, Louise Glasper, Kelly Hutchinson & Rebecca Thompson, Dimitri & Sylvia, Newton Aycliffe

Above: Woodworkers at Bracken Hill ATU, Peterlee

Annex A Area Advisory Groups Membership

East Durham

- Joe Armstrong
- Eric Baker
- Peter Cradock
- Mary Crossley
- Malcolm Fallow
- Val Goodrum
- Stuart Hudson
- Peter Keith
- John Murphy
- Jenny Myers
- Peter Phipps
- Val Taylor
- Jacqui Neville
- Kate Welch

Derwentside

- Ann Barkas
- Maureen Bates
- Peter Cradock
- Lester Crawford
- Albert Croney
- Chris Espiner

- David Ford
- Val Goodrum
- David Houpt
- Steve Lang
- Robert Leech
- Jenny Myers
- Ron Walker
- Ken Wilkinson
- Fiona Wood

South West Durham

- Lynne Ackland
- Nick Brewster
- Ann Cant
- Peter Cradock
- Paul Gillis
- Val Goodrum
- George Harris
- Paul Harrison
- Steve Lang
- Gerard Moran
- Jenny Myers
- David Pearson

- Darren Race
- Barry Robinson
- Joanna Tait
- Ron Walker
- Steve Wright

Mid Durham

- Peter Cradock
- Jo Forster
- Val Goodrum
- Anne Lakey
- Denise McNaughton
- Caroline Moralee
- Jenny Myers
- Mitch O'Reilly
- Chris Peverall
- Peter Phipps
- Ian Robertson
- Richard Royle
- Dorothy Tait
- John Widdowson

Annex B StAR Executive Group Membership

Janice Bray	Connexions
Ann Cant	Representing Work Based Learning providers
Neil Charlton	Local Education Authority
Peter Chinnery	Learning and Skills Council County Durham
Tom Crompton	Group Chair – Learning and Skills Council County Durham
George Dunn	Newcastle and Hexham Diocese
Val Goodrum	Learning and Skills Council County Durham
Steve Harness	Representing Schools
David Houpt	Representing Further Education
Nick James	Learning and Skills Council County Durham
Sue Northcott	Representing the Voluntary and Community Sector

Our Statement of Intent

We commit ourselves to work with our partners to transform learning to meet the demands of young people, adults and employers.

We will continue our positive commitment to making a real difference to the lives of people in County Durham.

We commit our organisation to embracing the recommendations and to contribute to the delivery of the actions set out in:

The Future of Learning in County Durham for Post-16 Education and Learning

Please return this Statement of Intent to Peter Chinnery,
Information and Performance Manager

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