



>LSC

Leading learning and skills

nw news

the newsletter for stakeholders of the LSC in the North West

spring 07

Welcome



John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West LSC

Welcome to the first LSC North West stakeholders' newsletter. We intend this to be a quarterly publication which will contain news, features and updates which will be of interest to our many partners and stakeholders in the learning and skills sector. I hope you find it of interest and that you will let us know your thoughts about the content.

This newsletter reaches you at a time of enormous change - even judged by the standards of the learning and skills sector, which has seen such major developments over the past few years. Within the newsletter you will find features on a number of major drivers of this change - in particular the Leitch report on skills.

Chancellor Gordon Brown and Education Secretary Alan Johnson's call on employers to sign up to a 'Skills Pledge' to ensure their employees reach a skills level equivalent to five good GCSEs, is yet another example of the increasing focus on our country having the skills to compete globally, now and in the future.

The LSC's strategy for meeting the challenges arising from these initiatives is our own *agenda for change*, a dynamic programme of change designed to deliver skills for employers, excellent provision, simplification and economic success, leading to the realisation of a vision of a demand-led FE system delivering world-class skills.

The parallels with the Leitch report can be clearly seen - indeed we were pleased to see within the report the recognition of the contribution that some of our flagship programmes and services are already making such as Train to Gain, Apprenticeships, Skills for Life and the National Employer Service.

So I look forward to continuing to work with our partners and stakeholders as we further develop the demand led learning and skills system we need to deliver our vision.

J. M. Korzeniewski

North West Regional Office
9th Floor
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Manchester M4 3AQ
Tel: 0845 019 4142
Email: grmanchesterinfo@lsc.gov.uk

In this issue

Leitch rallying call	3	Apprenticeship news	10-11
Train to Gain	4	Investing in FE	13
Regional Skills Priorities	5	14-19 learning	13
National Skills Academies	6	ESF news	14
Local news	7	Events calendar	15
Who's who	8-9	Consulting on LLDD	16

Leitch rallying call

"A clear rallying call." That's how LSC Chair Chris Banks described the challenges and opportunities set out in Lord Leitch's report on the UK's long-term skills needs, 'Prosperity for all in the Global Economy: World-Class Skills'.

Published last December, the Leitch report sets out ambitious goals for 2020, which, if achieved, would make the UK a world leader in skills.

The report is set against a backdrop of economic strength and stability in the UK, with 14 years of unbroken growth and one of the highest employment rates in the developed world. However the report makes it clear that in a rapidly changing global economy, the UK cannot afford to stand still.

Left unchecked, low skills levels can hold back productivity and growth and will result in increasing inequality. Even if current targets are met, the report warns, by 2020 the UK's skills base will be inferior to that of many developed nations.

The Leitch ambition

The report recommends that the UK commits to a compelling new vision; to become a world leader in skills by 2020. This means increasing skills attainment at all levels by 2020 so that:

- 95% of working age adults have basic skills in both functional literacy and numeracy, rising from 85% and 79% respectively in 2005
- More than 90% of adults are qualified to at least Level 2, up from 70% today
- The number of apprentices in the UK is boosted to 500,000 each year, with a shift in balance from Level 2 to Level 3
- More than 40% of adults are at graduate level and above, up from 29% today.

To achieve these goals Leitch points to radical change in the system to make it more efficient and responsive to market needs. He also says that Government, employers and individuals must all engage and invest more in skills development.

Recommendations in brief

Leitch outlines a series of far-reaching and stretching recommendations across the whole skills spectrum by:

- Increasing skills attainment at all levels
- Routing public funding of vocational skills through Train to Gain and Learner Accounts
- Strengthening the employer voice on skills through the creation of a new Commission for Employment and Skills, increasing employer engagement and investment in skills, reforming Sector Skills Councils which will simplify and approve vocational training
- Launching a new 'pledge' for employers to voluntarily train more employees at work. If insufficient progress has been made by 2010, introduce a statutory right for employees to access workplace training
- Increasing employer investment in higher level qualifications, especially in Apprenticeships and in degree and postgraduate levels; significantly more training in the workplace
- Raising people's aspirations and awareness of the value of skills, creating a new universal adult careers service to diagnose skill needs with a skills health check available for all
- Government to introduce compulsory education or workplace training up to age 18 following the introduction of new Diplomas and an expanded Apprenticeship route; and
- Integrating of public employment and skills services to deliver sustainable employment, enabling more disadvantaged people to gain skills and find work, developing employer-led Employment and Skills Boards.

"The prize for this new ambition is huge - a more prosperous and productive society, with higher rates of employment and lower levels of poverty and inequality."

Lord Leitch



Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC addressing delegates at the recent regional Leitch/FE reform roadshow held at the Hilton, Manchester.

North West voice heard

Employer engagement is the single largest challenge facing those operating in the further education system in achieving Leitch's vision. That was the clear message that was heard at a recent regional Leitch/FE reform roadshow held at the Hilton, Manchester.

Over 200 representatives of colleges, training providers and key regional skills stakeholders attended the event, organised by the DfES and the LSC.

Part of a national roadshow, the North West event was the sixth in the series and encouraged the audience to put forward their views and opinions through a lively interactive session. It gave delegates an opportunity to hear about the implications of Lord Leitch's report and what it means for individual institutions and the sector as a whole.

"The Leitch report estimates a potential net benefit of at least £80 billion over 30 years, equivalent to an annual boost of £2.5 billion" said LSC Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, who hosted the conference.

He challenged the audience to rise to the recommendations set by Lord Leitch. "It is a big challenge to be world-class. We have collectively already made considerable progress but there is much, much more which needs to be done" he said.

With employer engagement increasingly high on the agenda of those charged with realising the Leitch vision, over 50% of the audience acknowledged that substantial change would be required in their own organisations to meet the challenges that lie ahead. A quarter of the delegates believed that employer attitudes towards training is the most important driver for attracting investment from employers and over 40% said that improving engagement and marketing to employers were the most critical things that need to be done to deliver Leitch and transform FE.

Train to Gain gathers momentum

Employer awareness of Train to Gain is set to take off with a major national and regional marketing and advertising campaign, which will ensure employers don't miss out on the service built around their needs.

In the North West, employers are already successfully using the Train to Gain Service to boost business performance, but there are many more that don't yet know the service exists. The national marketing campaign aims to address this by targeting hard to reach employers via national and regional newspapers, the trade press and national and local radio.

As an employer focused service, the LSC's Train to Gain policy team has liaised with employers from the outset to ensure the service is relevant to the needs of employers across all sectors. This has proved to be a success as over 90% of employers using the Train to Gain service nationally have expressed satisfaction with the Skills Brokerage Service. Employers have benefited from individual training needs assessments, tailored training packages and advice on the sometimes complex funding sources, and how training can improve business performance.

The development of Train to Gain started in 2003 with the publication of the first Skills White Paper, 21st Century Skills. This was then followed by Employer Training Pilots that helped small to medium sized businesses develop their workforces through subsidised training and contributions to wage costs.

The Train to Gain service has grown from this pilot, however it has many new qualities as Paul Holme, LSC North West Regional Director of Skills comments,

"The four year period that the pilots covered was a really good opportunity for us to test out what worked and what didn't. Train to Gain is not just an extension of the pilots, it has taken the best from that experience to build a much broader offer of a comprehensive new service for the employer."

Paul continued, "The independent and impartial Skills Brokerage Service is a really good example of the dialogue we had. Employers told us that they valued an advisor working for them with their best interests at heart – someone who wasn't there to promote or sell a particular product or service but to help them address their business needs and look at how skills could benefit them. That's at the very heart of the Train to Gain service as a result."

Lord Leitch has also acknowledged Train to Gain's role in his recent report on the UK's long-term skills. He highlighted that Train to Gain is an important approach to developing the nation's workforce and maintaining the country's competitiveness.

If you'd like to find out more about Train to Gain, contact the regional Train to Gain Skills Broker, Business Link Northwest on 0845 00 66 888 or visit www.traintogain.gov.uk



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Fish & chip shop 'plaices' people first

Award-winning Taylor's Fish Ltd has been serving the nation's favourite food, fish and chips, to the community of Woodley, Stockport, since 1966. The traditional, family-owned business is well known for its past and present achievements, but four years ago the company was suffering from lack of staff motivation and long working hours that were affecting morale.

The directors were determined to turn the situation around. They turned to the LSC's Employer Training Pilot and put in place a plan of action to raise the company's profile and provide a learning framework for their staff. Such was the success that this continues today through Train to Gain.

Five employees undertook training, securing NVQ Level 2 qualifications in Team Leading and Customer Service. One member of staff also completed the European Computer Driving Licence IT qualification.

The creation of a formalised career structure helped employees commit to the learning process. They quickly understood how their own personal development would help the business to achieve its objectives.

With staff now more motivated, Taylor's Fish Ltd is unquestionably benefiting from improved performance and a more efficient workforce. Turnover has more than doubled and staff are highly motivated and proactively involved in the growth of the business.

The company has also achieved Investors in People status, has won a National Training Award and the Edge Small Organisation Employer of the Year 2006.

Anne Wallace, Director of Taylor's Fish Ltd, enthused, "The staff are now equipped with the skills required to deal with many of the day to day management duties.

"The business is going from strength to strength, and I now have the time to dedicate to raising the company profile. Long term, becoming involved in training has not only helped raise turnover but we are now looking to expand into larger premises."



Anne Wallace, Director of Taylor's Fish Ltd.

Driving up North West skills

LSC North West – Regional Skills Priorities

There has never been a more exciting or challenging time to be working in the education and skills sector. With momentum gathering around the 14-19 education reforms, the launch of Train to Gain and the birth of a truly demand-led system in the Leitch report, all organisations involved in learning are being urged to play their part and raise their game.

In the North West, real progress has been made, however there is much work to do if we are to achieve the vision of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) to become, 'A dynamic, sustainable international economy which competes on the basis of knowledge, advanced technology and an excellent life for all.' The RES is the blueprint for the economic development of England's North West, and sets out a clear vision for the region's economy. It identifies specific priority actions to meet the economic challenges and opportunities of the next ten years and close the economic gap with the rest of England.

Equipping employers and individuals with the skills, knowledge and expertise to drive up the competitiveness of the region's businesses is vital to achieving the vision. The North West Statement of Skills Priorities has been developed by the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) to take forward the RES.

Our seven priorities from 2007 to 2010 are:

Tackle worklessness by linking people, jobs and training

We will:

- Refocus investment in adult learning on people not in work and commission high quality bespoke training linked to jobs or equip them with the skills needed to get back into work
- Work closely with Jobcentre Plus and other key partners to link workless people to job opportunities by providing information, advice, education and training
- Target specific groups such as people claiming Incapacity Benefits, offenders and ex-offenders, adults without a Level 2 qualification and people aged 50+
- Work with employers involved in economic development and regeneration to maximise opportunities for upskilling the workforce.

Increase participation of 16-19 year olds in education and/or work based learning, thereby securing increases in Level 2 and Level 3 attainment and progression into higher education

We will:

- Strive to maximise the impact of local 14-19 partnerships so that young people can access relevant and effective learning
- Ensure that through their education and training opportunities, colleges and providers provide young people with sound preparation for employment and meet the needs of employers and public services.

Increase the proportion of adults with the skills and qualifications needed for employment, with a focus on Skills for Life and Level 2 attainment

We will:

- Ensure that colleges and providers plan a mix of learning for adults across the full range of provision so that people are moved from welfare to work
- Encourage more adults to acknowledge and address their Skills for Life needs by undertaking approved courses
- Target priority groups including those on Incapacity Benefits and adults aged 50+
- Work with sectors that demonstrate high employment growth including retail, financial services and health and social care.

Support adults to progress beyond Level 2 and to attain skills and qualifications at Level 3 and above, with a focus on key sectors

We will:

- Target adults who have participated in Level 2
- Encourage colleges and providers to review Level 3 and Level 4 provision to ensure they are offering the higher qualifications that individuals want alongside qualifications prioritised by Sector Skills Councils.

Stimulate employers to invest more in workforce development which meets business needs including innovation, management, leadership and intermediate and higher level technical and professional skills

We will:

- Meet the needs of employers and ensure that colleges and other providers offer training that reflects employer preferences
- Encourage employers participating in Train to Gain or Apprenticeships to consider wider development opportunities, including leadership and management and higher level skills.

Stimulate demand for, and investment in entrepreneurial, intermediate and higher level skills for individuals

We will:

- Continue to support Union Learning Representatives to stimulate demand for and take-up of learning
- Support the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance to people without a Level 2 qualification.

Support providers to respond to the needs of individuals and employers through delivery of high quality provision

We will:

- Strive to make provision increasingly demand-led
- Encourage employers to increase investment in education and training
- Target employers that have not previously been engaged in training through initiatives such as Train to Gain.

During 2007/8 the impact of our activities will:

- Reduce the numbers of young people not in employment, education and training from 8.5% to 7.5% to align with the national picture
- Deliver approved Skills for Life learning to 27,400 adults
- Support 18,500 adults to achieve a Level 2 qualification
- Upskill 40,000 adults through Train to Gain
- Deliver 46,422 Information, Advice and Guidance sessions to people without a Level 2 qualification by July 2007
- Improve the success rate of young people on Apprenticeships.

"There are still 80,000 people across the region in need of higher level qualifications that are required to meet the North West's productivity gap; 2.5 million adults with literacy basic skills needs and 3.5 million with numeracy needs. Despite progress, the region's skills deficit remains a major challenge" said John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West LSC.

"The LSC, working with a strong Regional Skills Partnership in the North West, is committed to enabling all people who want to gain qualifications and skills to get the help they need. We must all now accept the challenge of making learning relevant and responsive and inspire learners and employers alike to embrace the true value and benefits that learning can bring."

North West at the forefront of National Skills Academies



The North West is set to significantly benefit from the National Skills Academy programme, launched last October.

National Skills Academies are employer-led initiatives funded by the LSC with its partners, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), and aim to drive up skills levels and productivity by delivering the skills required by each major sector of the economy.

There are now four National Skills Academies in the region:

National Manufacturing Skills Academy (NMSA) – The Academy will focus on meeting the skills needs of both large and small employers from the manufacturing sector including aerospace, automotive, electronics and marine. The NMSA will work as a 'hub and spoke model', with the spokes at the heart of the regional skills activity, managing relationships with employers and individuals, regional stakeholders and the provider network.

Financial Services Skills Academy – The Academy, initially based in Manchester but set to expand to other parts of the region, will offer centres of excellence for training and development for the financial services industry, from entry level to retraining and continuing professional development. One of only four initial



Overseas students learn the fundamentals of the Tetraflex pasteuriser and separator at Reaseheath.

regional centres in this sector, the Academy will comprise high quality providers as delivery spokes, including the Financial Management Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) at The Oldham College, Manchester Solutions and FTC Kaplan.

Construction Skills Academy – The main focus of this Academy is to provide a range of learning and development opportunities for people that are centred on large-scale construction projects. One central hub, based at Newall Green High School in Wythenshawe, Manchester, and nine regional partnerships will be developed, comprising employers' representatives, key training providers, colleges, the Regional Development Agency, the LSC, regional ConstructionSkills, Jobcentre Plus and other stakeholders as required. The regional partnership will provide support to each of the major projects within its region, with the North West already identified as one of two initial regional partnerships to be established during the development phase of the plan. Key projects will include New Heartlands in Liverpool, New East Manchester and Balfour Beatty in Manchester and Elevate in East Lancashire.

Food and Drink Manufacturing Academy – Reaseheath College in Nantwich is one of five specialist 'centres of excellence' nationally which will provide training for 28,000 employees in the food and drink industry. The sector has a major impact on the North West, employing over 100,000 people and contributing £9.5 billion to the region's economy. Reaseheath College, which is already recognised as a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Food Chain Technology, will provide specialist dairy training and has invested £500,000 in its food processing plant to ensure its facilities are at the forefront of the industry. The Academy is a joint venture between Improve, the Sector Skills Council for the Food and Drink sector, and the LSC.

John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West LSC has welcomed the launch of the National Skills Academies in the region. "The National Skills Academies are a direct response to employers and their needs. It's really excellent that the North West features so prominently in the first phases of the programme.

"Whilst there is much evidence that the skills gap in the region is closing, there is still much to be done. The National Skills Academies will go a long way to addressing these skills gaps by putting employers in the driving seat in developing high quality, relevant training programmes for their own sectors. We welcome the commitment of many employers across the North West who are playing a pivotal role in development of the region's Academies."

Official opening celebrated at Liverpool Community College



Pictured from left, Paul Arista and Maureen Evans-Olsen - LSC Partnership Managers for Liverpool, Wally Brown - Principal of Liverpool Community College, Louise Ellman MP and Gideon Ben-Tovim - Chair of the College Corporation Board.

A major construction provider, Liverpool Community College, has seen its available construction places increase dramatically during the past few years. This has coincided with a major £1 million programme of capital investment, which now sees the college boast a suite of new and modern training workshops in Central Liverpool.

The workshops were officially opened on Friday 20 April 2007 by Louise Ellman MP. Helen France, LSC Director of Area for Greater Merseyside, says "I am really pleased to see the development of the Vauxhall Road Campus and believe this will add much to the excellent work that Liverpool Community College already provides for the construction industry across Greater Merseyside. I am sure that the continued excellent quality of provision can only go from strength to strength following the opening of this new facility."

Liverpool Community College is also the lead partner for a Centre for Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in Construction and Building Crafts, in partnership with Knowsley Community College and Wirral Metropolitan College, and has been identified as a preferred partner in one of the few national pilot programmes identified by the National Skills Academy for Construction.

Local learners get the VIP treatment!

Twelve learners from Carlisle and West Cumbria proved that hard work really does pay off as they celebrated their achievements recently at a high profile presentation ceremony.

The event, at JHP's centre in Carlisle, was attended by John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West LSC who presented learners with their certificates, along with Ruth Bullen, LSC Director of Area for Cumbria and JHP Regional Director, Rob Smith.

Six students achieved Apprenticeships at Level 2 in subjects ranging from Team Leading to Customer Service, with four learners recognised for their success in completing Apprenticeships at Level 3 in Business Administration. They were joined by two Train to Gain learners who had completed courses in Administration and Retail.

Congratulating the learners, John Korzeniewski said, "The event has been a fantastic success. The young people here today are real examples of what can be achieved through learning. Each and every one is in an excellent position to progress their careers thanks to qualifications such as Apprenticeships and I wish them all successful futures."

Rob Smith added, "Whether you're employed and want to boost your skills, unemployed and looking for a job or leaving school, there is a range of training programmes on offer to suit individual needs. I would like to congratulate today's learners who have worked hard to secure their qualifications and I was delighted that John Korzeniewski was on hand to make the presentation."

Helen France has been appointed as the LSC's Director of Area for Greater Merseyside. Helen brings with her extensive experience in the education arena gained through previous positions at Exeter College, Bicton Agricultural College and latterly as National Manager for UK Education at Edexcel.

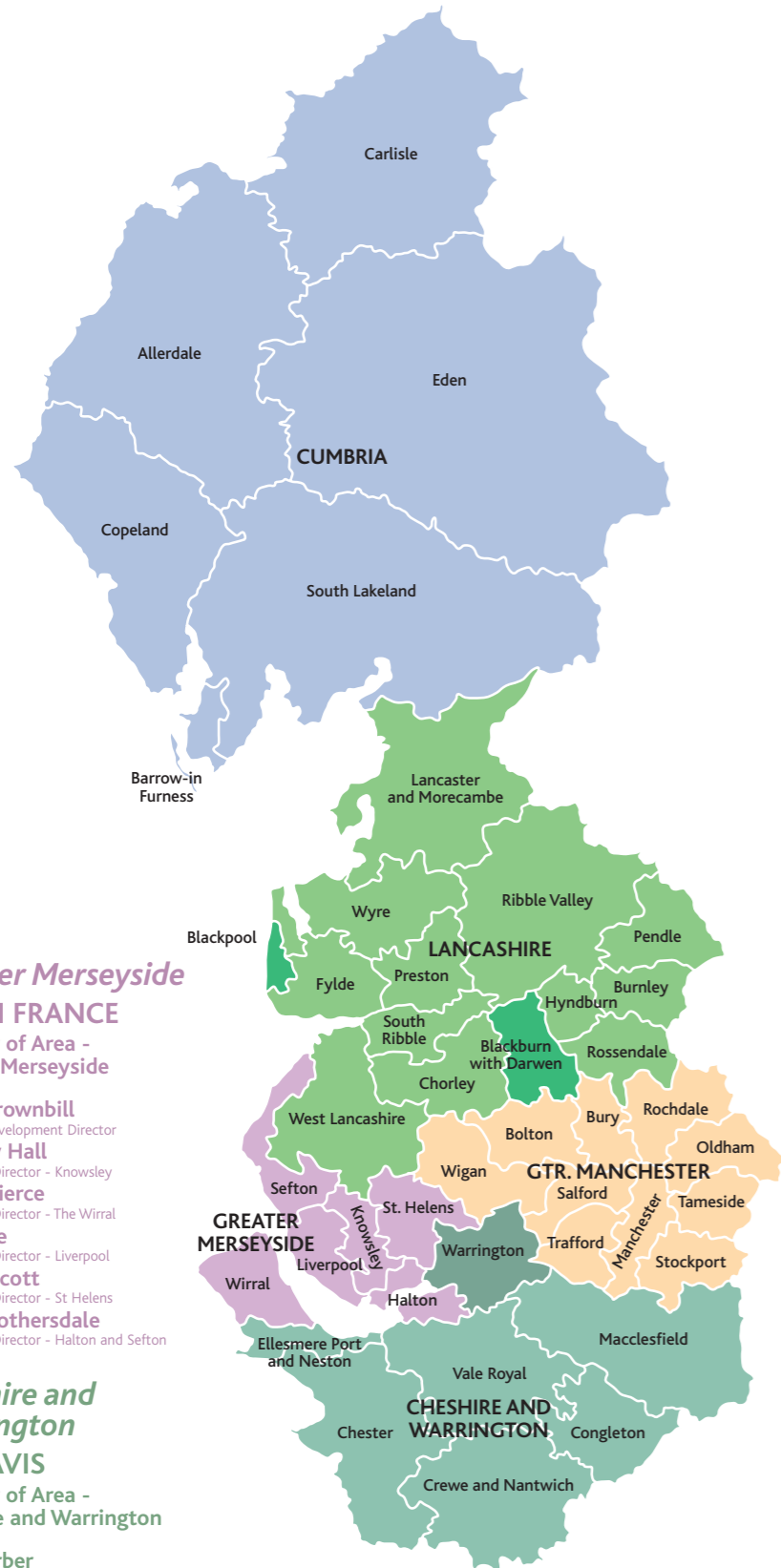
As she takes up her new role, Helen is very clear about her vision for the area's learning. "I am committed to the value that qualifications and skills hold and believe that by raising standards and making learning provision more responsive to the needs of individuals and employers, the LSC can improve the FE and training sector in Greater Merseyside" she said.

With an annual budget of just under £275 million, the LSC in Greater Merseyside works on average with 112,000 learners each year.

New Director for Greater Merseyside

Who's who

The LSC in the North West consists of regional office staff, based in Manchester, who work closely with and support local area teams based in each of the five sub-regions. Staff in the regional office report into five functional heads and those in area teams report to a Director of Area, with the size and structure of these teams determined by the needs of the local learners and employers and the size of the population.



Cumbria
RUTH BULLEN
 Director of Area - Cumbria
 Jon Power
 Economic Development Director

Lancashire
IAN HAWORTH
 Director of Area - Lancashire

Dave Cresswell
 Partnership Director - Blackburn
Sandra Whyte
 Partnership Director - Blackpool
Ian Kinder
 Partnership Director - Lancashire West
Abdus Wadee
 Partnership Director - East Lancashire

Greater Manchester
ELAINE BOWKER
 Director of Area - Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester - City of Manchester
Hooshang Rahmani
 Economic Development Director and Partnership Director

Greater Manchester - North
John Rawsthorne
 Director of Area - Greater Manchester North
Ian Ellis
 Partnership Director - Rochdale
Michelle Ford
 Partnership Director - Oldham
Claire Jackson
 Partnership Director - Bolton
Ruth Wheatley
 Partnership Director - Bury
Carol Bluer
 Partnership Director - Wigan

Greater Manchester - South
Jane Bracewell
 Director of Area - Greater Manchester South
Kevin Rowswell
 Partnership Director - City of Salford
Christine Troughton
 Partnership Director - Stockport
Alison Cresswell
 Partnership Director - Tameside
Ian Pursglove
 Partnership Director - Trafford

Greater Merseyside
HELEN FRANCE
 Director of Area - Greater Merseyside

Karon Brownbill
 Economic Development Director
Timothy Hall
 Partnership Director - Knowsley
Simon Pierce
 Partnership Director - The Wirral
Sue Price
 Partnership Director - Liverpool
Nicola Scott
 Partnership Director - St Helens
Kevin Mothersdale
 Partnership Director - Halton and Sefton

Cheshire and Warrington
LIZ DAVIS
 Director of Area - Cheshire and Warrington

John Barber
 Partnership Director - Cheshire and Warrington



JOHN KORZENIEWSKI
 Regional Director

Leads the transformation of the learning and skills sector by securing maximum investment in the North West's learning infrastructure and delivering the LSC's regional strategic objectives.



PAUL HOLME
 Regional Director of Skills

Leads and develops the Regional Skills Strategy in line with the National Skills Strategy with a focus on channelling resources towards improving regional skills performance.

David Brennan
 Skills Development Director - Strategy
Kirsty Evans
 Skills Development Director TtG
Anne Gornall
 Development Director OCLASS + SfL
Graham Fisher
 Skills Development Director - Sectors
Andy Fawcett
 Economic Development Director



JANE COWELL
 Regional Director of Learning, Planning and Performance

Secures funding and resources that will enable the development of the LSC's regional strategy to increase participation and attainment and implement the LSC Agenda for Change.

Robin Goddard
 Young Peoples' Learning Director
Kewel Dass
 Learning and Quality Director
Mo Ahmed
 Planning and Performance Director



CHRIS GRIFFIN
 Regional Director of Finance and Resources

Supports the regional senior management team in managing LSC financial resources with a focus on improving financial performance and supporting capital investments.

John Myers
 Contracts Director
Steve Dunmore
 Provider Financial Management Director



DEBORAH WOODGATE
 Head of Human Resources

Leads the regional office senior management in targeting and achieving business focused HR improvements. Actively stimulates a high performance culture to attract, retain, motivate and develop high quality people.



TED NOONE
 Regional Head of Communications & Marketing

Strategically leads and operationally manages the marketing and communications function within the region ensuring that all activity supports the achievement of national priorities, regional and local targets.



SHEILA SMITH
 Regional Office Manager

Provides high-level business and organisational support to the Regional Director by managing the key internal business administration and support activities of the regional office to enhance its strategic effectiveness. Ensures the identification and dissemination of best practice and innovation across the region.



LIZ DAVIS
 Director of Area - Cheshire and Warrington



RUTH BULLEN
 Director of Area - Cumbria



ELAINE BOWKER
 Director of Area - Greater Manchester



HELEN FRANCE
 Director of Area - Greater Merseyside



IAN HAWORTH
 Director of Area - Lancashire

Act as ambassadors for the LSC in their local, geographical or political area. Develop and deliver local area plans to transform the local skills sector in line with LSC strategic objectives.



Jane Bracewell
 Director of Area - Greater Manchester South



John Rawsthorne
 Director of Area - Greater Manchester North

Apprenticeships for Adults – responding to employer's needs

The launch of Apprenticeships for Adults is set to improve workforce skills across the region. The roll-out of the new programme follows successful national trials by the LSC during 2005/06.

Available to adults over the age of 25 who wish to follow a full Apprenticeship, it is estimated that this new programme will give thousands of people the opportunity to benefit from new skills through work based learning.

Over £16 million will be invested nationally, with nearly £3 million of this funding coming to the North West, meaning that over 900 individuals in our region will benefit.

The roll-out of Apprenticeships for Adults follows in the wake of the Leitch Review which has identified the skills mix required by the UK by 2020 to maximise the country's economic growth and productivity.

The Leitch report highlights the challenge that employers are facing through significant skills shortages within their own workforces and in the pool of labour from which they recruit.

In addition almost one third of firms that report skills gaps say that these shortfalls prevent them from modernising their businesses to move into higher value-added and more productive economic activity.

Apprenticeships for Adults aim to address such issues, equipping the workforce with relevant and appropriate skills, reducing skills gaps and enabling businesses to be increasingly competitive in a global market.

Two core aims of the Apprenticeship for Adults programme will be to move people without work into sustainable employment and to increase the productive skills of those already in the workforce.

It is also envisaged that the programme will support the National Skills Strategy by increasing the number of adults achieving Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications.

Apprenticeships for Adults will be aimed at:

- Unemployed people, including those on Incapacity Benefit, who are seeking to train or retrain in order to enter long-term employment
- Individuals who are seeking to enter an atypical career
- Adults working within sectors that have been identified as local, regional or national priorities, who have existing skills or knowledge gaps and who lack formal qualifications for those skills, including those who wish to complete an Apprenticeship having achieved their NVQ Level 2 or Level 3 through Train to Gain.



It's a family affair

Apprenticeships for Adults complete the 'Apprenticeship Family', which now covers individuals from the age of 14 onwards and makes a major contribution to the skills of the country's workforce, both now and for the future.

Young Apprenticeships pilot schemes have been running since September 2004 for those at the beginning of academic Year 10. Young Apprenticeships enable young people to start on their career with an employer and learning provider by spending up to two days a week in the workplace.

Young people are responding positively to this flexible learning opportunity and employers have already found that young people they recruit have an excellent grounding in the skills they need.

For 16-24 year olds, the core Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships programmes are now well established. Involving working and training with an employer, and studying for other qualifications with a learning provider, they last for between one and five years, depending on the type of Apprenticeship and the type of employment. Young people emerge with National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), Key Skills qualifications and, in most cases, a technical certificate.

"Apprenticeships are providing real skills, real employment and real opportunities" comments John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West LSC. "The LSC has a core commitment to providing employers with a responsive and skilled workforce and this comes a step closer with the addition of Apprenticeships for Adults to the 'Apprenticeship Family'. We're excited that even more individuals will be able to benefit from these opportunities and confident that this move will ensure a more capable and productive workforce is available to meet the needs of employers."

Find out more about Apprenticeships at www.apprenticeships.org.uk



Award winners revealed in Cumbria

The winners of the Excellence in Cumbria Awards have been recently announced, with the awards to learners and employers from across the county presented by Michelle Dewberry, winner of last year's television series 'The Apprentice'.

Winners crowned on the night include Steven Norman, age 15, from Whitehaven who scooped the Young Apprentice Award. Steven attends St Benedict's Catholic High School and is undertaking a Young Apprenticeship in Engineering through Lakes College West Cumbria, with a placement at GEN II Training. Philippa Hutt, age 19 from Levens, won the Apprentice of the Year Award, studying for a Foundation Apprenticeship in Business Administration with JHP in Barrow-in-Furness.

Ruth Bullen, LSC's Director of Area for Cumbria said, "Like Michelle Dewberry, all of the winners have shown real commitment and determination. They exemplify why the LSC runs these Awards - to highlight the importance of learning, and once again the Awards have discovered an abundance of talented individuals who have excelled in learning and improved their lives. My congratulations go to all the learners - there was an extremely high standard of entries this year and the all finalists did really well to win through to the County Final."

A full list of winners can be viewed at www.excellenceawards.org.uk

Greater Manchester Learning Awards in the pipeline

A glittering Awards Ceremony, set to take place on 7 June 2007 at Manchester's Town Hall, will showcase the very best learners from across the area.

The Greater Manchester Learning Awards 2007 will celebrate the success of people through learning, and recognise the commitment of employers, training providers and colleges.

Elaine Bowker, LSC's Director of Area for Greater Manchester said, "The Awards are a fabulous way to reward learners, employers and providers for their achievements. The event will be a platform on which to highlight the wealth of talent in Greater Manchester."



Finalists at the Excellence in Cumbria awards

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

James Walker and Company Limited



Paul Myerscough, Managing Director of James Walker and Company Limited

James Walker & Co. Ltd. is based in Cockermouth, Cumbria and is a manufacturer of high performance sealing solutions to every major industry sector across the world.

Paul Myerscough, Managing Director, believes that the development of employees is essential to the future success of the business and James Walker proactively recruits, manages and develops employees to ensure a talent pool to meet this need. The company also operates a Goal Deployment Matrix, which encompasses the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Over the past three years, Personal Development Reviews have been introduced to link in with these objectives, as well as to identify the individual training and development needs of employees. These, in turn, form part of the company's training plan, which is delivered in conjunction with JHP Training.

James Walker currently has eleven Customer Services apprentices and one Maintenance and Engineering apprentice and, as part of their strategy to implement lean and continuous improvement throughout the company, they are about to pilot Business Improvement NVQs with a group of 10 employees. In addition, apprentices are being asked to deliver a presentation to their managers and the training team, and to introduce one idea for continuous improvement within the business.

Paul Myerscough concludes, "Our apprentices have helped us to get the right mix of skills and experience to take the business forward. They are enthusiastic, adaptable and flexible and would be sure to bring benefits to any business."

£18 million investment builds on success at Reaseheath

Work has begun on an £18 million investment programme at Reaseheath College in Nantwich, Cheshire, which will provide the college with international-standard facilities.

The project is part-funded by the LSC. It will equip the college with an enhanced animal care teaching complex incorporating specialist dog grooming and veterinary nursing facilities. A new aquatics and exotics centre, plus a new mammal house, is also being built. Around £3.5 million will be spent on the total upgrade of the animal centre, which holds a zoo licence and houses 200 species of animals, birds, reptiles, insects and fish.

Work is also progressing at the college on a purpose-built construction trades workshop and a state of the art IT teaching centre. Investment at the college will also see a 96-bed self-catering hostel developed and the overhaul of the college's equine facilities to provide an international standard indoor riding arena.

A further phase of work will include the redevelopment of the centre of the campus with a new £2.5 million learning resource and student services centre along with new engineering workshops and enhanced horticultural facilities.

Liz Davis, LSC's Director of Area for Cheshire and Warrington commented, "I am delighted that Reaseheath College has been successful in securing LSC capital funding. This is excellent news for the learners of Cheshire."

Investing in FE

The Government will make a record commitment to rebuilding the FE estate, investing £750 million annually on capital projects by 2011. In addition, later this year, work based learning providers, as well as colleges, will be able to bid for funding.

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive of the LSC commented, "One of our main priorities between now and 2010/11 is to maximise the scale of FE development, making world-class, 21st century facilities available to all learners. Our aim is to make England's FE estate a world leader so that learning is delivered in innovative, energy efficient and inspirational buildings.

"Students will be more responsive, attentive and enthusiastic in bright, airy and stimulating 'state of the art' learning environments. External research has shown that capital expenditure impacts positively on participation and attainment for both 16-19 year olds and adults. In 2003, the £300 million that we spent on capital investment was linked to a three per cent increase in participation and success rates.

"The positive effects of rebuilding a college can be staggering, both on the individual learner, but also on the wider community."

North West investments

The LSC, working in partnership with a range of agencies, is committed to creating world-class buildings in the North West in a bid to provide learners with modern, efficient and flexible learning environments. Planned developments which will be part-funded by the LSC to date include:

Projects with detailed approvals:

Ashton under Lyne Sixth Form

A £3,700,000 scheme, comprising 1,797 sq m new build and 4,540 sq m refurbishment at the existing campus.

Mid Cheshire College

The development of a new 1,742 sq m arts block, resulting in the investment of £3,549,528.

Reaseheath College

A new animal care centre is being developed, along with the expansion of construction workshops and the expansion of the Tetrapak building, making the total of the scheme £2,802,934.

(NB included in second project, approved in principle)

Middleton Technology School

£6,933,488 of investment to build a 3,250 sq m sixth form.

Ashton on Mersey School

£4,695,826 of investment to build a 2,600 sq m sixth form.

Projects approved in principle:

Blackpool Sixth Form College

A £12,733,000 scheme to construct a 6,163 sq m new build and complete a 1,985 sq m refurbishment at the existing campus.

Bolton Sixth Form College

A £13,550,000 investment, to create a 5,730 sq m new build at the Farnworth site.

Burnley College

A £53,934,000 scheme, developing a 20,476 sq m new college campus on Princess Way.

St Helens College

£50,275,000 of investment in a 16,598 sq m new build and 7,987 sq m refurbishment at the town centre campus.

Reaseheath College

An £18,105,541 investment to carry out general campus upgrades.



Collaboration at the heart of 14-19 learning



Robin Goddard

A true spirit of collaboration must be grasped by every organisation working in the 14-19 learning arena if the North West is to drive up its competitiveness. That's the message coming across loud and clear as we approach the next era in 14-19 reform.

Since the publication of the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper in 2005, there have been some powerful success stories right here in the North West, many achieved by joint working between the LSC and its partners. Nowhere is this success more apparent than through the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP), created to raise the perceived value of vocational education and provide work-related learning for 14-16 year olds.

At its best, the IFP has been built on a solid foundation of collaborative working; learning providers, the LSC and local authorities coming together to extend the range and quality of learning available to young people and schools. The programme has had a real impact in changing the lives of young people by equipping them with skills, new-found confidence and a desire to continue in learning.

The IFP is a shining example of the difference true collaboration can make when we get the formula right. So how can the LSC work with its partners to forge partnerships, and in a changing landscape, how sustainable can these alliances be? "My view is that the North West is on a journey between networking and strong collaboration" says Robin Goddard, Young People's Learning Director at LSC North West. "Evidence indicates that the North West contains examples of all stages along the path. Networking at its simplest is a process of joint working without clear ambitious goals in which talk predominates and action is thin on the ground. The Nuffield Foundation, in its annual report 2005/6 on 14-19 developments in England, usefully distinguishes between this type of joint working and strong collaboration. Strong collaboration contains features such as 'a shared concept of local need and emphasis on area planning', and 'a strong sense of local leadership with a

locally generated approach to capacity building'. The focus of such working covers the whole range of 14-19 learning and not just a piecemeal approach with some marginal adjustments."

The LSC's local partnership teams will be working with local authorities, representatives of learning providers and stakeholders to offer clear leadership for their areas. They will be contributing to a shared 14-19 vision with priorities for change and strategies for achieving them; a demanding but fundamental step. If this groundwork is done, then the stream of national initiatives, including Young Apprenticeships and the September Guarantee, can become tools to be used with ingenuity to achieve local priorities.

Regardless of the future of specific initiatives such as the Learner Agreement Pilot and Specialised Diplomas, Robin Goddard points to the urgency in transforming the 14-19 agenda at local level.

"Too many of our young people are currently poorly prepared for life and work, and this has serious consequences both for social inclusion and for our competitiveness on the world stage" he warns. "If the penny hasn't already dropped, the growth of economies such as those of Brazil, Russia, India and China leave us no option but to deliver the recommendations of Leitch and bring about a step-change in our approach to developing skills.

"It is certainly no easy task for any single institution to place strong collaboration as a central focus to its activity: funding methodology, accountability measures and even some policy initiatives may appear to stand in the way. Yet the IFP has provided a glimpse of what can be achieved through collaboration, for individual young people and for our future competitiveness. Many local initiatives have built on this start and moved on. The challenge now is to establish strong collaboration across the region and thereby extend our performance in learning and skills."

ESF set to boost North West employability

The employability skills of the North West's workforce are set for a major boost thanks to a new programme of European Social Fund (ESF) investment that will be introduced this year.

The LSC is working with other major organisations including Government Office, the Northwest Regional Development Agency and Jobcentre Plus on the new programme. Under the new programme the LSC intends to sustain its role as a major Co-Financing organisation and will be developing its plans over the next few months.

Currently under development by the LSC, working with its partners in the North West, the new programme of funding will provide a much greater focus on employment and skills and will link closely to joint work undertaken with Jobcentre Plus, the North West's other major Co-Financing organisation. Co-financing channels both ESF money and the required match funding to providers in a single funding stream, simplifying the process and ensuring quality of delivery.

With three City Employment Strategy Pilots also underway in the North West,

covering the whole of Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Blackburn with Darwen, the North West ESF priorities will be closely aligned to those identified within the pilots.

ESF funding has already had a major impact on employability across the North West. From 2004 – 2007, £360 million has been invested, successfully funding 700 projects and initiatives that have sought to tackle major barriers such as longterm unemployment, young people not in education, employment or training and raising the level of basic skills amongst the North West workforce. Over these three years 10,000 businesses have received assistance, with over 150,000 individual beneficiaries.

In addition work has been undertaken to improve training, education and counselling, encourage lifelong learning and promote equal opportunities - to name but

a few of the wide range of issues that have been tackled.

The new programme will build on this excellent foundation to continue to improve employment prospects and opportunities for individuals and businesses alike.

As ever, effective engagement with partners and stakeholders will provide a key ingredient for success as the new ESF programme gets set to roll-out and external consultation over the summer will play a major role in the development of the plan.

The LSC will be consulting widely on its new Co-Finance Plan from June onwards. The prospectus inviting tenders will launch in September and activity will start from January 2008, with significant programmes underway by April 2008.

Further information will be available at: www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/northwest/tendering



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ESF Contractor:
Lancashire County Council Youth and Community Service

Nature of project:
Employability skills for unemployed young people

Beneficiary:
Damon McDonald

Targeted at young people of working age from significantly deprived backgrounds, or those who were unemployed for less than six months, the project provided its beneficiaries with a range of skills designed to increase 'soft outcomes' such as confidence building and communication skills through support and mentoring of a one-to-one nature.

19-year-old Damon McDonald was one such beneficiary. Having left school with few qualifications he was referred onto the project by his Youth Worker and highlighted that he wanted a job in, or

training in, motor mechanics, but suffered from very low self-esteem as a result of being sacked from his previous job.

Through the project he received assistance, completing an application for a Training 2000 Mechanics course and started three days a week at Blackpool & The Fylde College doing the NVQ Level 1 Motor Vehicles course, run in conjunction with National Tyres.

Since then Damon hasn't looked back. The programme of study has resulted in him achieving Skills for Life in Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy and NVQ Level 1 in Automotive Vehicle Maintenance and Automotive Valeting.

Not only that, but he has achieved several AQA Awards, is working on the third challenge of the Bronze Youth Achievement Award and has registered with Millennium Volunteers - completing his 200 hours voluntary work in the community.

Kevin Gannon, Project Manager, commented, "Damon has always shown a very positive attitude to all the opportunities presented to him. His self-esteem has improved radically and he is now involved in several activities such as caving and district fun days, often as a senior helper."



Damon McDonald

Events calendar

Event	Description/Target audience	Organisers	Venue	Date/Time	Contact details
Working with children and young people? - Free taster session	The 'taster' session will offer practical ideas about the best ways to engage, influence and motivate children and young people	CETAD, Lancaster University	Lancaster University	Tuesday 22 May 2007 1.30pm – 3.30pm	To book your place call 01524 593318
People, Potential, Performance - Free taster session	The 'taster' session will offer practical strategies that you can use to engage, influence, motivate and develop the people in your team	CETAD, Lancaster University	Lancaster University	Thursday 24 May 2007 1.30pm – 3.30pm	To book your place call 01524 593318
Business Support Intermediary Conference	To bring together the wider business support community to review/discuss/explain their role in the delivery of the Train to Gain Core Brokerage service	Paul Ashcroft, LSC North West – Train to Gain	Lancashire County Cricket Club, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 0PX	Friday 25 May 2007 Full day event	For more information contact paul.ashcroft@lsc.gov.uk
Employer Event	To offer networking opportunities to local businesses in the Lancaster and Morecambe area	Lancaster and Morecambe College Business (LMC Business)	Lancaster and Morecambe College – Hexagon Theatre	Wednesday 6 June 2007 5.30pm – 8.00pm	For more details or to book exhibition space contact George Stannard, 01524 521322. Email: g.stannard@lmc.ac.uk
Greater Manchester Learner Awards Ceremony	To recognise achievements across the full spectrum of LSC-funded learning provision	Ian Rodgers/ Jo Miles, LSC North West - Marketing & Communications Team	Manchester Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA	Thursday 7 June 2007 Starting at 6.00pm	For more details contact Kay Kehoe at Comtec, 0161 370 7772. Email: kkehoe@comtec-presentations.com Attendance by invitation
Business in the Community (BITC) Awards	Awarding North West companies for integrating responsible business practice into their operations resulting in a positive impact in the marketplace, the workplace and the community	Business in the Community (BITC)	New Century House, Manchester M60 4ES	Thursday 7 June 2007 7.00pm – 11.00pm	To book tickets contact Mary Beaird, 0161 233 7769. Email: mary.beaird@bitc.org.uk
Business Support Intermediary Conference	To bring together the wider business support community to review/discuss/explain their role in the delivery of the Train to Gain Core Brokerage service	Paul Ashcroft, LSC North West – Train to Gain	Leyland Hotel, Leyland, Preston, Lancashire, PR25 4JX	Tuesday 29 June 2007 Full day event	For more information contact paul.ashcroft@lsc.gov.uk

A step closer to learning opportunities for all

Formal consultation around the LSC's plans for the provision of learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) in the North West is now complete.

The regional implementation plan, which was consulted on from January to March 2007, aims to take forward the priorities outlined in the national strategy; 'Learning for Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities', published in October 2006.

The plan identifies the actions to be taken in the North West to build inclusive, purposeful and progressive learning provision that will allow this group of learners to participate, both economically and in their own communities.

"The plan outlines how the LSC in the North West intends to prioritise its actions, define the direction of travel over the next four years and support the FE system towards the achievement of the Government's vision of inclusion" said John Korzeniewski, Regional Director North West LSC.

"The Government has a clear vision that by 2025 people with a disability will have the opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and will be respected and included as equal members of society. The LSC intends to invest £35 million across the country to achieve this vision by improving provision for this group of learners and we in the North West must now take up this challenge."

The North West strategic implementation plan for LLDD aims to ensure that an effective and appropriate regional framework is developed to support:

- The communication and the implementation of the national strategy
- The planning and development of appropriate, consistently high quality, accessible and purposeful local provision in the North West for LLDD
- Extending the range and scope of learning opportunities that meet aspirations and lead to appropriate outcomes, including employment, for LLDD.

LSC funding will be used to accelerate change in the North West to support the development of LLDD provision. The priorities are:

- Investing in provision: understanding demand and building capacity
- Raising the quality of provision, including workforce development
- Increasing participation in the economy and our communities through sustainable employment.

The consultation was undertaken with a wide range of partners and stakeholders including FE colleges, independent specialist colleges and schools, training providers and employers. It aimed to establish how the LSC regionally will implement the national strategy, and covered six themes: Communicating Our Priorities, Planning, Quality, Funding, Working With Partners and Learner Progression.



44 responses were received from a wide range of organisations which have now been fed into the plan. Responses and comments included:

- A need for greater clarity around the commitment to improving skills of people aged 25+
- More detail required on how the LSC will capture the views of learners
- A general consensus that grass roots involvement of parents and learners will be best achieved through the organisations that are involved at this level
- Sharing of best practice in relation to specialist colleges is an excellent idea
- Providers should be made aware of common difficulties of disabled people and the proportion of potential learners who have difficulties and disabilities
- The importance of forging links with local schools/colleges and employer forums to enable employers to develop an understanding of the range of skills that people with disabilities can bring to the workplace.

"We welcome the valuable contributions that have been made through this consultation process. These responses have now been fed into the plan which will be submitted to the LSC regional management board in May. We see the plan as a live document which will be reviewed and revised as further research delivers analysis of supply, demand and need, and in response to other work at a national level" added John Korzeniewski.

An easy-read version of the regional implementation plan is available at www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/NorthWest/LLDA+Plan+2007-2010 or by contacting the LLDD strategy team at LSC North West on 0845 019 4142.

Local Office Locations and Contacts

Cheshire and Warrington

Dalton House
Dalton Way
Middlewich
Cheshire
CW10 0HU

Tel: 01606 320 001

Email: cheshireandwarringtoninfo@lsc.gov.uk

Cumbria

Venture House
Regents Court
Guard Street
Workington
Cumbria
CA14 4EW

Tel: 0845 019 4159

Email: cumbriainfo@lsc.gov.uk

Greater Manchester

9th Floor
Arndale House
Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3AQ

Tel: 0845 019 4142

Email: grmanchesterinfo@lsc.gov.uk

Greater Merseyside*

Tithebarn House
Tithebarn Street
Liverpool
L2 2NZ

Tel: 0845 019 4150

Email: merseysideinfo@lsc.gov.uk

Lancashire

City Gate
Longridge Road
Preston
PR2 5BQ

Tel: 01772 443 001

Email: lancashireinfo@lsc.gov.uk

*As of 11 May 2007 Greater Merseyside office address will be: 14th Floor, The Plaza, Old Hall Street, Liverpool L3 9TD