



# Learning and Skills Council Northumberland Annual Plan 2007-08

## March 2007

Of interest to National, Regional and  
Local Learning and Skills Colleagues

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## Introduction

We are delighted to present this, the Annual Plan for LSC Northumberland for 2007-08. The document sets out our priorities and challenges, the activities we will undertake and how we will target our resources to make the maximum impact. Though this is a one year plan it supports the delivery of our vision which is that:

***“By 2008 we will have developed a learning infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of learners and employers and that prepares people who live and/or work in Northumberland to take advantage of learning and employment opportunities wherever those opportunities may be.”***

The plan is part of a coherent suite of documents which includes our National Statement of Priorities and, for the first time, a regional Commissioning Plan for the LSC in the North East.

During last year we have continued to make good progress in driving up participation and improving the attainment of young people and adults in Northumberland. We have focused our efforts on the reorganisation of provision in order to meet national, regional and local priorities. At the same time the LSC went through a major national restructuring exercise, to put us in a stronger position to deliver the future needs of the sector.

Our focus in 2007-08 is to build on this success by addressing our national priorities and ensuring that the actions that form our local response meet the specific needs of employers and learners in Northumberland.

The agenda is challenging, but we will meet that challenge head on so as to continue the transformation of the sector and the work of driving up the skills of young people and adults who live and work in the County. Our providers and partners have a crucial role to play in helping us to achieve our ambitions, and we are grateful to them for their commitment, for working so closely with us and for their contribution to our successes to date. Our values of trust, expertise, ambition and urgency will continue to drive all that we do and provide the context for effective and productive partnership working.

The Northumberland Partnership Team will be key to taking this agenda forward and we look forward to building on our collective achievements and working closely with you all in the delivery of this plan for the benefit of Northumberland's people and its economy.



**Jackie Axelby**  
**Chair, LSC Northumberland**



**John Wayman**  
**Area Director,**  
**LSC Northumberland and Tyne and Wear**

## Local Context

This section provides the context for our delivery in Northumberland by setting out the key learning and skills needs and the main challenges to be addressed through effective partnership working.

### Northumberland – Key Facts

- Northumberland covers an area of almost 2,000 square miles, of which 86% is designated as rural. The population density of the County is just 157 people per square mile compared with 754 for the North East as a whole, making it the least densely populated County in England.
- The spread of population, and the learning infrastructure and curriculum offer in Northumberland mean that learners in more isolated areas need to travel to access appropriate learning opportunities.
- Northumberland has one General Further Education College based in Ashington; the mission of the College is to meet the needs of Northumberland learners and this is delivered through a number of satellite sites in Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth, Prudhoe and Kirkley Hall in Ponteland. The College also makes use of a “learning bus” to operate outreach classes.
- Northumberland contains Acklington Prison and Castington Young Offenders Institution, which accommodate approximately 400 young people and 900 adults. Newcastle College provides learning for around 50% of these adults (**Offender Learning and Skills**) and 75% of the young people in these institutions are in full or part-time learning activities.
- Newcastle College has also established out-reach facilities in Cramlington and Hexham where Further Education courses are offered.
- Dilston College in Corbridge is a specialist College sponsored by MENCAP. The College supports delivery of specialist learning in the region by offering residential placements for learners who require a high level of support and provision for day learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities.
- There are three key providers supporting the delivery of Apprenticeships based in Northumberland; Northumberland College, Northumberland Training Agency and North East Chamber of Commerce.
- All 15 high schools in Northumberland have sixth forms.
- Whilst currently operating a three-tier school system the County is consulting on and implementing plans for a two-tier arrangement through its “Putting the Learner First” process.
- The breakdown of **16 – 18 year olds participating in learning** shows 56% studying at school post-16, around 26% in Further Education and 13% on Apprenticeship programmes. The remainder are in Entry to Employment (E2E) and pre-E2E programmes.
- Around 70% of **adults participating in learning** do so through Further Education routes. A further 2% are on Apprenticeship programmes and 4% are participating through European Social Fund (ESF) funded Activities. The Employer Training Pilot has delivered 7% of learning and around 17% is delivered through Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL).
- Currently 12% of working age adults in the County lack any **formal qualifications**. This is below both the regional and national averages of 16% and 14% respectively. Northumberland has a slightly higher proportion of the working age population working at level 4 than the region, but many of these more highly qualified individuals live in the County but commute to Tyne and Wear for employment.
- A comprehensive 14-19 strategy is being implemented across the County with strong collaboration through the 14+ partnership arrangements.

## Young People – Improving Participation and Achievement

### Demand Issues

- The number of young people continuing in learning through **school 6<sup>th</sup> form provision** has increased on the levels achieved in 2005. The increase coincides with the full introduction of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).
- 62% of young people finish year 11 with a **full level 2 qualification** (5 GCSEs at grade A\*-C, or equivalent).
- The proportion of learners **participating in full level 2 or full level 3** programmes through Further Education has increased to around 35%.
- Although the participation rate of young people at 16 remains relatively high, the County continues to have an issue with the number of young people dropping out from learning at 17 and joining the **not in education, employment and training (NEET)** group or entering employment without training. A larger concentration of learners not in education, employment or training is found in NEET hotspots in Blyth, Berwick, Amble and Wansbeck.
- A key component of making work based learning a success is the availability of appropriate **apprenticeship opportunities** but 81% of employers in the County employ between 1 and 10 people and do not have the resource and systems to support an apprentice. In some areas of the County the availability of opportunities at level 1 is also an issue.

### Supply Issues

- Northumberland College is a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Construction and Tourism. Otherwise, there is a lack of **specialist facilities** to support the skills needs of key sectors such as renewable energies. To be economically viable facilities have to be able to meet the needs of young people, adult learners and employers; in some parts of the County this presents a considerable challenge.
- **Success rates in the completion of Apprenticeship** frameworks continue to rise with a significant increase in 2005/06, when a 48% success rate was achieved. However, further improvement is necessary if we are to reach the 55% target by 2007/08.
- The number of places and the nature of learning offer available for **Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities** are highly dependent on provision in specialist colleges outside the County.
- Progression rates from **E2E provision** to positive destinations have increased to 47%. This matches the regional rate but is below the national rate of 48%.
- The **achievement of level 2 at 19** in the County is 67% but this falls to 45% when performance in English and Maths is specified.
- Rates of progression into **Higher Education** are relatively good with an estimated 31% of the cohort entering the sector compared with a regional average of around 24%. This figure masks significant differences across the County; in particular, Ashington, Blyth and Berwick show lower rates of progression.

### Young People - key issues to address:

- support more young people to achieve a **Level 2 qualification by the age of 19**
- increase the number of young people with **high level specialist skills (Level 3 and above)**
- increase uptake and achievement of **Apprenticeships** and work based learning
- improve or remove **poor quality provision**, particularly in some areas of work based learning
- strengthen the learner offer and improve **learner choice**
- support the needs of young people not in education, employment or training (**NEET**) and reduce the numbers in this group
- increase the numbers of **Entry to Employment** learners who progress into positive outcomes
- support the needs of **young people at risk** such as young offenders
- reduce **barriers to participation** in learning at 16, minimise the risk of drop-out, and support the smooth transition between learning opportunities
- increase the capacity of local provision to meet the needs of **Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**
- encourage more progression to **Higher Education** with particular attention paid to areas of the County where participation is low.

## Adults – Driving up local skills and meeting the needs of employers

### Demand Issues

- The number of adults in Northumberland **with literacy and numeracy** needs remains an issue; 61% of adults have levels of literacy below level 2, while 85% are below level 2 in numeracy.
- 29% of working age adults in Northumberland have not gained a **level 2 qualification**; this is below the regional average of 35% and the national 34%. Within the County, Berwick upon Tweed has the most acute problem at 36%.
- The level of job vacancies in the County is in line with regional and national averages, as is the proportion of those vacancies considered “hard to fill.” However, the proportion considered to be vacant because of **skills shortages** is lower than the regional and national average which might suggest that terms and conditions of employment are an issue.
- **Employment** in the County is dominated by the public sector, constituting over 36% of total employment. This is higher than both the regional and national averages. Retail and distribution and tourism are also major employment sectors.
- Research from the Sector Skills Councils continues to suggest a need for **Skills for Life, level 2** and Leadership and Management training across all sectors. Sectors with priority **skills needs at level 2** include Health, Tourism, Manufacturing and Public Administration. We will also give specific focus in the County to the Public Sector (Public Administration, Health and Education), to Construction, Renewable Energies and Tourism.
- The value of **training** is well recognised by employers; more than half provide training for their staff but over a third provide no training at all.

### Supply Issues

- Capacity constraints in terms of **places available on entry level and level 1** provision are an issue in some parts of the County. We have made a concerted effort to address this in Blyth Valley, Wansbeck and rural coalfield areas through co-financed projects.
- The North of the County has **limited facilities** in which to develop a more vocationally focussed offer.
- **The way in which provision is delivered** plays a key role in employer engagement. Flexible delivery is crucial in ensuring that the balance between supply and demand more closely reflects employer needs.

- Further development is required of provision delivered using the On Site Assessment and Training (OSAT) model, and development of provision in the areas covering Information Technology Qualification (ITQ) and Business Improvement Techniques (BIT).
- Most wards have access to **basic skills** provision within Northumberland, though enhancements are needed in the learning offer available to support improvements in numeracy.
- **Skills for Life** provision that does not count towards the national target is reducing and, at 45%, is better than the regional position of 46%.
- There has been an improvement in overall **success rates in Further Education** and in the success rates of long courses.
- Around 39% of Further Education provision is non-accredited or 'other' provision which does not contribute to LSC targets, compared with 36% for the region. A significant amount is leisure learning and entry level which suggests a review of the **balance of Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)** is required.

**Adult Skills - key issues to address:**

- align local LSC funded provision more closely to **LSC priorities**
- increase the number of adults with **Level 2 qualifications**
- reduce the levels of **non-accredited or 'other' LSC funded provision** which does not contribute to LSC targets
- continue to shift the mix of local LSC funded provision in order to meet **local skills needs**
- continue to deliver the priorities in **Sector Skills Agreements** in the local context
- **increase demand** for employment-related skills and training among employers and individuals
- support the development of high quality **specialist provision**
- consider the implications of **demographic change** on future skills needs
- support sustained improvements in the **quality and success** of local provision
- support **economic development** providing the skills needed to support lifelong employability
- increase the number of adults achieving **Skills for Life qualifications** that contribute towards the national target
- improve the skills of workers in the **public services** and better meet the needs of public sector employers.

## Key Actions

This section outlines the specific activity that LSC Northumberland will undertake in order to tackle the main issues identified in the previous section and to address the LSC's four national priorities for 2007/08.

<b>LSC Priority 1: Raise the quality and improve the choice of learning opportunities for all young people to equip them with the skills for employment, further or higher learning, and for wider social and community engagement.</b>		
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>
<b>Learner participation and reducing NEET</b>	<p>Contribute to a reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), reduce barriers to participation in learning at age 16, minimise the risk of drop out and ensure smooth transition between learning opportunities through targeted local action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and agree a joint action plan with Connexions for Northumberland that is consistent with the National NEET Strategy, and play a lead role in the development and implementation of a County-wide Education, Employment and Training (EET) Strategy</li> <li>• Continue to provide effective leadership to the 14-19 agenda through involvement at all levels in the 14-19 structures within the County</li> <li>• Work with providers to ensure there is sufficient and appropriate E2E, bridging and Level 2 provision to increase the entry and progression opportunities for young people taking account of the travel to learn issues in rural areas of the County</li> <li>• Support the implementation of the "Putting the Learner First" school reorganisation programme in the County through participation in the School Organisation Committee and subsequent arrangements</li> <li>• Promote the range of learning opportunities and support arrangements available to young people, their parents and teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute towards the achievement of the Local Area Agreement stretch target for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training of 7.2% for 2007/08</li> <li>• 53% of Entry to Employment (E2E) leavers progress into employment, work based learning or further education</li> <li>• Implement activity identified in the LSC/Connexions action plan</li> </ul>
<b>Attainment at Level 2 and higher</b>	<p>Increase the number of young people achieving a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 with a particular focus on the achievement of Maths and English:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set, monitor and manage challenging Level 2 achievement targets with providers through development plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 percentage point improvement over level achieved in 2005/06 in FE full Level 2 success rates for young people</li> <li>• 10 percentage point improvement over level achieved 2005/06 in WBL full Level 2 success rates for young people</li> </ul>
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<p>Increase Apprenticeship achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve performance of Northumberland's providers through setting stretching targets and ceasing to purchase poor provision</li> <li>• Work closely with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to ensure that JCP clients are prioritised for identification and support in taking up Apprenticeships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Apprenticeship achievement rates by 8 percentage points over levels achieved in 2005/06</li> <li>• 10 JCP client referrals aged 16-24</li> </ul>
<b>Learner choice and provider collaboration</b>	<p>Improve the learner choice for all young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with strategic partners to ensure all young people's needs are met, irrespective of ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and other differences</li> <li>• Encourage provider collaboration to increase choice and quality of provision, targeting areas of specific need and work to influence key local</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute fully to Northumberland's Joint Area Review by delivering all LSC requirements</li> <li>• Ensure LSC support is provided to all of Northumberland's 14+ partnerships in the planning, delivery and management of appropriate learning provision</li> </ul>

	<p>strategic partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop solutions to rurality issues including innovative delivery mechanisms such as distributed and e-learning</li> <li>• Work closely with the Wansbeck Initiative to implement the activities identified within the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI)</li> <li>• Increase the impact of local collaborative programmes such as Increased Flexibility and Young Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Collaborate with the local authority to produce an on-line prospectus for Northumberland outlining courses and programmes on offer to 14-19 year olds</li> <li>• Strengthen the information and advice available on learning opportunities through robust planning with Connexions</li> <li>• Contribute to the development and delivery of specialised diplomas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support partnership activity to raise the standard of employability skills in Northumberland</li> <li>• LSC positioned as key partner within Northumberland Families and Children's Trust (FACT)</li> <li>• Local on-line 14-19 prospectus that meets DfES guidelines available by September 2007</li> </ul>
<b>Young people at risk</b>	<p>Support the needs of young people at risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure young and juvenile offenders progress from custody to community learning provision as part of the delivery of the Integrated Offender Learning and Skills Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of young offenders supervised by Youth Offending teams and participating in learning</li> </ul>
<b>Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities</b>	<p>Increase the capacity of providers to deliver more innovative provision, and develop more new provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions to be determined as a result of the development of a regional LLDD Strategy to be published in April 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures to be determined from Regional LLDD Strategy</li> </ul>

**LSC Priority 2: Raise the skills of the nation, giving employers and individuals the skills they need to improve productivity, employability and social cohesion.**

Issue	Action	Measure of Success
<b>Aligning provision to LSC priorities</b>	<p>Deliver the funding priorities in the LSC's <i>Priorities for Success</i> document and the regional Commissioning Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce non-approved provision through specific agreements with all local FE providers</li> <li>• Increase the proportion and success rates of FE provision at Level 2 and Level 3 through the review and agreement of key targets in provider development plans</li> <li>• Strengthen the implementation of Level 2 entitlement increasing the numbers of adults participating and achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications</li> <li>• Agree with Personal and Community Development Learning (PDCL) providers a proportion of existing provision in support of learning for personal or community development including family learning</li> <li>• Agree appropriate fee income targets with providers</li> <li>• Support collaborative cross-sector working leading to more effective pathways to accredited learning and employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 percentage point reduction compared to levels in 2005/06 in the amount of non-approved provision that does not contribute to LSC targets</li> <li>• 20% increase in participation over levels achieved in 2005/06 in full Level 2 provision in FE</li> <li>• 30% increase in participation over levels achieved in 2005/06 in full Level 3 provision in FE</li> <li>• 5 percentage point improvement over levels achieved in 2005/06 in full Level 2 success rates in FE</li> <li>• 2 percentage point improvement over levels achieved in 2005/06 in full Level 3 success rates in FE</li> </ul>
<b>Skills for Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Skills for Life achievements by agreeing with local FE providers an increase in the proportion of Skills for Life provision that contributes to the national target</li> <li>• Reduce the level of automatic fee remission for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learning by focussing the resources on priority groups – primarily people who are unemployed or receiving income-based benefits</li> </ul>	<p>Increase the FE Skills for Life provision mix which counts towards the national target to 70%</p>
<b>Ensuring local provision meets skills needs</b>	<p>Deliver an incremental change in the local provision mix to ensure that provision continues to meet the skills needs of employers in key sectors, and ensure that it continues to deliver the skills priorities set out in the Sector Skills Agreements (SSA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission qualifications that are listed by Sector Skills Councils as a priority for employers</li> <li>• Review provider development plans to ensure they reflect SSA priorities</li> <li>• Targeted purchasing of Advanced Apprenticeships to respond to specialist Level 3 needs in key local sectors including Construction, Tourism, Manufacturing, Public Administration, Health and Social Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector priorities integrated into provider development plans.</li> <li>• Contribute to the OSAT Level 2 regional target of 5644</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing informed demand – Train</b>	<p>Improve take up and achievement of level 2, level 3 and Skills for life provision in the local workforce, as part of the regional Train to Gain service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver an integrated support package to local employers</li> </ul>	<p>Contribute to the following regional Train to Gain targets;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16,700 Learners participating in learning</li> <li>• 14,340 First level 2 starts</li> </ul>

<b>to Gain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with employers, employees, the local information advice and guidance service, Business Link and the TUC promoting the need for employees to improve their essential skills</li> <li>Ensure broker involvement is a key to driving up workforce engagement reflecting the Train to Gain offer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7,850 Learners gain first level 2 qualifications</li> <li>2,360 Skills for Life learners</li> <li>1,650 learners to gain Skills for Life qualifications</li> <li>90 Level 3 qualifications achieved</li> <li>210 first level 3 learners</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting public sector skills needs</b>	<p>Improve the skills of local workers in the public services and meet the needs of local public sector employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted delivery of 'Train to Gain' providing learning, advice and training for those without a Level 2 and with basic skills needs in the public sector</li> <li>Increase the number of school support staff with a Level 2 contributing towards LSC National Support Staff Targets in collaboration with the local authority</li> <li>Target the promotion of Investors in People (IiP) as an effective organisational development tool across the public sector, specifically to those not already working with the IiP standard</li> <li>Work as a key part of the Northumberland Workforce Development Partnership to support workforce development activities in the County</li> </ul>	<p>Train to Gain activity to contribute to the regional target of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14,560 Learners participating in learning</li> </ul> <p>Northumberland-specific measures to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>275 qualifications at level 2 or above achieved by school support staff</li> <li>250 employees covered by new IiP commitments</li> <li>200 employees covered by IiP recognitions</li> </ul>
<b>Adults at risk – Offender Learning</b>	<p>Improve the achievement levels of learners on Skills for Life and full level 2 programmes, delivered in Custody through the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS)</p> <p>Improve the achievement levels of learners on Skills for Life programmes delivered in the community through the OLASS and improve the referrals from the Northumbria Probation area to other LSC funded Skills for Life programmes</p>	<p>Contribute to the following regional targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1440 Skills for Life achievements that count towards the National target</li> <li>20 first full Level 2 qualifications that count towards the National PSA Level 2 target</li> <li>126 Northumbria Skills for Life achievements delivered in the Northumbria Probation area that count towards the National target</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Education</b>	<p>Promote Higher Education as a progression route to young people in Northumberland with a particular focus on Ashington, Blyth and Berwick</p> <p>Increase the focus of the Construction and Tourism CoVEs on progression to Higher Education with a focus on the development of Foundation Degrees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of young people from the County accessing Higher Education</li> </ul>

**LSC Priority 3: Raise the performance of a world class system that is responsive, provides choice and is valued and recognised for excellence.**

Issue	Action	Measure of Success
<b>Quality and success</b>	<p>Implement the requirements of the Regional Quality Improvement Strategy to provide quality and choice of learning opportunities for all young people in Northumberland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that provider plans include measures to bring about an improvement in success rates</li> <li>• Challenge poor quality and unresponsive provision through planning discussions, applying the national policy on minimum levels of performance</li> <li>• Define and identify coasting provision and have effective actions in place to achieve improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All self-assessment reports reviewed by 31 December 2007</li> <li>• Support all providers identified by the inspectorate and/or LSC as under-performing</li> </ul>
<b>Capital development</b>	<p>Support the development of high class accommodation aligned to excellent provision through mainstream capital and Single Programme investment in a long-term strategy of modernisation of FE provider estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the development of the Northumberland Learning Park in Ashington</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve full agreement to a revised implementation plan for the Northumberland Learning Park in Ashington by September 2007</li> </ul>
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	<p>Influence and support provision to ensure Equality &amp; Diversity is embedded in all learning delivery and continue to support specific learner groups in Northumberland so that they can enter and stay in learning and achieve what they are capable of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address inequalities in participation, success and progression rates</li> <li>• Establish local Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMS) that reflect Northumberland population profiles and regional requirements</li> <li>• Work with regional groups and networks to improve opportunities and support for all individuals and minority groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework achievement rates for LLDD learners across all provision are within 10% of overall achievement rate</li> <li>• Framework achievement rates for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) learners across all provision are within 10% of overall achievement rate</li> </ul>

<b>LSC Priority 4: Raise our contribution to economic development locally and regionally through partnership working.</b>		
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Success</b>
<b>Local Area Agreements</b>	Influence the content, development and refresh of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and the Sustainable Community Strategy and take a lead role in the implementation of learning and skills elements in the context of economic development through Local Strategic Partnerships and Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to all Local Strategic Partnerships through participation in the executive groups</li> <li>• Contribute to the newly formed NSP structure</li> <li>• Ensure LSC targets and priorities are reflected within LAAs</li> <li>• Where possible ensure that funding is aligned with partners to maximise the delivery against targets</li> </ul>
<b>Worklessness and Disadvantaged communities</b>	Enable those who are excluded from the labour market to access learning and sustainable employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the availability and effectiveness of learning in disadvantaged communities through close partnership working and influencing of the local authority, Local Strategic Partnerships and other key partners involved in LEGI and other regeneration activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will be working with all partners to agree key priorities and joint measures</li> </ul>
<b>Voluntary and Community Sector</b>	Continue to work with partners including the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to increase skills and economic inclusion in particular through taking a key role in the Northumberland Voluntary and Community Sector Learning Network	
<b>Information, advice and guidance</b>	Embed good quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) within the broader learning offer for adults: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure full and effective delivery of mainstream IAG services to adults below Level 2</li> <li>• Utilise ESF and other supplementary funding to develop and evaluate the success of an extended IAG service for adults</li> <li>• Support the development of effective IAG networks</li> </ul>	Contribute to the following regional targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46,577 adults receive information</li> <li>• 7081 adults without a Level 2 receive advice</li> <li>• 1230 adults from additional target groups receive advice</li> <li>• 17% of advice service clients without a Level 2 to be aged 50 or over</li> <li>• 15% of advice service clients without a Level 2 to have a learning difficulty and/or disability</li> </ul>

## Aggregate Volumes

Volumes are currently indicative. These will be finalised when actual numbers are agreed with providers.

LSC Funded Participation	16 - 18 (Learner Volumes)	Adult (Learner Volumes)
Number of FE learners (total)	1,884	11,881
Number of FE Full Level 3 Learners	303	635
Number of learners undertaking an Advanced Apprenticeship (Average in Learning)	170	186
Number of FE Full Level 2 Learners	420	1,345
Number of learners undertaking an Apprenticeship at Level 2 (Average in Learning)	791	225
Number of FE learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	502	1,478

Outcomes	16 - 18 (Learner Achievements)	Adult (Learner Achievements)	16 - 18 Success Rates(%)	Adult Success Rates(%)
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 3 qualification	143	364		
Number of Learners achieving an Advanced Apprenticeship Framework	46	56	32.9	35.6
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification	224	861		
Number of Learners achieving an Apprenticeship Framework at Level 2	310	128	42.7	49.3
Number of FE learners achieving a Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	310	869		
Number of Advanced Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship learners achieving a Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	411	228		

Funding Summary	Funding (£)
FE 16 - 18	0
FE Adult	0
FE Additional Learning Support	0
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships 16-18	0
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships Adult	0

## Other Information

### Partnership Working

The LSC is proud of its strong record of effective partnership working at regional, sub-regional and local level. In Northumberland we are also proud of the success that this has brought in helping improve local provision so that it meets the needs of individuals and the economy.

The streamlining of the LSC through the “*Agenda for Change*” reform programme has sought to strengthen our collaboration with partners at all levels. Robust joint working is imperative in meeting the challenges we have set in transforming learning and skills and locally we are working with partners in a number of ways including through;

- pro-active membership of the Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP), taking a lead role within two of its new sector boards – Families and Children’s Trust and Business, Enterprise and Skills
- our role in the Families and Children’s Trust (FACT) Leadership Team, which is responsible for championing and ensuring delivery of improved outcomes for children, young people and families in Northumberland. We will play a full part in joint action to address the issues highlighted within the Children and Young People Plan, for example, those who are not in education, employment and training and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- a key role in the County’s innovative and collaborative approaches to the implementation of the 14-19 agenda. The LSC has direct involvement at all levels within the 14-19 structures including the Strategy Group supported by a management group and a development group and individual groups representing each of the six local 14+ partnership areas.
- the underpinning partnership of the LSC, NSP, Business Link, Jobcentre Plus and Connexions which has enabled LSC Northumberland to engage effectively with the Regional Skills Partnership and has resulted in the development of the Northumberland Workforce Development Strategy.
- Full participation in the County-wide dialogue to develop a consensus about what learning in Northumberland should be like in the year 2020.

Our regional team is strengthening the LSC’s engagement with strategic partners at the regional level. Through the **Regional Skills Partnership** and its Regional Skills Action Plan we will work with One NorthEast, Business Link and Jobcentre Plus to maintain a structured and co-ordinated approach to strategic planning.

The work of the LSC North East’s sector team is ensuring sector needs and the Sector Skills Agreements fully inform the strategic purchasing of LSC funded provision, meeting skills needs across a range of sectors of strategic importance in the area. This involves a strong interface with Skills for Business, the Sector Skills Development Agency, and the relevant **Sector Skills Councils**.

## **Equality and Diversity**

The LSC has a duty to promote equality and diversity across all learning and skills provision to ensure that we meet the diverse needs of all sections of society. We will discuss with providers through our planning dialogues how they are embedding good equality and diversity practice into all their activities. In spring 2007 we will draw up a regional strategy and action plan for equality and diversity, informed by a national Single Equality Scheme and the One NorthEast Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan.

Regional Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) will be identified by early 2007 based on a regional analysis of participation and achievement. These will be taken forward in Northumberland by the local partnership team. We also recognise the importance of embedding equality and diversity in our own workforce through the identification, development and dissemination of good practice.

## **Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

The LSC is committed to meeting the learning needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD). By April 2007 a regional strategy will be published, informed by the national strategy and the recent regional review of provision. The key elements will be:

- investing in provision: understanding demand and developing more high quality, learner centred provision to increase the number of opportunities for learners to study locally
- raising the quality of provision: actively supporting programmes that enable individuals to progress to meet their aims and aspirations
- working with partners to develop a co-ordinated regional approach to LLDD workforce development
- increasing economic participation through sustainable employment: sharing good practice and working with partners to increase employment opportunities.

The Northumberland Partnership Team will be working closely with relevant providers and partners in the County to ensure that these priorities are addressed.

## **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of learners is a fundamental issue for the Learning and Skills Council. We believe that everyone is entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. LSC policy is to adopt a 'best practice' approach to the promotion of learner health and safety, by applying four core principles, namely to:

- expect that colleges and other providers funded by the LSC will fully meet their legal obligations and "duty of care" to learners
- seek assurance that colleges and other providers have suitable and sufficient arrangements for learner health and safety
- take appropriate action where expected standards are not met or maintained
- promote the raising of standards for learner health and safety through support, and challenge, as appropriate.

These principles will be taken forward by the LSC's regional Health and Safety team, working closely with the Northumberland Partnership Team, providers and key partners.