

Strategic Plan

North West Jobcentre
Plus and LSC Joint
Strategic Plan 2006-7



Leading learning and skills



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Background

One of the Government's key objectives is to implement a coherent national skills strategy between Government Departments and their Agencies. These aims were initially set out in the July 2003 White Paper '21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential'. The NEP Report 'Welfare to Workforce Development' in February 2004 and a further report 'Skills in the Global Economy', published in December 2004 followed this. A fundamental aspect of these reports are plans for closer working between Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to address labour market and skills issues and take forward the National Skills Strategy.

As part of the National Skills Strategy implementation programme, the National Employer Panel (NEP) examined measures to increase collaboration between key partners who have a shared interest to support those in receipt of welfare benefits into sustainable employment. The NEP conducted extensive research and consulted employers, policy makers and frontline staff from Department for Working Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentre Plus; and with 'workforce development' key players from Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council.

The report found that although there is common ground between DWP and DfES objectives, it is not fully utilised. Increased collaboration between Jobcentre Plus and LSC, including shared objectives, target and performance measures, would improve the continuity of service and guidance for individuals seeking to move from unemployment into sustainable employment.

The NEP Welfare to Workforce Development Report recognised that key employment and skills priorities have been identified in each Region by the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) delivery plans and that the

Regional Skills Partnership plays a vital role in delivering these priorities. However the report outlined concerns that these plans overlook the fact that, 'labour markets are essentially local'. Therefore the report recommended that each LSC

Executive Director and Jobcentre Plus District Manager formulate and agree Local Joint Delivery Plans.

In summary, the report contains 35 recommendations which fall into seven key areas: Policy & Strategy; Local Delivery Planning; Contracting & Performance Management; Skills for Life; Information, Advice and Guidance; Employer Related; and Sector Skills. There are 14 recommendations captured within the Report, which require LSC and Jobcentre Plus action at a regional and sub-regional level.

(Full details of the 35 recommendations are outlined at Annex A)

Collaborative working between Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council will also provide the mechanism to address Skills and Employment issues across the Region. Through the Northern Way and City Region Development Plans both organisations will explore joint opportunities to increase the number of people of working age that are economically active and improve employability and productivity through a higher skilled workforce. This includes measures such as the rollout of Train to Gain (NETP) and the expansion of Pathways to Work.

Summary of progress

Over the year to March 2006 significant progress has been made across the North West in all seven key planning areas. A Success Report documenting these achievements has been produced and clearly illustrates the advances made in; improving access and take up of Advice and Information services, adapting LSC and Jobcentre Plus provision to better meet the needs of Jobcentre Plus customers and employers and aligning ESF co-financing provision, activity and planning. We intend to build on these successes in the coming year, using this Regional Strategic Plan as the focus for new and existing approaches and activities.

It is acknowledged that a number of key issues require national action to enable progress in areas such as Funding, Contracting and Targets. However, both the LSC and Jobcentre Plus in the North West have developed a series of plans and reports to maximise impact in the Region. This Strategic Plan, alongside the Regional Progress Report, captures the activities undertaken across the North West and identifies issues for cascade upwards to the national tier for resolution through the use of issues logs.

Progress towards the NEP recommendations will also be monitored and discussed by senior managers at the quarterly Regional Strategic Group meetings jointly chaired by John Korzeniewski (Regional Director LSC) Paul Keen (NW Director JCP). Across the five sub-regions, planning groups have been established, bringing together LSC Executive Directors, Jobcentre Plus District Managers and planning specialists. Commitment towards a shared agenda has been captured and developed through the production of Local Joint Delivery Plans.

The national priorities for joint planning in 2006/7 are: -

- Skills for Life (Transfer of Basic Skills)
- Apprenticeships for Adults
- Demand Led Routeways
- Information, Advice and Guidance (including Skills Coaching)

Our overall aim is to provide a high quality offer to employers and individuals. This offer should be the mainstream of LSC and Jobcentre Plus activity over the coming year.

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
Strategic Planning	<p>Regional Joint Planning Group Provide strategic direction and monitor ongoing joint Jobcentre Plus and LSC activity towards the NEP WtWD Report and wider Skills agenda.</p> <p>Review membership and terms of reference for the Group.</p>	JCP FD LSC RD	Ongoing	<p>Planning Group meet quarterly to direct and monitor progress in the field. Joint JCP/LSC Planning Workshop delivered in February 06 to discuss 2006-07 priorities, progress monitored and plans reviewed at follow-up workshop 15th June.</p> <p>A Joint progress report is produced from input submitted by local LSC and JCP contacts and used as the key discussion document for the Regional Strategic Group meetings. National Office has shown interest in utilising the process nationally.</p> <p>Regional Strategic plan in place and updated quarterly.</p>	<p>LSC Priorities:- 2,3,4,6</p> <p>JCP Priorities:- 2, 3</p>
	ESF Objective 3 Co-financing Plans – LSC and Jobcentre Plus to co-ordinate strategic objectives/plans in line with Joint Working Agreement signed in 2005.	LSC / JCP Regional Leads	Ongoing	Joint GONW, LSC and JCP monthly meetings through Co-financing Network Group.	
			Ongoing	2006-7 Regional Statement of Priorities used by both LSC and JCP to inform focus of ESF co-financing provision / activity.	
	<p>Skills Academies Ensure Jobcentre Plus interests are considered in the development of skills academies.</p>	LSC / SSPAs	Dec 2006	ESF Assessment Panels jointly attended by JCP and LSC. This included sub-regional and regional panels.	SSPA members to influence focus of academies towards the targeting of Jobcentre Plus priority customers.

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
	<p>City Strategy. Both Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council to influence the direction and goals of City Strategy EOI to support joint objectives.</p> <p>LSC/Jobcentre Plus to give support to working with any successful consortium in the sub region.</p>	Local LSC / Jobcentre Plus Leads	By July 2006.	<p>City Strategy involvement included in all Local Joint Delivery Plans.</p> <p>Regional Jobcentre Plus/LSC reps to share information about EOI, City strategy progress and connectivity with other skills and employment strategies.</p>	

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
Engaging Employers	<p>Skills Brokerage Develop an independent and impartial brokerage model, delivering demand-led skills solutions for adults, through the Train to Gain (NETP).</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus to work collaboratively with LSC to determine the 'core offer' to employers and inform the development of a NW Skills Brokerage Model for the Region.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus Employer Engagement leads (Regional and District) to work with LSC to improve knowledge and understanding of T2G and Skills Brokerage. Develop 'customer journey' to clearly set out referral arrangements between JCP and LSC.</p>	<p>LSC Skills Director JCP Skills & Employment Manager</p> <p>JCP DMs LSC Eds</p> <p>LSC SDM / JCP SME Mrg</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2006 – ongoing</p>	<p>NW Brokerage Group established, chaired by RSP Manager. Membership includes LSC and Jobcentre Plus.</p> <p>T2G Delivery Plan in place.</p> <p>Expressions of interest for T2G brokerage received before Xmas – short listed organisations have been invited to tender for the delivery. T2G contracts will be in place in Employer Training Pilot areas by August 2006.</p> <p>Joint Regional meetings between JCP and LSC to understand core JCP offer to employers. Ongoing work at a regional level to capture JCP mainstream activity.</p> <p>T2G and Skills Brokerage to be communicated to Jobcentre Plus Advisers</p>	<p>LSC Priorities:- 2,3,5,6</p> <p>JCP Priorities:- 1,2,3</p>

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
	Skills Brokers to train Jobcentre Plus Advisers on how to promote and refer to T2G services.	LSC / Jobcentre Plus T2G Leads.	August – October 2006	and to be included in Senior Adviser Manager conference in October. Two way training to share information will be put in place.	
	<p>Skills for Business Network / Sector Skills Agreements LSC and JCP engagement through the emerging Sector Skills & Productivity Agreements (SSAs), demonstrating links between skills and productivity. Delivering real benefits to employers.</p>	JCP RPM	Ongoing	JCP representation reflects priority sectors in the region, with focus on those offering entry- level opportunities for priority customer groups. Jane Rushton based in NWRO picks up remaining SSPAs.	
	Capture pre-entry routes for those currently inactive and workforce development opportunities through a 'skills escalator' approach.	JCP DMs LSC Eds	Cleared	Regional Statement of Priorities 2006-7 captures NW sector priorities and will inform JCP and LSC (plus other key partners) planning for 2006-7.	
	<p>Jobcentre Plus – Vacancy Plus Share information with LSC to inform workforce development provision and skills solutions.</p>	Local JCP Leads	Cleared	Local JCP vacancy planning analysis is shared fully with LSC colleagues at a local level and included in Local Joint Plans.	
	<p>Employability Routeways Identify occupational sectors to develop and 'test' joint LSC and JCP sector routeways. Consider funding opportunities and build on existing 'demand led' models such as Health Learning Works.</p>	Local LSC / JCP Leads	Ongoing	Routeways are included in all Local Joint Delivery Plans with Health Learning Works in Cumbria and Merseyside highlighted as good practice (funding for these two projects have been secured to March 2007).	

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
	<p>Joint Marketing Material Utilise opportunities to develop joint regional and local marketing material. Produce regional sector focused material, promoting the role of both LSC and Jobcentre Plus in addressing recruitment and workforce development issues.</p> <p>Local arrangements to market a coherent package of products and services to employers to be pursued.</p> <p>Rapid Response. Co-ordinate joint activities in response to large-scale recruitment or redundancy.</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus/LSC'SSPA reps</p> <p>Local LSC / Jobcentre Plus Leads</p> <p>Regional Jobcentre Plus & LSC leads</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By Dec 2006.</p>	<p>Joint material developed through the NW SSPAs including Construction, Health and Logistics, and transportation sector in Merseyside and Manchester.</p> <p>Inclusion of specific marketing objectives appears in Cheshire/Warrington, Cumbria, Merseyside and Manchester Joint Plans.</p> <p>Regional representatives have agreed to develop a joint protocol to respond to large-scale labour market events.</p>	

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
Supporting Individuals	<p>Employer Training Programme / NETP LSC to undertake a procurement exercise to contract with providers beyond August 2006. A wide range of stakeholders will be involved in shaping the specification of provision to be procured</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus and the LSC to work jointly to embed and deliver all the elements contained in the nationally agreed Train to Gain Protocol to maximise impact in the Region.</p> <p>JCP to signpost employers to the new Train to Gain brokerage service and will aim to publicise Train to Gain on JCP intranet and external websites; feature Train to Gain in paper based and e-channels, hold joint briefings with LSC, co-ordinate the launch and marketing of NETP and communicate and up-skill Jobcentre Plus staff and Advisors</p>	Jobcentre Plus SME Manager/LSC SDM.	From July 2006	<p>Contracting for brokers should be complete by July 2006 with contract commencing in August Jobcentre Plus has been involved in the selection exercise for the Brokers.</p> <p>Nationally produced T2G communication packs have been distributed to all local office managers & a series of communication tools & training events will be delivered prior to 'go live'. Adviser Managers event in October will invite a T2G provider to outline the process and referral mechanism.</p>	<p>LSC Priorities:- 2,3,4,5,6</p> <p>JCP Priorities:- 1,2,3</p>
	<p>Apprenticeships Each Jobcentre Plus District will agree arrangements for LSC to maximise the number of Apprenticeship opportunities.</p>	Local Jobcentre Plus/LSC Leads	By June 2006	Jobcentre Plus & LSC have included quantifiable/measurable targets for apprenticeships filled by Jobcentre Plus in each Local Joint Delivery Plan.	
	<p>New Deal for Skills</p> <p>Adult Learning Option Trial the effectiveness of an incentivised approach to learning for the low-skilled through the Adult Learning Option. Providing greater support for inactive benefit recipients (inc. l/t unemployed) to access learning to Level 2.</p>	Jobcentre Plus Local Implementation mgr/ERM.	Ongoing to Sept 2006	<p>National Steering Group & ALO Process Sub-Group includes representation from LSC and NW JCP. Manchester East and West is the NW pilot area. Issues around SLAs, new referrals forms, budgets and availability of level 2 places have held up progress on ALO. Issues identified at local level have been cascaded up t the National Steering group, LSC and Jobcentre Plus national offices and Change Manager.</p>	

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
	<p>Skills Coaching Pilot Review the lessons learnt and findings from the Skills Coaching Pilots in Manchester East and West.</p> <p>Consider wider implementation of New Deal for Skills measures across the NW Region.</p> <p>Incapacity Benefit (IB) customers Identify opportunities for IB customers to access LSC funded learning opportunities (subject to capacity issues).</p> <p>In-work support for IB customers to be maximised through T2G. Local linkages to be agreed to allow referrals to Workforce Development support for inactive customers.</p> <p>Skills for Life / Basic Skills</p> <p>Regional Skills for Life Action Plan Through the NW Skills for Life Delivery Plan for 2005-7 outline the role and responsibility of Jobcentre Plus, LSC and other key partners towards the achievement of SfL targets.</p> <p>Plan access and capacity of LSC provision for JCP customers throughout the transition period 1 April –31 July 2006.</p> <p>Develop and design a new employability programme that achieves the desired outcomes of high quality provision, achievement of basic skills and ESOL qualifications and entry to sustainable employment for introduction in 2007.</p> <p>Include Ufi/Learn Direct provision into each Local Joint Delivery Plan and confirm capacity.</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus ERM</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus/LSC Regional Leads.</p> <p>Local ERMs and LSC SDM.</p> <p>SME Mrg and LSC SDM.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus ERM/LSC SDM</p> <p>Local LSC/Jobcentre Plus Leads.</p> <p>Regional LSC/Jobcentre Plus reps.</p> <p>Local LSC/Jobcentre Plus Leads.</p>	<p>To March 2007.</p> <p>July 2006.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2006.</p> <p>By Sept 2006.</p> <p>By June 2006.</p> <p>By Dec 2006.</p> <p>By June 2006.</p>	<p>Skills coaching has been extended for a further 12 months to March 07</p> <p>Plans have been accepted to increase its geographical spread to include Central Manchester.</p> <p>Pathway will be rolled out across all NW areas by March 2009. Rollout will start on 30 October 2006 Greater Mersey; October 2007 Greater Manchester East & West and April 2008 Cheshire & Warrington. With the rollout of T2G links between contracted in-work support and Pathways areas will be enhanced.</p> <p>Following LSC re-organisation and SFL transfer, a new SFL joint group will be introduced.</p> <p>All Local Joint delivery Plans include SFL referral targets and mapping objectives for transitional period.</p> <p>Bi monthly Joint Regional meetings scheduled – national stakeholder events scheduled with regional reps in attendance.</p> <p>Regional engagement with Learndirect has taken place, review meetings are planned. 15% of Learndirect provision is intended for Jobcentre Plus customers and provision is mapped locally with SLAs for joint working put in place.</p>	

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
	<p>Working with Offenders Introduce an integrated Offender Learning and Skills Service for all offenders (OLASS). Skills for Life will remain a priority for offender learning. Jobcentre Plus will work in partnership with LSC through Sub-regional Plans and through membership of the Regional Project Board.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus and LSC to co-ordinate a joined up approach to the offender learning employment agenda in line with the Green paper Reducing Reoffending through skills and employment.</p> <p>Information, Advice & Guidance Continue to increase access to the Information and Advice contracts delivered through “nextstep” by extending the most successful approaches across the region e.g. Co-location of IA staff in Jobcentre Plus offices, sharing resource in external premises and delivering joint promotional events</p>	<p>Local LSC/Jobcentre Plus Leads. Regional Jobcentre Plus ERM and ERT specialist and LSC SDM.</p> <p>LSC SDM/Jobcentre Plus ERT Specialist.</p> <p>Local LSC/Jobcentre Plus Leads</p>	<p>By June 2006.</p> <p>By April 2006.</p> <p>By June 2006.</p> <p>By Sept 2006</p> <p>By July 2006.</p> <p>By September 2006.</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus represented on OLASS Regional Project Board and all 5 local CJAs.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus and LSC jointly lead on the ‘Skills & Employment’ work stream of the Regional Re-offending Action Plan.</p> <p>OLASS has been recognised as a local area of priority for the 06/07 planning round.</p> <p>Have in place a network of LSC and Jobcentre Plus reps and co-ordinate & share activities undertaken in each CJA/OLASS Board to contribute to the Regional Re-offending Action plan</p> <p>Targets for IAG referrals and starts have been included in all Local Joint delivery Plans in 06/07.</p> <p>Nextstep referrals have been included as a key stage into new SFL referral process to LSC provision.</p>	

Strand / business area	Planned activity/action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	LSC priorities / JCP PSA targets
Contracting & Performance Management	<p>JCP access to LSC funded provision and other non-contracted provision Jobcentre Plus Districts and Local LSCs to identify provision, which will support the achievement of shared objectives and determine the capacity to accommodate referrals.</p>	JCP DMs LSC EDs	Ongoing	Jobcentre Plus to identify and share knowledge of LSC provision suitable for Jobcentre Plus customers using LMS & other information sources to encourage usage.	LSC Priorities: - 1,2,3
	<p>Payment of Allowances for JCP customers accessing LSC provision Continue to trial the payment of Allowances for JCP customers accessing LSC funded provision through existing payment pilots until completion in August 2006.</p>	JCP DMs LSC EDs	Cleared	Payment Pilot in Lancashire completed in June 06, Merseyside's continues until March 07. Good practice and evaluation summaries are shared and used to identify issues and remedies.	JCP Priorities: - 1,2,3
	<p>Adult Learning Option – in Manchester East and West will pilot the access to L2 courses funded by the LSC by Jobcentre Plus customers primarily on Incapacity Benefit.</p>			Issues identified at local level have been cascaded higher and ALO will be introduced for the September 2006 term start.	
	<p>Local contracting plans Share details of Jobcentre Plus and LSC contracting plans and timescales, including mainstream and ESF Co-financing plans (see Policy and Strategy)</p>	District 3 rd Party Managers and LSC counterparts	Ongoing – quarterly	Ongoing dialogue between JCP and LSC through Joint ESF Networking Group.	

Annex A

Summary of National Employer Panel (NEP) Recommendations

Recommendations for regional and local action:

- (3)** LSC should use its new employer engagement database to provide Jobcentre Plus with information on employers committed to Investors in People (IiP) and active in training.
- (7)** LSC to work with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that basic skills and ESOL training providers participate in the LSC's SfL Quality Initiative.
- (9)** Skills for Business Network (SSDA and SSCs) should strengthen links with Jobcentre Plus, which should be viewed as a full partner and prime customers of its services. Jobcentre Plus should work closely with the SSDA and SSCs to identify and secure the skills needed for employment.
- (13)** LSC EDs and Jobcentre Plus DMs should agree an annual delivery plan that sets out the key employment and skills priorities for the two organisations.
- (14)** Vocational training providers should be required to demonstrate that they are addressing local labour need.
- (15)** Priority funding should be given to those contractors, which integrate training with work placements, demonstrate high quality and performance outcomes for provision.
- (18)** LSC and Jobcentre Plus to agree arrangements to share performance data on all contractors.
- (19)** LSC should have lead responsibility for purchasing and managing the provision of all basic skills and ESOL training. (Subject to conditions)
- (20)** LSC and Jobcentre Plus to identify where there is overlap and therefore sensible for one organisation to procure services on behalf of the other
- (22)** LSC should use their funding and procurement powers to ensure that IAG contracts give priority service to disadvantaged clients
- (23)** Jobcentre Plus should ensure that all clients without qualifications are referred to a Nextstep Provider; and those with less than level 2 qualification are given the opportunity to access IAG services and skills training needed to gain sustainable employment.
- (26)** LSC and Jobcentre Plus should explore ways to progress newly hired former benefit claimants through in-work support.
- (27)** Business Link organisations and Jobcentre Plus should develop sufficient knowledge of each other's products and services to signpost employers.

(29) A coherent, ‘no wrong door’ system should be achieved through effective collaboration between LSC, Business Link and Jobcentre Plus. Three critical elements include; a) a single offer based on a combined portfolio of services provided through each organisation b) employer-facing staff with sufficient knowledge to signpost employers effectively c) an IT system to support a customer relationship management system.

(31) LSC and Jobcentre Plus should agree measurable objectives for the number of Apprenticeships filled by Jobcentre Plus.

(32) Local LSCs should develop systems to measure how many E2E young people secure and retain jobs following participation on the programme.

(33) Delivery Plans should outline arrangements for ensuring a smooth transition from E2E to New Deal or from JSA to E2E as a step towards an Apprenticeship.

Recommendations for national action:

Policy

1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12

Changes to delivery system

16, 17 and 21

Customers Services

24, 25 and 28

Modern Apprenticeships

30, 34 and 35

Full details can be found in the National Employment Panel’s Welfare to Workforce Development Report.

Annex B

Summary of LSC National Priorities

1. Ensure that all 14–19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities
2. Making learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults
3. Transform the learning and skills sector through *agenda for change*
4. Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help all individuals into jobs
5. Improve the skills of the workers who are delivering public services
6. Strengthen the capacity of the LSC to lead change nationally, regionally and locally

Summary of JCP Business Priorities

1. Transforming our services by:

- Completing the roll out of Jobcentre Plus offices in Summer 2006 and continuing to implement our new organisation preparing for welfare reform changes, focussing the majority of resource on contact with customers;
- Expanding Pathways to Work pilots for Incapacity Benefit customers;
- Introducing New Deal plus for lone parents;
- Continuing our specific work with those disadvantaged customers and communities who face the greatest barriers to employment and promoting diversity and equality in every area of our business;
- Continuing the development of our services for employers and improving our 'e channel' services.

2. Delivery of performance by:

- Delivering high quality services and reducing variations in performance;
- Meeting our performance targets
- Improving key areas for customers such as phone answering and benefit clearance times, and continuing to improve the performance of our advisers.

3. Delivering services more efficiently & effectively by:

- Reducing costs and redeploying our people to reduce staff numbers by March 2007;
- Extending our private sector led New Deal contracts and securing high levels of outcomes from our contracted provision;
- Working closely with partners and stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally in delivering services to customers.

4. Delivering the Values through our people by:

- Working together to deliver high quality services for our customers;
- Improving the skills and capability of our people;
- Strengthening leadership at all levels through systematic action;
- Strengthening internal communications to ensure our people are well informed.