

 For information

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Leading learning and skills

Learning and Skills Council Kent and Medway Annual Plan 2007-08

March 2007

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

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Introduction

The LSC is here to make a difference to people and communities throughout Kent and Medway. We work with our strategic and delivery partners so that local people have access to high quality education and training.

Regeneration in the Thames Gateway, Ashford and East Kent areas, and the 2012 Olympics, bring opportunities and challenges for the LSC and our partners to deliver the skills that the new economy demands.

We did make a difference last year:

- Participation in education and training by young people increased by 4.0%
- Vocational opportunities for young people increased by 19.2% through Full Level 2 programme
- Participation has increased on Full Level 3 programmes by 2.0% for Young People and 19.3% for Adults
- Further Education success rates in the South East are one of the best in England. Success rates in Kent and Medway for young people and Adults are up by 5.0% and 2.2% respectively
- We now have 23 accredited colleges as the core of local Action for Business networks who are providing more responsive services for employers
- Two major capital projects at Canterbury College and South Kent College, with a total value of £88m, were approved
- Five of our seven colleges have achieved Action for Business status and our other two colleges are currently going through the assessment

We will deliver our commitments for 2007/08 through action against our four key priorities which are:

- to get more young people in education or training
- to improve the employability and skills of the workforce
- to ensure excellent quality of learning and training
- to safeguard access to learning for the most vulnerable people

Our plan is focused on our actions resulting from our priorities. Together with our partners, will deliver on these actions

Lesley Davies, Area Director

Local Context Summary

Population

Kent and Medway has a total population of just over 1.62 million, with a working age population of just over a million (62%). There has been a population increase of 5.6% (0.4% above South East) over the last decade and is predicted to increase by 7% (1.7% above the South East) over the next decade.

Over the last decade the population of children (under age 15) has increased by 1.1% compared to no overall change in the South East. It is predicted that overall children's population will continue to increase due to the new housing developments in Thames Gateway, Ashford and East Kent despite decreases in birth rates.

The Economy

The Kent and Medway economy underperforms against both the South East and England. Inward investment has been increasing in recent years and is forecast to increase more rapidly.

There are some 62,000 business units employing some 730,000 people. Large numbers of residents are employed in the service sectors (public and private), a greater proportion than the national average, but lower than the South East. Half the public sector jobs are in Health and Social Work.

Only 5% (South East 4%) of employees are employed in construction, 28% are in distribution, hotels and restaurants. One in five jobs are in Wholesale and Retail. Manufacturing is falling but still accounts for 9% of all the jobs in Kent and Medway.

The current employment of 730,000 is predicted to increase by 0.6% per annum between now and 2014 bringing the total employment to 776,000

The employment by industrial sectors is expected to change; there will be a decline in the primary sectors, engineering and other manufacturing. This will be offset by major growth in hospitality, business and other services, wholesale and retail, education, health and social work.

The Job density (ratio of jobs to working age population) at 0.76 is lower than the South East and indicates a commuting population.

In Kent and Medway 40% of employees are in management and professional occupations 5% below the South East. In contrast 3% more people are involved in administration and skilled trades (26%) than the South East (23%).

Kent and Medway as a whole is the most deprived area in the South East. Thanet and Medway towns account for most of the deprivation. It also has the highest rate of economic inactivity (1 in 5 of working age population), the highest rate of unemployment and higher than average JSA claims in the South East.

Education and Skills

The Kent and Medway workforce has the lowest qualification levels of any South East region;

Qualification level	Kent and Medway	South East
Level 4	23%	26%
Level 3	45%	47%
Level 2	62%	63%
Level 1	80%	82%
No Qualification	13%	10%

The hard to fill vacancies are the highest amongst skilled trade and professional occupations, and the skills gaps reported amongst current employees were highest in technical skills. The predicted shift from low skills economy to high skills economy is likely to put even more pressure on the need for higher skills.

Over the next ten years the net employment demand of 320,000 is predicted of which 14% are for Level 5; 29% are for Level 4; 27% are for Level 3; 20% are for Level 2; 11% are for Level 2 qualifications and there will be a reduction of 3% in jobs that require no qualification.

65% of provision undertaken by Kent and Medway residents which is delivered by Kent and Medway FE providers is at Entry Level, Level 1 or Level 2, the highest in the South East. 15% of FE learners have a disability, learning difficulty and/or health problem, the highest in the South East.

There has been a great improvement in Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies in FE provision where the success rate has increased from 57% to 67% in 2006, overtaking the South East.

The large number of School Sixth Forms (104) and the selective system has meant that the participation of young people in colleges is lower than the rest of the South East. The school sixth forms provision account for 36% of the overall provision. However, the Kent and Medway increase in participation over the last three years of 9% is 3% above the South East average. School performance has increased in line with national trends. Level 2 attainment at key stage 4 has increased to 59% just above the regional average.

Our Priorities

In Kent & Medway, we will be putting a greater proportion of our time and resources to meet our first two priorities – Young People and Skills. Our priorities for action therefore are the **participation and achievement by young people, and more adults getting a first Level 2 and Level 3 qualification.**

By strategic partners, we mean Kent & Medway Connexions, Kent County Council and Medway Council. By delivery partners, we mean schools, colleges and providers of work-based learning.

Priority 1: To improve substantially the range and accessibility of practical and vocational learning opportunities for all young people which inspire and engage them and lead to progression.

Investing in Young People¹

Last year some 41,473 Young People were studying in Kent and Medway (FE, School Sixth forms, WBL, E2E). **The Young People's participation in Kent and Medway has risen at a faster rate (4%) than the national (1.3%) and regional (2.3%) averages.** The overall rate is now above the National but slightly below the South East.

There are 104 School Sixth Forms with some 18,165 learners representing 44% of the total participation by Young People in Kent and Medway. There has been a 7% increase in the number of school learners over the last two years (2004 to 2006).

The Kent and Medway figure for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training is above the regional average. In January 2006 there were an estimated 3,392 young people in Kent and Medway Not in Education, Employment or Training, representing 6.6% of 16-18 year olds. This is 0.7% below the National average and 1.5% above the South East average.

The progression rate in E2E programmes rose by 6.2% last year to 55.5%, higher than the national and regional rates and second highest in the country. Over the same period starts have risen by 8.9% and the average length of stay has decreased from 21 weeks to 14 weeks.

In 2004/05 the overall FE Success Rate in Kent and Medway rose by 5% to 65% below the South East rate which is one of the best in the country.

Full Level 2 & 3 Success Rates are increasing faster than in the South East but still below the Average for the South East. Full Level 2 Success Rate increased by 11% to 61% slightly below the South East at 62%. Full Level 3 Success Rate increase by 5% to 60% below the South East at 64%.

Schools performance in Kent and Medway has risen in line with rest of the country. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is now above the South East with 59% of Pupils reaching Level 2.

The Key Stage 5 (GCE/VCE) achievement in the South East is the highest of all England regions with an average candidate score of 276.1 but remains below the average candidate score for England (277.8). **Kent and Medway has an average candidate score of 274.6 below England and the South East.** Achievement of Maths and English GCSE's are 3.1 percentage points below the regional rate.

Advanced Apprenticeship framework completions has risen by 140.1% over the last three years, a greater percentage increase regionally and nationally. All Apprenticeship success rates increased by 15.7% in 2005/06 to 55.3%, this is greater

¹ All sources: Autumn Performance Review 2006

than the regional and national rates. Advanced Apprenticeships, showed the biggest improvement, rising by 24.4% to 49.5%.

We see partnership with local authorities as fundamental in terms of delivering the right provision. Working in partnership with Kent County Council and Medway Council, the LSC has taken the lead in establishing fourteen “14-19” Planning Forums across the county. Comprising representatives from colleges, schools, work based learning providers and other stakeholders, Planning Forums are the main vehicle for collaborative skills development activities for this key age group. One of the key outcomes has been the submission of expressions of interest for the specialised diplomas pilots from all planning forums in Kent and Medway.

Outstanding Issues and Challenges

Over the next decade the population of Young People is projected to decrease due to birth rates both in the South East and in Kent and Medway. However, it is predicted that overall population of Young People will continue to increase in Kent and Medway due to the new housing developments in Thames Gateway, Ashford and East Kent.

This changing population structure presents challenges in the appropriate planning of provision particularly in meeting a growing post-16 population. Kent and Medway has the highest participation in school sixth form provision in the South East, with areas such as Maidstone almost exclusively served by school sixth forms. Ashford, Gravesham and Thanet have a higher representation in further education and work based learning.

The need to simplify access to IAG to improve the availability of information on post 14 options for young people.

To engage employers to take more apprentices and offer work placements.

Vocational pathways are successful in Kent and Medway, with high levels of progression from E2E and successful apprenticeship provision. However, despite good improvement in further education success rates, there is still a need to develop quality in further education provision.

[The percentages quoted under local performance against national targets in the next four sections are regional figures; local figures will not be available until local volumes in the Summary Statement of Activity have been confirmed]

Action for Young People

Locally, we will boost performance against national targets by:

- a **2%** increase in participation with a focus on priority learners to reduce the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- increasing volumes of learning below Level 2 in every local area with particular attention to those areas with high numbers who are NEET
- a **2.5%** increase in participation in Entry to Employment programmes whilst seeking to at least maintain current progression in rates (**47%**)
- increasing the numbers of young people participating in apprenticeships by **4.5%**
- further improving Success Rates for Further Education and Apprenticeships.

Our Local Actions

We will get a higher proportion of young people to stay in – or start – an education or training course or programme. We plan to have 5% more young people in education or training during 2007/08, an additional 2,000 14-19 year-olds. We will do this by:

- 1.1 focusing on young people from age 14, we will lead and influence local 14-19 forums of schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to be action-oriented. We will work closely with strategic partners, and be active members of the Children's Trusts, the Medway Strategy Group, the Kent 14+ Strategy Forum and 14-19 Action Plan Group;
- 1.2 fostering greater engagement of employers to increase by 10% the number and the range of work-related learning opportunities for young people by March 2008. We will work with Kent Works, Medway EBP and other relevant partners.
- 1.3 improving the capacity within mainstream institutions for more and better provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and working with both Councils to improve the transition arrangements for those learners. Through four Partnership Pilots, we will provide 25 more places for learners to access FE provision or progressing to employment during 2007/08;
- 1.4 developing a work-based learning clearing house with the Kent Association of Training Organisations by March 2008;
- 1.5 improving the E2E offer by expanding range of options to include 100 more young people successfully completing programmes by 2008. This links with our priority 3. We will measure progress using starts, progression, modular delivery and admissions indicators;
- 1.6 increasing the range and quality of vocational provision for 14-19 year-olds, so that there will be 10% more apprenticeship places and 10% more other places for young people in 9 sectoral areas. We will work with employers and strategic and delivery providers on developing the workforce, more innovation, practical arrangements such as co-coordinated timetabling and support for all delivery partners through the specialised diploma gateway process;
- 1.7 developing, with all strategic and delivery partners, a communications strategy to give consistent message and break down employer misperceptions by September 2007. This links with a similar action in our priority 2. The strategy will be targeted at young people, parents and carers as well as employers. It will be linked to the September Guarantee – including the electronic prospectus and on-line application system - for Kent & Medway and will include a progression route map. We will continue with the Design 4 Life Website, until the electronic prospectus is fully in place.

Priority 2: To improve skills training and employer engagement through implementing the South East Action for Business Strategy and further developing the responsiveness of the FE and work based learning provider network.

Investing in Skills

The Kent and Medway workforce has low skill levels of any LSC in the South East, 23% (SE 26%) qualified to Level4+; 45% (SE 47%) to Level 3+; 62%(SE 63%) to Level 2+; 80% (SE 82%) to Level 1 and has the highest unqualified workforce at 13% (SE 10%).

Five out of six jobs (85%) are in the service sector, with 28% in the Distribution Hotel and Restaurants and 27% in Public Admin, Educ. and Health. Tourism and Manufacturing each represent 10% of the workforce and construction is still at 5%.

Employment currently stands at approximately 730,000 and is predicted to increase by 0.6% per annum till 2014 to a total of 776,000.

Employment in the Manufacturing sector is predicted to continue to contract over the next decade, although the pace of that contraction will not be as fast as the last decade. By 2014; the Manufacturing sector is likely to account for just under 9%. The Construction sector is predicted to remain fairly constant at around 5%.

The real growth in employment is predicted to be in Distribution & Transport, Business service Sectors and the non-marketed services - such as education, public administration and health which are both forecast to grow by about 0.8% per annum.

Around 16% of the organisations surveyed in the Kent and Medway had vacancies. This equates to about 18,500 vacancies. This mirrors the South East as a whole². Of the companies trying to recruit, 38% had difficulty doing so, below the average for the South East at 46%.

Hard to fill vacancies were the highest amongst skilled trade occupations and professional occupations. The main causes for hard to fill vacancies were: low number of applicants with required skills (40%); low number of applicants generally (20%) and not enough people interested in doing this type of work (18%), slightly higher than the South East average. Hard to fill vacancies was impacting 91% of the businesses with 47% reporting major impact on their businesses.

Of the companies surveyed, 4.2% (4,300 vacancies) were suffering from skills shortage vacancies. Skills shortages were reported to be highest among:

- Professionals (19%) - (slightly higher than the SE average)
- Skilled trade occupations (17%).

Over 42,000 existing employees are not fully proficient in their roles. Skills gaps were highest among Sales and Customer Service staff (4.3%) and Administration and Clerical staff (4.1%). Employers believed that by far the greatest cause of skills gaps

² National Employer Skills Survey 2005

was a lack of experience through newness to the job (74%) and to lesser extent lack of motivation. Skills gaps are impacting the business creating increase workload for existing staff (70%), increased operating costs (34%) and difficulties meeting quality standards (33%).

Adult Apprenticeship participation has decreased but success rates have improved considerably.³ Work Based Learning (Average in Learning) figures for Kent and Medway in 2005/06 are 8.7% lower than planned, compared to a 1% increase against planned provision in the South East as a whole. Overall all adult participation was 24% lower than planned, a higher reduction than observed across the South East. All adult Apprenticeship success rates rose by 21.2 percentage points in 2005/06, higher than the regional improvement and 2 percentage points higher than the regional and national rates.

Train to Gain

Train to gain was launched in Kent and Medway on 1st April 2006 as interim activity leading on from the successful Employer Training Pilot. The programme includes delivery of NVQ and skills for life qualifications to employees not already qualified to full level 2. Within the Kent and Medway area there are nine lead providers engaging with employers and delivering demand led training in a variety of sectors including health and social care, retail, ICT, manufacturing and engineering and school support staff. Planned first year delivery is for at least 3,700 NVQs starts and over 900 skills for life enrolments by July 2007. Early indications are that after a slow start, performance is steadily improving.

Outstanding Issues and Challenges

Performance on Train to Gain requires continued focus and priority given the increasing importance of raising level 2 skills for both the local and regional economy. The challenge will be to raise the volume of starts and to ensure learners achieve their qualifications in line with employer demand.

The Kent and Medway workforce is less qualified than the rest of the South East. It is estimated that 75,980 adults with Entry Level 3 or below Literacy skills and 467,800 adults with Entry Level 3 or below Numeracy skills⁴.

Overall vocational provision is of a high quality and E2E has been very successful, but there is a need to consider the quality of provision in priority skills areas. Construction and Manufacturing industries are predicted to contract slightly, whilst Retail, Distribution and Business services are expected to grow which requires a response to the high basic skills needs and of high quality vocational provision.

The workforce needs to be re-skilled and up-skilled if we are to create a world class workforce and match training to the needs of employers.

The employers and the community need to engage in preparation for 2012 Olympic.

³ Autumn Performance Review 2006

⁴ Skills for Life Survey 2003

Action for Skills

Locally, we will boost performance against national targets by:

- 80% of Skills for Life provision to be accredited through nationally recognised qualifications
- a 4.5% increase in target bearing Skills for Life provision
- colleges delivering adult provision will move towards a minimum of 20% of their adult allocation to supporting full Level 2 provision
- delivery of Level 2 for adults having a greater focus on delivering first full Level 2s with particular increases in participation of those claiming benefits
- increasing employers' engagement in supporting learning and skills through Train to Gain with a particular focus on those employers who have not previously been engaged
- continuing to increase the proportion of adult funding being spent on priority provision
- increasing the numbers of people over 19 participating in apprenticeships by 5% (apprenticeships by 3%; advanced apprenticeships by 8%)
- improving provision and success rates in priority sectors with a particular focus on construction and the built environment.

Our Local Actions

We will improve the employability and skills, including enterprise, management and leadership skills, of the workforce through increasing the proportion of adults with a Full Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. We plan to increase the FE success rate for Adults in Full Level 2 and Level 3 by 5% during 2007/08, which is an additional 600 Adults. Our actions under this priority link closely with priority 4, which is about community opportunities. We will do this by:

- 2.1 developing with strategic and delivery partners a communications strategy, targeted at employers and all potential adult learners, by March 2008. This links with a action under priority 1, to include a Level 1 to Level 4 progression route map;
- 2.2 giving direction and support to providers to ensure optimal performance of Train to Gain contracts, so that we achieve an additional 2,500 full Level 2 qualifications by March 2008;
- 2.3 introducing and evaluating locally a Level 3 Learner Account trial in Thames Gateway and in Ashford. We will evaluate by using criteria such as learner take-up numbers and provider feedback by March 2008;
- 2.4 we will develop the provider capacity to respond to the needs of employers, so that all FE colleges and 25% of all local private training providers have achieved - or are working towards - Action for Business Standard by March 2008;
- 2.5 developing appropriate sectoral provision through effective shared use of LMI, and other relevant data, with strategic and delivery partners to achieve increased provision and success rates in priority sectors, specifically increasing the proportion of places available in construction and in care by 2% during 2007/08;
- 2.6 addressing barriers to Level 2 achievement through comprehensive, coherent and accessible pre-level 2 provision, including Skills for Life and pre-Train to Gain, in order to achieve the relevant local targets.
- 2.7 increase the number of individuals with a first full level 2 by improving the number of starts and achievements in line with the regional commissioning plan. This will be achieved through Train to Gain, Adult Learning Grant and IAG activity with a

focus on strengthening consortia working and including the effectiveness of local brokerage arrangements.

- 2.8 use the 2012 Olympic as an additional opportunity to work with providers to drive employer lead provision, in particular in subjects such as enterprise, management, leadership, modern languages, construction and procurement, tourism sports and recreation, and media.

Priority 3: To raise performance and improve the quality of provision, using the Framework for Excellence, to further develop a self-critical provider network with a focus on quality improvement.

Investing in Excellence

Two of the Kent and Medway Colleges were inspected in 2006 resulting in satisfactory or better grades for all subjects within the two colleges. Since the start of the ALI's Cycle 2 of inspections there have been 13 WBL inspections in Kent & Medway, of which nine were satisfactory overall, three were unsatisfactory and one was good.

The overall FE Success rate in 2004/05 was 65% (a rise of 5% points from 2003/04). This rate is below the regional rate which is one of the best in the Country and above the National rate.

The average A-level points score per student increased from 264 in 2003/04 to 274.6 in 2004/05. Average points score per exam entry also improved from 76.7 to 78.3.

16-18 Apprenticeship success rates are up by 18.8 percentage points, to 55.3%, which is 1.1% above the national average. Level 2 Apprenticeships have made a significant improvement to 56.1%, and is also above the regional average of 53.7%. Advanced Apprenticeships have also improved considerably (by 23.6 percentage points), and are above the regional but below the national averages.⁵

Adult Apprenticeship success rates have improved considerably with particular improvement at Level 2 to above the national average.⁸

All adult Apprenticeship success rates in Kent and Medway rose by 21.3% in 2005/06, higher than the regional and national rates. Level 2 Adult Apprenticeship success rates in Kent and Medway rose by 20.1% in 2005/06 and are now above the regional and national averages. FE adult success rates have risen to 75% and are 1% higher than the regional rate.

Capital investment

Capital investment has been a success story in Kent and Medway. We have already brought in some £186m of total project costs with £88m of LSC capital support.

We need to continue to deliver, with our partners, the goals in our Capital investment Plan which will support the South East Region's capital investment priority of economic performance and inclusion and SEEDA's area based regeneration. To do this £273 million of investment is needed over the next 7 years. In 2007/08 we plan to approve around £162m worth of projects.

Significant population growth is planned in most areas of Kent and Medway, in particular in the Thames Gateway, Ashford and East Kent. This together with participation levels below regional and national averages creates substantial new demands for education

⁵ Autumn Performance Review 2006

and training. In addition many complex organisational and estates' challenges face our providers and the need for greater synergy between the policies and plans of partner agencies, especially to support economic growth and regeneration.

The education landscape in Kent and Medway is unique, with a background of selection and 104 schools sixth forms. In this context, collaboration between providers is vital if we are to achieve our capital investment aims and deliver the right environment for 21st century learners.

Outstanding Issues and Challenges

Progress continues to be made in raising success rates for young people and adults, particularly in priority areas for Level 2 and Level 3 provision. The high quality of success rates in some sector skills areas, and in the provision of E2E and ETP, provides an exemplar to other sub-regions. FE full level 2 success rate rose by 3 percentage points, to 53%, this remains 4 percentage points below the regional rate.

The Framework for Excellence will provide broad challenges in developing effective and high quality provision with a supportive infrastructure that will give learners the opportunities they need to succeed.

Improve the quality of provision by making the transition from 'satisfactory' provision to 'good' in FE and ensuring that this is consistent across all vocational areas and at all levels of provision. Work with partners to improve the quality of provision in school sixth forms.

Action for Excellence

We will assure quality in Kent and Medway and the South East with a particular focus on:

- investing in and growing excellent provision and encouraging increased specialisation
- all providers delivering at least minimum levels of performance over the next two years
- increasing the proportion of good and excellent provision
- eradicating unsatisfactory provision by 2008
- increasing young people's FE success rate for full Level 2 and full Level 3 qualifications by xx percentage points.
- a 3 percentage point increase in framework completion rates for all apprenticeship programmes, particularly for advanced apprenticeships
- all FE and WBL providers working towards a 5 percentage point improvement in adult full Level 2 success rates
- identifying high quality alternative providers through applying the principles of competition to secure new provision
- investing in a significant improvement in the quality of the FE infrastructure.

Our Local Actions

We will ensure all post-16 learners in Kent and in Medway, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have access to high quality teaching and learning provision in a 21st century learning environment. We will do this by:

- 3.1 commissioning a greater proportion of provision from high performing providers - and ceasing to contract for poor provision - for 2007/08. We will develop success measures to gauge how many more learners are in provision judged "good" or better by March 2008;
- 3.2 promoting provider self-regulation through the Framework for Excellence, and through engaging with partners such as QIA, Ofsted, CEL and Kent and Medway Councils to ensure that timely interventions, quality improvement activities and sharing of good practice occur;
- 3.3 delivering the Kent & Medway LSC's capital plan - where possible achieving alignment with Kent and Medway Councils' capital programmes, especially under Building Schools for the Future, SEEDA's area based regeneration and fostering innovative curriculum delivery;
- 3.4 using local and regional discretion to support smaller-scale capital projects in partnership with strategic partners.
- 3.5 increasing achievement rates through effective partnership management, continually working with providers once commissioned, to ensure delivery.

Priority 4: To increase economic activity and productivity, and support the regeneration and growth of communities, by developing the South East Action for Communities model and aligning the LSC's investment with that of others.

Investing in Communities

Kent and Medway is the most deprived area in the South East with 75 Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the 20% most deprived SOAs in England. There are also 175 SOAs in the 20% most deprived education, skills and training SOAs in England, accounting for 17% of all SOAs

Thanet contains the majority of most deprived SOAs based on the overall index of deprivation and many of the most deprived SOAs based on the education, skills and training domain. It is ranked 85th most deprived authority out of the 354 local authorities. **Medway Towns contains the majority of most deprived SOAs based on the education, skills and training indicator** and is ranked 160th out of the 354 local authorities in England, based on the overall index of deprivation.

One in five working age people are inactive, the highest of all areas in the South East. The economically inactive consist of a diverse group comprising the early retired, students and sick or disabled that vary in their closeness to the labour market. Of this group, however, more people wanted a job compared to the South East average (28% compared to 27%). There was no difference in the economic inactivity profile for Medway Towns and Kent.

Unemployment for both females and males, measured on the ILO basis, is the highest in the South East at 3.5%. Kent and Medway has a lower proportion of short term claims, up to six months, compared to the South East (63% compared to 65%). The claim rate is higher for durations of six to twelve months (20%) and higher for claims lasting longer than twelve months (17%) compared to the South East (19% and 16% respectively). This suggests that the area has a long-term unemployment group.

Kent and Medway had the lowest productivity outputs in the South East based on Gross Value Added (GVA). In Medway GVA per head is 38% lower than that of the South East as a whole, whilst in Kent it is 16% lower than that of the South East.

Kent and Medway had the highest decrease in PCDL provision compared to planned delivery. In 2005/2006 there were just under 29,000 learners on PCDL programmes, 34.9% lower than planned and a reduction of 20% compared to 2004/2005. In 2004/2005 of the 36,000 PCDL learners, 15% considered themselves to have a disability, learning difficulty or health problem, the highest in the region⁶.

Literacy, Numeracy and SfL

Providers in Kent and Medway continue to increase the level of funding of provision for Literacy, Numeracy and SfL qualifications which contributes towards the National Targets with 46.4% of provision contributing to the target. This compares favourably to

⁶ ILR, A03, 03/04 and 04/05

the South East figure of 41.9%. Funding on countable provision has risen from £8.4 million in 04/05 to £10.5 in 05/06

Providers updated their SfL Implementation Plans in December 2006 to reflect the emerging priority learners: -

- JC+ clients
- Offenders in the community

The Plans have also been updated to reflect how the Institutions are preparing for the changes to ESOL in 07/08

Jobcentre +

Kent and Medway LSC and Jobcentre Plus have agreed a joint plan covering activities in 4 areas: Skills for Life, IAG, Apprenticeships and Demand led Routeways, focussing on joint activities to get individuals off benefits and into work, undertaking skills training that has been identified by employers. In addition LSC is funding 275 basic skills training places, through a contract with Learndirect, for unemployed individuals to offer them a pathways back to employment.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

Kent and Medway is a partner in both Kent and Medway LAAs. Kent Council is in the 2004 pilot LAAs and Medway Council is the third round. Kent has targets for achievements at level 3 by 19 and reducing percentage of 16-18 NEETs. Medway targets are to increase the take up of Full Level 3 Vocational Training and to increase the take up of HE courses through access courses.

Voluntary and community sector

Working in collaboration with the Kent and Medway Learning Partnerships, LSC will continue to develop relationships with voluntary sector organisations in their area and encourage their involvement in "Laying the Foundations" learning networks as well as other initiatives to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, such as learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. The LSC will also develop its relationships with local umbrella organisations and local Change Up consortia to improve communications, build local capacity and align planning activities. It will continue support for development of the Kent Partnership Compact and the Medway Compact, so as to complement the actions of the LSC Regional Compact with RAISE for working with the voluntary and community sector.

Offender Learning and Skills Service

At any one time there are around 4,500 offenders in the community under the supervision of the Kent Probation Area (KPA). Working through an agreed Partnership Plan with the Kent Probation Area the LSC has made available, through its FE-funded providers, placements within Skills for Life provision which meets requirements set out by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). In 2005/06, 930 adults on probation started Skills for Life provision. In 2006/07 we are aiming to achieve 1235 starts. For 07/08 we should anticipate a further 15-20% rise in the number of Skills for Life starts sought by NOMS.

Two large ESF projects, worth over £1.2m in Kent and Medway, will be working to offer an enhanced IAG service to offenders in the community, aiming to ensure that there is a much greater awareness and take-up of the full range of LSC-funded provision available

to offenders on probation and to ex-offenders. Currently around 55% of offenders under the supervision of Kent Probation Area are economically inactive.

Children and Young People in Care

In October 2006, a green paper was published entitled “Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care” Chapter Five of the paper , A First Class Education, set out the vision for improving the educational attainment of Looked After Children , which is traditionally low. The proposals will enable the LSC to play a role in introducing mandatory training on children in care for new Further Education College principals, as part of their qualification criteria and a new pre apprentice programme to help young people gain the skills needed to start an apprenticeship, ensuring that the needs of children and young people making the transition from care up to the age of 25 are taken into account in developing and delivering local learning opportunities.

Outstanding Issues and Challenges

The regeneration in the Thames Gateway, Ashford and East Kent together with the 2012 Olympics has given LSC and its partners in Kent and Medway a unique challenge to deliver the skills needs of the new and existing employers and communities.

Kent and Medway has some of the highest concentration of people with English as a second language with Gravesham being the highest in Kent and Medway. Gravesham also had the highest concentration of adults with basic skills needs with 11% of the population with poor Literacy skills, whilst in Shepway and Swale 56% of the population had poor Numeracy skills. Overall in Kent and Medway there are some 76,000 adults with Entry Level 3 or below Literacy skills and 467,800 adults with Entry Level 3 or below Numeracy skills.

Low skills, high basic skills needs and a range of settlement types from industrial areas along the Thames Gateway and distribution facilities in Dover, to the rural communities of Kent, the sub-region is faced with many challenges. The biggest issues are in the continued provision of elementary skills in the service industries, including retail and distribution and in narrowing the gap between the highly qualified and low-skilled workforce.

Identifying the vast range of activities that are available to adults which are often difficult to access and not available to all, in all areas. In particular the need to target the areas within Kent and Medway with high levels of NEETs.

Action for Communities

We will work towards the regional priorities with a particular focus on:

- increasing the proportion of learners from vulnerable groups engaged in Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)
- engaging economically underactive people who wish to develop their careers through Adult Learner Accounts and the adult Level 2 entitlement
- increasing quality and opportunities for offenders in custody and in the community
- increasing outcomes and progression for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- increasing the resource allocated to priority skills in specified growth areas
- increasing opportunities and support for those without basic skills and first Level 2.

Our Local Actions

We make more effective use of available resources to safeguard access to learning, in particular for the most vulnerable groups to enable them to make a greater economic contribution by:

- 4.1 supporting the “Laying the Foundations” project that will set up local learning networks and ensure that effective development plans are implemented, engaging a cross-section of key partner organizations;
- 4.2 increasing the proportion of learners from vulnerable groups in Kent and in Medway by 5% who are engaged in personal and community development learning through the development of effective local PCDL partnerships and offender learning contracts.
- 4.3 reducing the number of unemployed Adults through “Skills for Jobs” programme, working with our partners, in particular Jobcentre Plus and Local Authorities, to integrate skills training and employment opportunities to support workless individuals into sustainable employment, contributing to the RES Transformational Action to raise employment rates to 85% by 2016.
- 4.4 working with local partners on tailored local strategies and action plans, which differentiate between the varying levels of NEETs and deprivation in Kent and Medway, to reduce economic underactivity.

1. Equality and Diversity

The overarching aim as stated in the LSC's Equality and Diversity Strategy is to ensure the provision responds to all customers of education and training, driven by need. The LSC continues to promote the use of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMS) as set by the LSC at regional and local levels.

In all provision that we fund we aim to:

- promote equality of opportunity across six equality strands: race, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.
- reduce gaps in participation and attainment by individuals from disadvantaged groups and for those in the most deprived localities within the region.
- utilise the capacity and expertise of the voluntary sector wherever possible.

At the local level LSC Kent and Medway will be emphasising equality and diversity commitment throughout the work of partnership teams. This commitment will seek to actively promote public duties relating to race relations, disability and from April 2007, gender. Commitment to non discriminatory practices will extend to embrace beliefs and religions, sexual orientation and to pro actively address issues relating to under represented and vulnerable groups.

Throughout in Kent and Medway, Equality and Diversity will be widely promoted through partnership and multi agency work. Whilst there will be close working relationships directly with our funded providers, multi agency collaboration will extend to the voluntary sector, to local authorities and in instances to Health Authorities. This will in particular be the case in relation to our LLDD networking.

Kent and Medway has maintained regular monitoring of its own devised Equality and Diversity Measures (EDIMS). The intention now is to develop, alongside any nationally defined core measures, EDIMS which relate more closely to partnership areas and to their equality challenges and priorities. This will generate measures which are more meaningful and purposeful to providers and partnerships teams.

ESF

As well as overseeing the delivery of local ESF Co-financing projects funded under the LSC Kent and Medway or regional Action4Skills and On Your Marks Co-financing programmes, we shall be helping to disseminate opportunities under the new South East ESF programme for 2007-2013 that will start in January 2008. The LSC will host events to encourage partnership development and networking in the spring.

Aggregate Volumes
[All numbers are indicative]

Summary Statement of Activity	Year 1	
	16-18 (Learner Volumes)	Adult (Learner Volumes)
LSC Funded Participation		
Number of FE learners (total)	[19,210]	[40,800]
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 4 and above		[1,710]
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 3	[11,740]	[8,500]
of which: Full Level 3 Learners	[8,710]	[4,250]
of which: First Full Level 3 Learners		
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Level 3		
Number of learners undertaking an Advanced Apprenticeship (Average in Learning)	[710]	[1,080]
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 2	[4,780]	[13,170]
of which: Full Level 2 Learners	[3,780]	[4,410]
of which: First Full Level 2 Learners		[1,760]
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Level 2		
Number of learners undertaking an Apprenticeship at Level 2 (Average in Learning)	[1,820]	[1,060]
Number of FE learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	[6,880]	[5,610]
Number of Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	[1,380]	[1,100]
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target		
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 1 and Entry	[2,660]	[14,510]
Number of learners undertaking Entry to Employment (starts)	[850]	
Number of learners undertaking Safeguarded Adult Learning (Total)		[23,580]
of which: Number of learners undertaking Family learning, literacy and numeracy		[1,520]
of which: Number of learners undertaking Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities		[430]
of which: Number of learners undertaking Wider Family Learning		[1,670]
of which: Number of learners undertaking Personal / Leisure Learning		[19,960]
ESF Funded Participation		
Number of ESF Learners undertaking any ESF Activity		
Number of ESF Learners not included in LSC Funded Participation table above		
Of which:		
Level 4 and above		
Full Level 3		
Full Level 2		
Skills for life that directly contributes towards the PSA target		
Level 1 and Entry		
Other ESF activity		

LSC Funded Outcomes	16-18 (Learner achievement s)	Adult (Learner achievement s)	16-18 Success Rate (%)	Adult Success Rate (%)
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 3 qualification	[5,820]	[2,070]		
Number of FE Learners achieving a First Full Level 3 qualification				
Number of Train to Gain learners achieving a Full Level 3				
Number of Learners achieving an Advanced Apprenticeship Framework	[150]	[260]		
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification	[2,300]	[2,510]		
Number of FE Learners achieving a First Full Level 2 qualification		[1,000]		
Number of Train to Gain Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification				
Number of Learners achieving an Apprenticeship Framework (at Level 2)	[720]	[490]		
Number of FE learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification (s) that directly contribute to PSA target	[4,120]	[3,110]		
Number of Advanced Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification(s) that directly contribute to PSA target	[890]	[1,100]		
Number of Train to Gain learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification(s) that directly contribute to PSA target				
Number of learners progressing to a positive destination from Entry to Employment				
ESF Funded Outcomes				
Number of ESF Learners not included in LSC Funded Outcomes table above achieving a qualification at:				
Full Level 3				
Full Level 2				
Skills for life qualification that directly contributes to the PSA target				

Funding summary	Funding (£)
FE 16 - 18	
FE Adult	
FE Additional Learning Support	
Train to Gain	
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships 16-18	
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships (Adult)	
Entry to Employment	
WBL additional learner / learning support	
Safeguarded Adult Learning	
ESF	
Total	

Fee Income and Other Activity Summary	Fee Income (£)	% of LSC funded activity Fee Income	Number of Learners
LSC Funded provision			
Not publicly subsidised / full cost			

Information Sources

Local indicators relating to population and society can also be examined using the Audit Commission area profiles website at www.area-profiles.audit-commission.gov.uk

The latest Office for National Statistics Region in Figures for the South East was published for 2004/05 at the end of 2005. It can be accessed at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

The Government Office for the South East regional plan sets out a vision for the region from 2006-2026, focusing on housing, transport, economy and the environment. The plan provides a framework in which strategies can be developed for the region and can be accessed at <http://www.go-se.gov.uk/gose/planning/regionalPlanning/>, where information on the latest response to the plan can also be found.

The Government Office also has a role, on behalf of central government, in leading the discussions on Local Area Agreements. Further information on these can be found at <http://www.go-se.gov.uk/gose/localGovt/>. In addition to the Government Office, the South East England intelligence network also provides additional research and data that provide further context to this report and can be accessed at www.see-in.co.uk.

Statistical First Release:

[Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom 2006 \(Internet only\)](#)

Regional Economic Strategy:

<http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/>