

 For information

>lsc

Leading learning and skills

Learning and
Skills Council
South West
Regional
Commissioning
Plan
2008-09

January 2008

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

National Targets

- 1 Our Statement of Priorities, *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives* (November 2007) sets out government's key strategic priorities and the contribution the LSC will make towards achieving them. The section below summarises the key points set out in the Statement of Priorities.
- 2 As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the government has set out four new strategic priorities for the period 2008/09 – 2010/11.
 - Sustainable growth and prosperity
 - Fairness and opportunity for all
 - Stronger communities and a better quality of life
 - A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world
- 3 Under each of the priorities is a set of cross government delivery agreements, each containing a number of Public Service Agreement targets (PSA), which together play a vital role in improving the delivery of services. The LSC will indirectly support a number of these delivery agreements and targets. We will also directly contribute to and lead on the following targets:

Young People

- **Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people**
 - **Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.**
- 4 While our focus must be on all young people, our delivery targets will be measured specifically by the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 by the age of 19. By raising overall achievement, we will also increase the achievement levels of the most disadvantaged. The target levels are
 - to increase the proportion of young people achieving Level 2 at age 19 from 71.4 per cent in 2006 to 82 per cent by 2011, and
 - to increase the proportion of young people achieving Level 3 at age 19 from 46.8 per cent (in 2006) to 54 per cent by 2011.
 - 5 In the South West, in 2006, 74.5% of young people had achieved Level 2 by age 19 and 49.5% had achieved a Level 3. We have set a target for 2008/09 of 80% of young people to achieve Level 2 by age 19 and another for 53% of young people aged 19 to achieve Level 3, on a trajectory consistent with that of the national targets for 2011, which are 82% and 54% respectively.
 - 6 Through increasing the number of young people participating in learning, we will support the delivery agreement to **increase the number of children and young people on the path to success**. The specific delivery target is to reduce the percentage of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET), by 2 percentage points by 2010, from a current level of 10% (5.7% in South West in July 2007). As the NEET group becomes smaller, it becomes increasingly hard to reach and engage.

Adult Skills

- **Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020.**

- 7 The delivery targets for 2020 are:
- 95 per cent of adults achieving the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy
 - More than 90 per cent of adults being qualified to at least Level 2, with a commitment to achieve 95 per cent as soon as possible
 - 68 per cent of the adult population being qualified to Level 3
 - over 40 per cent of the adult population qualified to Level 4 and above.
- 8 We will also work to deliver England's share of the UK ambition for 500,000 Apprentices and improve the quality and success rates of their learning in order to increase further the supply of economically valuable skills.
- 9 Working towards these targets, Government has set interim targets for **2011** as follows:

Increase the proportion of people of working age achieving functional literacy and numeracy skills

- 10 The target is 597,000 people of working age to achieve a first Level 1 or above literacy qualification, and 390,000 to achieve a first Entry Level 3 or above numeracy qualification. These basic skills targets ensure we will continue to meet the target to improve the basic skills of 2.25 million adults between 2001 and 2010.

Proportion of working age adults qualified to at least a full Level 2 and 3

- 11 By 2011, **79 per cent of working age adults should be qualified to Level 2 and 56 per cent qualified to Level 3.** These targets ensure we also remain on track to reduce by 40 per cent the number of adults in the workforce who lack an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010.
- 12 Current performance nationally in 2006 is 69.7 percent of adults have achieved a Level 2 and 49.2 per cent have a Level 3. Current performance in the South West in 2006 is 73.0% of adults have achieved a Level 2 and 51.1% have achieved a Level 3

Proportion of Apprentices who complete the full Apprenticeship framework

- 13 The target is to have **130,000 learners completing the full Apprenticeship framework in 2010/11.**
- 14 In 2005/06, 98,000 learners completed an Apprenticeship; in 2006/07, we expect this to exceed 100,000. In 2005/06 9,300 learners completed an Apprenticeship in the South West, in 2008/09 we expect this to be over 12,000.

A new joint target with DWP/ JCP to move more people into sustainable employment and progression

- 15 Work will begin this year to clarify and set in train the new joint target with DWP/ JCP to move more people into sustainable employment and progression and will underpin the integration of employment and skills services.

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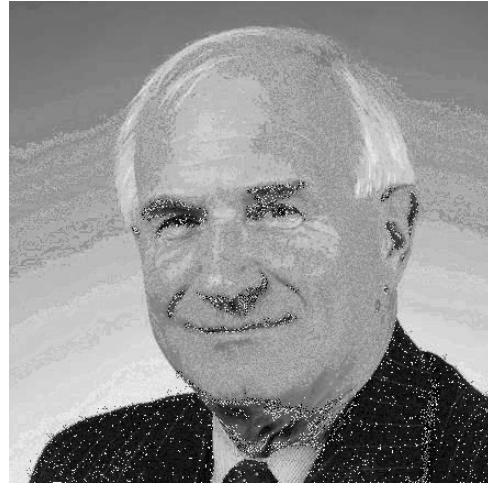
Foreword

- 16 In this, our second Regional Commissioning Plan for the South West region, we are pleased to present our commissioning priorities and ambitions for 2008/09. The plan sets out where we will target our funding through negotiated commissioning as well as through tendering to support our national targets and the Regional Skills Partnership vision of a high skills, high productivity, prosperous South West.
- 17 Over the last year, the policy context for the learning and skills sector has changed dramatically with the creation of two new departments of national government that now share responsibility for funding the sector: the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF); and the Department for Innovation and Skills (DIUS). We are very aware of the major work that will be needed to secure an effective transfer of planning and funding responsibilities for 16-18 learning from the LSC to local authorities from 2010 and we will do all that we can to support and facilitate this. We will likewise respond to the challenges of the Leitch implementation plan and Sub-national Review.
- 18 In developing this plan we have worked with our Regional Development Agency to ensure that our commissioning ambitions are set in the context of the Regional Economic Strategy and that the plans on the areas on which we lead are fundamentally aligned and based on a shared understanding of issues. Our Regional Skills Action Plan contributes to a single Skills Strategy for the region, which will maximise the opportunities to target public investment where it can really make a difference.
- 19 At a local level too, we are working with local authorities and other partners to identify areas where the market is not responding sufficiently or to respond to skills and employment priorities as articulated, for example, through Local Area Agreements. The challenging Public Service Agreement targets that have been announced over the autumn will require even more close and effective partnership working if they are to be achieved.
- 20 The LSC will continue to ensure that we are making the best investment decisions to meet the economic and social challenges the region faces. Our ambition is for the FE sector to be known as a key driver of economic competitiveness and growth, as well as a principal player in supporting wider social justice and community cohesion.
- 21 We are committed to greater improvements in success rates for LSC funded learners in the South West relative to success rate improvements nationally. We are also committed to increasing our capacity to work with employers, including the self-employed that are more prevalent in our predominantly rural region.
- 22 Whilst the LSC does not have an independent 14-19 plan, this Regional Commissioning Plan has been shaped by the general focus and emphasis of 14-19 Partnership Plans, and aligns with Children and Young People's Plans at a local level.



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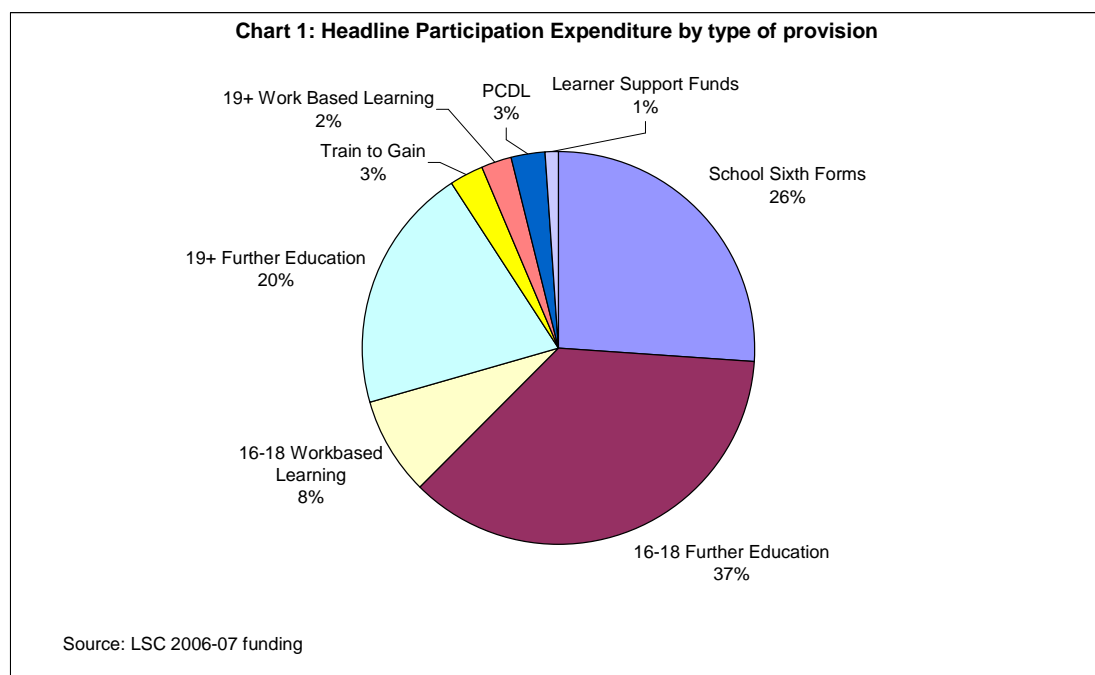
Malcolm Gillespie
Regional Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Savage." in a cursive style.

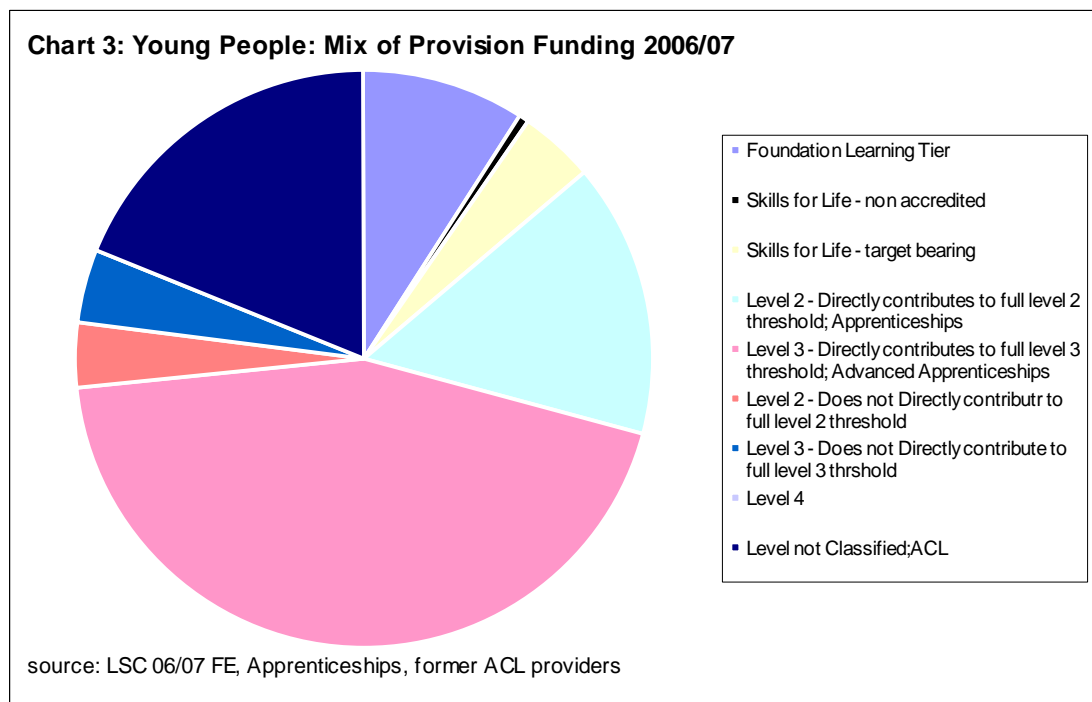
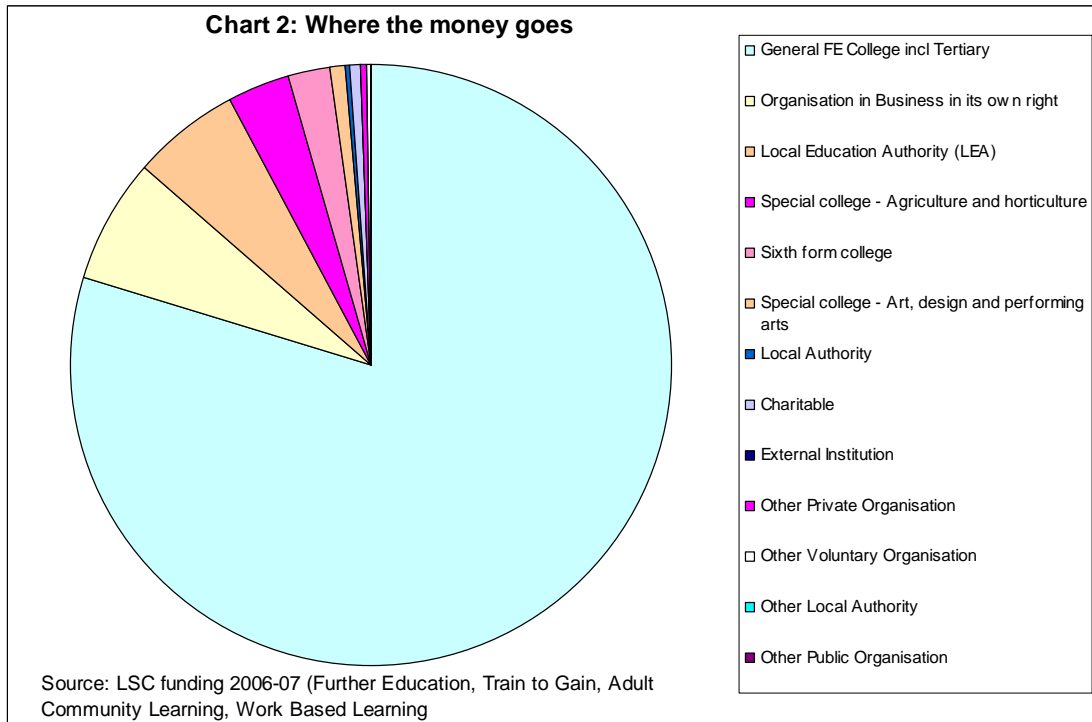
John Savage
Regional Chairman

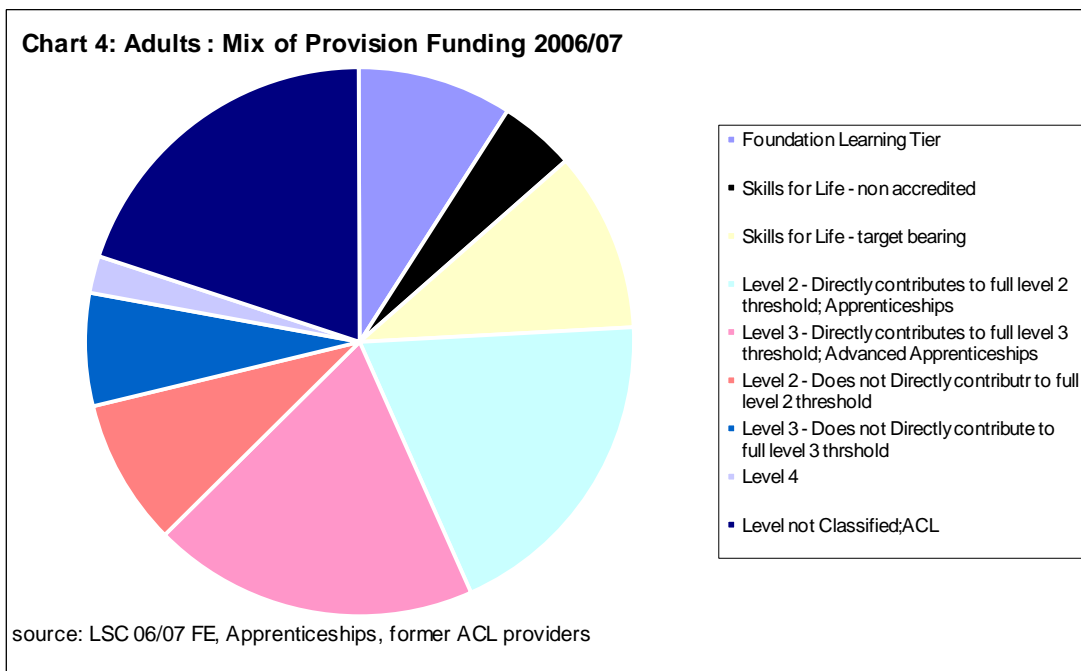
Investing in the South West



- 23 This year we will invest more than ever before in learning and skills in the South West. We want to buy the best quality provision to meet the South West's needs, and will employ robust and urgent measures to withdraw funding from poor-quality provision and to invest in providers that can deliver to at least a minimum level. This all means that we can now pay for the following for 2008/09.
- 120,000 places in schools and colleges for 16–18-year-olds.
 - An extra 2,700 places for young people participating in work-based learning.
 - Over 55,000 young people receive the Education Maintenance Allowance, enabling in total over 138,000 young people to stay in learning.
 - An extra 2,000 full Level 2 places for adults in FE.
 - An extra 2,200 full Level 3 places for adults in FE.
 - At least 840 Skills for Life places for community-based offender learners across the region.
 - Over £75 million in capital projects has provided world-class buildings for the region's learners.
 - 40,800 employees will start a first Level 2 or Skills for Life qualification (via Train to Gain).
- 24 In order to secure provision that meets the needs of learners and employers and in support of PSA Targets, we are increasingly focusing on our priorities in deciding what provision we will commission. We expect those that can afford to contribute towards the cost of their learning will do so. This will enable us to focus government resources on engaging and supporting those who are most excluded from the

labour market, enabling them to develop the skills and qualifications that will improve their ability to succeed in work and in life.





Investing in our Priorities

South West region's response to the Leitch Report

- 25 Following publication of the Government response to Leitch in July 2007 (*World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*) we have undertaken a detailed analysis of the implications for the South West region. This highlighted some key challenges which include:
- a further 568,150 individuals now within the scope of the new Skills target for adult attainment of Level 2 as a result of the focus on working age population
 - the far reaching implications of the increases in targets for improving functional skills in literacy and numeracy
- 26 Following on from this, a detailed Regional Skills Action Plan has been compiled for 2008/09 which includes key points for provider commissioning. This outlines how providers will need to use their funding allocation for 2008/09 to meet regional skills priorities and the ambitions of Leitch. The plan has been prepared by the LSC in consultation with partners.
- 27 The Regional Skills Action Plan sets out the LSC contribution to the *Statement of Priorities 2007-2010* of the South West Regional Skills Partnership; this in turn, supports the skills components of the South West Regional Development Agency's Regional Economic Strategy. These three documents combine to form the Single Skills Strategy for the South West Region, which will be signed by partners by April 2008.

- 28 The Regional Skills Strategy has informed the South West focus of the National ESF programme. The LSC's Co-financed activity will address and deliver the activities, outputs and outcomes defined within the ESF Frameworks for Competitiveness and Convergence. It will add value to mainstream delivery, delivering the requirements of the Frameworks in the context of identified sub-regional need. In the Convergence area, the ESF Framework has been informed by the Economic Development Strategy for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- 29 Our skills priorities fall into two main areas: workforce development through Train to Gain, in which our priorities are the delivery of full level 2 qualifications, Skills for Life and Apprenticeships; and the integration of skills and employment, in which our priority is supporting workless individuals into jobs through flexible skills provision.
- 30 We plan to re-position Train to Gain as a Service to meet all levels of skills needs, working not only with hard to reach employers but medium to large employers with 1,000 to 4,999 employees. We will work closely with the public sector and also deliver an integrated offer to employers, which links the Local Employment Partnership approach to the Skills Pledge. We expect to grow Apprenticeship for Adults beyond the 1,450 starts available in 2007/08 by (number to be confirmed).
- 31 We will stimulate demand for learning from individuals and, in particular, those who lack basic employability skills by developing our Information, Advice and Guidance provision for adults, in readiness for the new Adult Careers Service. In preparation for this we plan to embed information, advice and guidance into all our provision and we expect to trial aspects of Skills Accounts and the new service during 2008/09. Steps have been taken to establish a new Adult Careers Service Regional Strategic Partnership with Jobcentre Plus and other key partners to oversee the development.
- 32 A joint statement between Jobcentre Plus and the LSC will be produced to support the extensive work that is needed to integrate skills and employment provision across the region and to provide a seamless journey for individuals from worklessness to sustained employment. The regional Joint Delivery Plan between the LSC and Jobcentre Plus will address this new shared objective and bring with it, greater accountability; related local plans will focus on greater coordination and integrated planning. Such activity will link the new Adult Careers Service with Skills for Jobs provision and the skill requirements of Local Employment Partnerships.

- 33 The new functional skills target means that an additional 5% of the working age population (150,000 people in South West) will need to achieve at least functional skill level in literacy or numeracy if we are to achieve the 2011 Functional Skills targets. We expect current levels of literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages to be maintained. In addition, Literacy qualifications for adults at level 1 need to triple, and numeracy qualifications for adults at Entry level 3 need to quadruple.

Industry sector priorities

- 34 The economy of the region is changing rapidly, with employment growth at almost twice the national rate between 1998 and 2006.
- 35 We have agreed an interim list of priority qualifications with most SSCs and published these via the Sector Summaries to colleagues, providers and stakeholders in the region. The definitive qualification lists have been published as an addendum to the national Statement of Priorities and we will baseline the current LSC position in the South West. This will inform an action plan to support the process of progressively aligning funding with the vocational qualifications 'approved' by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Standard Setting Bodies (SSBs) within the context of their Sector Qualification Strategies.
- 36 We will develop a South West Plan for Growth to deliver growth in Train to Gain and we will work with brokers to help employers understand their workforce needs and with Sector Skills Councils to ensure that employer needs are identified and addressed. Industries with a high proportion of employees lacking Level 2 include construction, hotels & catering, retail and wholesale distribution. Our level 2 additional priorities in 2008/09 are likely to focus on employees covered by Asset Skills; Local Authorities; Nuclear decommissioning; Skills Active; Skills for Logistics; Skillsmart Retail and the Third Sector. We have an additional Level 3 priority in Financial Services.

Client group priorities

- 37 We particularly wish to target young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), people with low skills, people on benefits, people and communities that are most excluded from the labour market and those in 'vulnerable' employment.
- 38 We expect provision to be targeted at communities where learning participation and skills levels are low, especially the more deprived parts of the region, and among particular groups including people with disabilities and learners of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, to build on delivery of existing Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMS).
- 39 We will protect categories of provision to help more learners, in line with commitments in our Statement of Priorities:
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- Personal and community development learning, neighbourhood learning and wider family learning
 - English for speakers of other languages
 - Learning below Level 2 that forms the Foundation Learning Tier
- 40 The Foundation Learning Tier is a programme of work to develop a more focused and strategic approach to entry level and level 1 for learners aged 14 and over within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in order to raise participation, achievement and progression amongst learners at these levels.

Increasing the offer from the FE sector

- 41 Increasingly, we will focus on and prioritise public investment in areas of market failure such as Skills for Life and provision which delivers full Level 2. Outside these priority areas, we expect adult learners and employers to contribute towards the cost of their learning.
- 42 In 2008/09, we expect FE providers to increase their levels of fee income and full-cost provision by broadening their offer to adults, encouraging more employers to see FE as the solution to their skills needs, and delivering more professional qualifications and Level 4 and 5 provision. We expect to see institutions broadening their income base, and therefore becoming more autonomous and less reliant on public funding for adult and employer focused provision.
- 43 We estimate that fee income in the South West is currently £17.5 million. In 2008/09, we expect fee income to rise by £1 million and in line with the national fee assumption of 42.5%. We will encourage more colleges and providers to increase the level of income generated by fees and full-cost work and agree individual income targets with colleges.

Capital

- 44 Our investment in capital in the region will underpin the wider development of the FE infrastructure bringing benefits to learners, employers and the wider community. We will increasingly focus capital investment on both meeting the needs of an area and the renewal of the college estate. Our investment in world class buildings will contribute to the regeneration of local neighbourhoods.
- 45 LSC capital investment support in the region to 2006 is estimated at £112 million. A regional Capital Plan for the period 2007-11 has been approved and will prioritise investment to those areas where need has been identified according to anticipated patterns of population growth

and employment growth across the region. Following on from the work done with Strategic Area Reviews, Joint Area Reviews and Area Wide Inspections, Area partnership teams, working with providers and other key stakeholders, have identified a set of educational priorities based on local and regional needs to guide LSC investment.

Challenges, key actions and measures of success for the South West

- 46 The LSC has three national priorities, which we deliver at both a regional and local level. The key challenges for us in delivering these priorities are set out below. Our challenges and actions are based on our regional strategic analysis of supply, demand and need; as well as ongoing dialogue with key partner organisations. The main outputs of the strategic analysis can be accessed at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Aboutus/regionalannualplans/>

Priority 1 - Creating demand for learning and skills

- 47 Our aim is simple: we want more people to demand learning because they are clear about the social and economic benefits that it brings.

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
For young people: increasing participation and achievement against a falling cohort of 16-18 year olds		
<p>16-18 participation has increased, particularly in further education but the rate of increase has been much slower than the national average. There is much variation between participation rates in different parts of the region.</p> <p>Whilst the South West region has the lowest proportion of young people not in employment, education or training - NEETs, there remain 7,000 NEET young people in the region in addition to 5,000 whose status is not known. Young people who are NEETs are concentrated in certain parts of the region.</p>	<p>Support 14-19 transition planning through 14-19 partnerships and extension of the 14-19 offer, including the new diplomas, International Baccalaureate, Key Stage 4 engagement programme and Young Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Focus work with partners in NEET Hotspots and commission specific provision, as needed, to engage young people who are NEET.</p> <p>Work with local authorities in the region to prepare effectively for transfer of responsibilities for planning and funding of 16-18 in 2010/11.</p>	<p>Increased participation by 16-18 year olds despite declining cohort.</p> <p>Deliver the September Guarantee for 16 and 17 year olds.</p> <p>Reduction of proportion of young people who are NEET by one percentage point in 2008/09.</p>
<p>Level 2 and level 3 attainment at 19 continue to improve, with an estimated 79% and 52% qualified to these levels, respectively. The region's poorest-performing local authority areas are well behind these averages. Whilst level 2 attainment at 16 is above the</p>	<p>Actions with partners to increase participation focused on young people that have not attained Level 2 by age 16.</p> <p>Focus on success rate improvements and</p>	<p>Increased participation and achievement by groups targeted in EDIMS.</p> <p>Improved retention and success rates for young people in FE</p>

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
<p>national average, more than half the region's young people leave compulsory education without good GCSEs in maths and English and the rate of improvement in young people's qualifications is, in general, slower than the national average. Attainment levels are lower for boys, and learners of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity Impact Measures in dialogue with providers</p>	
<p>The number of young people undertaking Apprenticeship provision in the region has declined in recent years and the rate of increase in framework completion rates is slower than the national average.</p>	<p>Expand Pre-Apprenticeships as entry point to employer led apprenticeships for some learners.</p> <p>Commission additional Apprenticeship provision, including Programme-led Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Stimulate further growth in providers where framework completion rates are good.</p> <p>Roll out the national vacancy matching service within region and increase employer engagement.</p> <p>Increase the range of options for the land-based sector, including the new 14-19 diploma, Apprenticeships and Programme-Led Apprenticeships.</p>	<p>An additional 2,700 Apprenticeship places available.</p> <p>Additional 600 young people completing Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Withdrawal of funding from provision below Minimum Levels of Performance.</p> <p>Vacancy matching service linked with online prospectus and an integral part of 14-19 offer.</p> <p>Increased penetration of land-based sector, particularly in Apprenticeships.</p>
<p>People with Learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are more likely to be in NEET, less likely to undertake training and have slightly lower success rates when they do.</p> <p>17% of the region's residents and 5% of 16-19 year olds have limiting long term illnesses.</p>	<p>Secure provision that meets the need of learners with learning difficulties (LLDD) and/or disabilities in line with our regional strategy.</p> <p>Increased partnership working with specialist colleges.</p>	<p>Increase existing levels of provision for LLDD by 150 learners.</p> <p>Reduced need for learners to attend specialist provision outside the region</p> <p>People with LDD moving into sustainable employment</p>
<p>For adults: significantly increasing number of adults with skills for work and life</p>		
<p>Adult attainment at levels 2 and 3 are slightly above the national average, although around 800,000 and 1.5 million working age adults</p>	<p>Development of Information, Advice and Guidance services as a forerunner to the new</p>	<p>Increase in proportion of first full Level 2 and delivery of priority provision.</p>

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
<p>respectively do not have these qualifications. The problem is particularly acute for people with disabilities, workless and unskilled and semi-skilled workers, all of whom are also in the group of residents least likely to undertake training. The rate of increase in the proportion of adults qualified to levels 2 and 3 is slower than the national average.</p>	<p>universal Adult Careers Service in the South West as a means of informing and engaging more adults.</p> <p>Focus provider plans on priority provision and progression (Foundation Learning Tier, Full Level 2/3, Skills for Life) through effective dialogue.</p>	<p>Evidence of increased targeting of communities and groups that are most likely to lack skills and undertake training.</p>
<p>We are continuing to deliver record number of adults achieving Skills for Life qualifications. Whilst over 130,000 learners in the South West have successfully achieved a literacy, numeracy or language qualification, there remains a significant number of adults in the region with Skills for Life needs, many of whom are unwilling to admit they have a problem.</p> <p>The number of economic migrants from A8 countries has grown and will continue to increase in future years. Economic migrants often take up employment in less skilled occupations relative to their actual skills levels. An identified barrier to progress in the labour market for some is their level of English language skills.</p>	<p>Focus on discrete 'Skills for Life' programmes and at the same time, ensure that delivery is embedded within much, if not all vocational provision, including Train to Gain and Skills for Jobs opportunities.</p> <p>Maintain ESOL provision at existing levels</p>	<p>Numeracy provision increases in line with Leitch targets</p> <p>Functional skill achievements in numeracy at Entry level 3 are quadrupled and Literacy at level 1 to be tripled.</p>
<p>Offenders face major barriers in entering employment, often having significant training and education needs. The proportion of offenders accessing LSC funded mainstream provision is very low compared to the number of offenders in the community.</p>	<p>Maintain funded delivery for offenders in custody and in the community at current levels.</p> <p>Widen the learning offer to offenders in the community beyond Skills for Life to include a wide mix and balance of employment focused provision.</p>	<p>Over 225,000 delivery hours in adult prisons in the region.</p> <p>850 Skills for Life qualifications gained by offenders in the community.</p> <p>More offenders move into employment.</p>
For employers: helping businesses to develop skilled and motivated employees		
<p>The proportion of businesses in the South West experiencing skills gaps in their workforce has declined overall since 2003 (despite a slight increase in 2007) with 17% of employers reporting skills gaps. There remains a significant</p>	<p>Develop a regional 'approach' to promote and support the Skills Pledge which links to Local Employment Partnerships and provides an integrated</p>	

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
proportion of employees whose current skill levels are not adequate for the full achievement of their employers' business objectives.	employment and skills approach for employers. Focus commissioning and dialogue with providers on sectors experiencing skills shortage vacancies.	
Whilst over 5,700 employers have now benefited from Train to Gain , there remain large numbers of businesses that have yet to recognise the benefits of this flexible approach to up-skilling their workforce. Changes to processes have much improved Train to Gain performance. However, Skills for Life achievement and the number of 19-24 year olds progressing into Apprenticeships from Train to Gain remain poor.	Build on the Apprenticeships for Adults (25+) volumes delivered during 2007-08 and determine how to expand these volumes through to 2010. This includes refining our sectoral needs and forging more effective links in engaging workless people.	Additional 4,800 employers engaged through Train to Gain S4L targets in TtG and progression rate target to Apprenticeship (to be confirmed)
Whilst we have made significant investment in improving leadership and management skills we need to engage many more businesses, particularly those employing fewer than 50, so that they can develop the skills to help their business succeed and grow.		(under review)
A relatively large proportion of businesses in the region report hard to fill skills shortage vacancies. Skills shortage vacancies are most concentrated in particular sectors : Public Transport; Science, Engineering & Manufacturing Technology; Creative & Cultural and Construction industries.	Focus commissioning and dialogue with providers on sectors experiencing skills shortage vacancies	Reduction in Skill Shortage vacancies

Priority 2 - Transforming the FE system to meet demand

As we raise demand, we need the whole FE system to be able to respond.

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
Overall FE success rates in the region are improving but are below national averages and are increasing at a slower rate. There is also a wide variation in performance between areas from 80% in the best performing Area to 71% in the	Support partners' programmes to improve retention rates and secure an accelerated improvement in success rates, particularly for young people.	Improved retention and success rates Improvement rating of quality through Ofsted assessments

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
<p>poorest performing Area.</p> <p>The quality of teaching and learning is improving in the region, as judged by Ofsted, but small pockets of unsatisfactory provision still exist.</p>	<p>Remove funding from poor quality provision through applying Minimum Levels of Performance</p> <p>Stimulate appropriate support for providers through the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership</p>	
<p>Delivery of the Train to Gain service has transformed some learning providers' approach to employer engagement in the region, and there is an opportunity to build on this success and extend it to the worklessness agenda.</p> <p>There is a need to develop sector specialist networks to meet the ongoing training needs of employers engaged with National Skills Academies.</p>	<p>Introduce Train to Gain Plan for Growth, to expand service and meet the needs of more employers and learners</p> <p>Jointly develop proposals with Sector Skills Councils for action targeted at specific employers and/or occupational groups with skills needs including activity to promote upskilling and/or enhancing skills delivery infrastructure</p> <p>Secure senior management commitment in providers to achieving the employer responsiveness New Standard (Parts A and B), as a pre-requisite to membership of specialist networks</p>	<p>Broader offer of provision to meet the needs of learners and employers in all parts of the region</p> <p>Increased Train to Gain participation from targeted sectors and additional Skills for Life, level 2, level 3 and Apprenticeship outcomes.</p> <p>Accredited and responsive providers in place to support specialist network development (NSAs)</p>
<p>The financial viability of a number of colleges and other providers in the region remains a concern, which may be exacerbated by the slow response of some organisations to the opportunities of demand-led funding.</p>	<p>Introduce new demand-led funding models so that provision is more responsive to demand and infrastructure of providers is not destabilised.</p> <p>Agree fee income targets with colleges</p>	<p>Number of FE colleges in good financial health</p> <p>£ fee income generated</p>
<p>The skills brokerage needs to be even more effective at ensuring greater take up of workforce learning</p>	<p>Develop provider capability to deliver 'light touch' brokerage and employer engagement within the wider brokerage service,</p>	<p>Accredited employer engagement staff in providers in place to offer the Train to Gain Service</p>

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
	through the achievement of appropriate accreditation	

Priority 3 - Better skills, better jobs, better lives

48 By raising demand and also enabling the FE system to respond to that demand, we will increase skills levels and employability, which will in turn deliver greater social and economic success.

Challenge	Action	Measure of Success
<p>There are variable levels of deprivation and need within the region, with pockets of very high deprivation in particular urban and rural areas. The population spread is not uniform, nor are levels of skills development or growth.</p> <p>The South West is England's least densely-populated region with, for example, around seven out of ten of the region's lower-tier local authority areas having population densities of less than 2 people per hectare. This can create higher unit costs for delivery of learning and/or increase pressures for subsidised transport.</p>	<p>Ensure that LSC funded learning provision is better aligned to the priorities articulated in Local Area Agreements and the emerging Employment and Skills Boards</p> <p>Deliver the commissioned Skills for Jobs support, giving particular attention to eligible individuals in Plymouth, Torbay and Bristol and linking the skill provision to needs identified by Local Employment Partnerships</p> <p>Maintain range of provision and access in all areas</p>	<p>Evidence of individual achievement and progression in line with local priorities</p> <p>1,600 workless participants engaged through commissioned Skills for Jobs support</p>
<p>Whilst levels of claimant unemployment are at historically low levels, the proportion of workless people who are claiming benefits remains well above the national average.</p> <p>The linkage between the aspirations and skill levels for a significant proportion of the workless, and the opportunities available in the labour market, remains weak and there is a need for a more combined approach between agencies to connect those without work to the opportunities available.</p> <p>As the number of young people</p>	<p>Plan and action with Jobcentre Plus and the Third Sector to engage more workless individuals in learning to improve their skill levels and support them into sustained employment.</p> <p>Align Skills for Jobs and Train to Gain to respond to the training and support needs arising from Local Employment Partnerships. Skills for Jobs will be funded through the European Social Fund from 2008.</p>	<p>Delivery of joint local plans with Jobcentre Plus</p> <p>More learners from targeted groups in learning and succeeding</p>

<p>available to enter the labour market will decline from 2008, greater focus will need to be placed on helping those adults who are currently workless to enter or rejoin the labour market, ensuring that they have the relevant skills to do so.</p> <p>The South West, like other regions, needs to be able to deliver a rationalised and integrated employment and skills service by the end of 2010 through the delivery of joint local plans</p>	<p>Use Adult Safeguarded Funding to support a wide range of high quality learning across the community that supports progression</p>	
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Commissioning Profile

49 We will continue to measure our success – either directly or by working with regional and local partners – as outlined below.

Measure	2006/07	2007/08 estimated	2008/09 projected
14–16-year-olds			
Total number of learners aged 14–16	1,000	2,100	2,700
16–18-year-olds			
Number of young people participating in learning	136,100	137,600	138,000
Percentage of young people reaching Level 2 at age 19	77.6%	79%	80%
Percentage of young people reaching Level 3 at age 19	50.2%	51%	53%
Number of young people completing Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships	5,600	6,300	6,700
Adult learner responsive			
Total number of adults participating in learning	240,500	212,800	202,500
Number of Skills for Life achievements overall for adults	23,400	23,200	25,300
Literacy	4,700	4,800	7,700
Numeracy	200	200	3,000
Number of first full Level 2 achievements overall for adults	800	1,000	1,200
Number of first full Level 3 achievements overall for adults	1,700	1,900	2,070
Number of adults accessing adult safeguarded learning	72,700	73,000	71,000
Employer responsive			
Total number of learners	54,200	79,900	115,000

Number of first full level 2 achievements	5,700	14,000	17,500
Number of adults completing an Apprenticeship (including Advanced Apprenticeships)	3,700	4,900	5,370
Number of employers engaged through Train to Gain	4,300	5,200	10,000
Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) – young people & adults			
Total number of LLDD learners supported	56,200	56,700	56,850
Total number of learners in specialist residential colleges	300	400	400
European Social Funding (ESF)			
Total number of learners supported by ESF	7,200	12,400	14,800

Commissioning

- 50 The Leitch Review of Skills, *Prosperity for all in the global economy: World-class skills*, published in December 2006, set out new ambitions for developing world-class skills. To achieve the report's vision, the LSC has implemented a demand-led approach to commissioning, coupled with a strong emphasis on quality.
- 51 Commissioning is the term we use for all of our planning and purchasing activity across the learning and skills sector, negotiated or competitively tendered for 'purchases'. All of our commissioning decisions are rooted in a firm commitment to allocating our budget wisely, targeting provision of the highest quality, contributing to government targets and priorities, and giving value for money.

Negotiated commissioning

- 52 Negotiated commissioning involves us agreeing plans with colleges and providers that currently deliver good quality LSC-funded provision. Our negotiated commissioning plans for 2008/09 include the following.

16–18-year-olds

- 53 Most provision for young people will be secured through planning dialogues with colleges, providers and schools (via local authorities). These discussions will result in agreed plans to deliver the following.
- 138,000 places for 16–18-year-olds, of which:
 - 22,000 places are for Apprenticeships; and;
 - 26,000 places for foundation learning tier
 - 4,200 places for Entry to Employment

Adult learner responsive provision

- 54 As agreed with our partners, we need to deliver the following in 2008/09.
- Full Level 2: 11,000 places in total.
 - Full Level 3: 10,500 places in total.
 - Skills for Life: 45,200 places in total.
 - Foundation learning tier: 43,000 places in total.

Employer responsive provision

- 55 As agreed with our partners, we need to deliver the following in 2008/09.
- Level 2: 61,000 places in total.
 - Level 3: 29,300 places in total.
 - Skills for Life: 4,000 places in total.
 - Apprenticeships: 19,900 places in total.
 - Programme Led Apprenticeships: 3,000 places in total.

56 **Train to Gain** is a service that seeks to meet the employer demand for skills. In the South West it is currently delivered by over 100 providers. It will continue to be our flagship service to respond to employers during 2008/09.

- 10,000 employers will be engaged in Train to Gain by 31 March 2009.
- 40,800 employees will start their first Level 2 or Skills for Life qualifications by 31 July 2009.
- Train to Gain funding will focus on the South West's priority sectors, to help employers in those sectors who have the greatest volume of employees without a level 2 qualification.
- In the South West, up to 5% of the Train to Gain budget will be available as a responsiveness fund, which will be commissioned throughout the year in response to employers' needs.

Adult safeguarded learning, including personal and community development learning

57 We will secure this provision locally and ensure it is aligned to Local Area Agreements.

- Personal and community development learning (PCDL): 71,000 places in total.
- Family learning, literacy and numeracy: 5,300 places in total.
- Wider family learning: 5,000 places in total.
- Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities: 7,000 places in total.

Tendered commissioning

58 Tendered commissioning is a competitive process that is open to any new providers wanting to enter the market. It is also open to existing colleges or providers wanting to extend their provision or enter new markets or geographical areas.

59 In order to drive up the quality and responsiveness of the provision that we fund, we will be introducing more competition within our commissioning activity. Key triggers for competition include new investment, restructuring of provision or a new delivery model, significant gaps in provision, and failure to meet minimum levels of performance. In 2008/09, we may tender for the following:

- **16–18-year-olds**
Apprenticeships to the value of £14,400,000 (8,000 places)
Entry to Employment to the value of £3,200,000 (1,000 places)
NEET provision to the value of £4,000,000 (1,000 places)
Education Business Links
European Social Fund
Information, advice and guidance

Pre-Apprenticeships
Progression pathways
Work experience
Young parents to be

- **Adult learner responsive provision**
 - 19-25 Apprenticeships to the value of £7,500,000 (5,000 places)
 - 25+ Apprenticeships to the value of £3,900,000 (1,650 places)
 - 19+ further education to the value of £5,000,000 (2,000 places)
 - Train to Gain to the value of £27,000,000 (18,000 places)
 - Basic skills for Jobcentre Plus
 - European Social Fund
 - Information, advice and guidance
 - Olympics
 - Progression pathways
 - Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) provision
 - Skills for Jobs
- **Employer responsive provision**
 - European Social Fund
 - Specialist sectors

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD)

60 We will commission to increase learning and skills opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by expanding provision to meet the needs of the cohort and we expect participation and achievement to increase for learners with LDD. At a regional level in 2008/09, we wish to at least maintain numbers of LLDD at 2007/08 levels. Our regional strategy focuses on:

- **progression** from outset of LLDD programmes – to employment or independent living
- **employment** in the broadest sense – for example, job-sharing, job carving or volunteering
- ending **'revolving door' learning**
- **multi-agency, person centred** approach
- more **partnership working** with specialist colleges.
- developing more **local provision** and, over time, reducing the number of LLDD learners attending specialist provision outside the South West.

Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS)

61 We will work collaboratively with OLASS partners to improve opportunities for offenders and ex-offenders through learning and reduce re-offending rates by increasing the skills and qualifications of offenders, improving their employability and helping them move into work. We will continue to tender for **provision for offenders**, every three years, unless there is a failure of service for which we need to re-tender sooner.

- 62 For offenders in custody, we plan to secure similar levels of delivery as for 2007/08. In 2008/09, we plan that our providers will deliver over 225,000 teaching hours at adult prisons, more than 3,000 teaching hours in the region's one female juvenile unit and just over 22,600 assessments and IAG activities.
- 63 Working in partnership with probation areas and providers we will secure provision for delivery of more than 850 Skills for Life qualifications to be gained by offenders in the community during 2008/09. In addition, we will look to providers to continue to extend the learning and skills offer to offenders in the community beyond skills for life.

National Skills Academies (NSA)

- 64 The National Skills Academy (NSA) network is a unique structure of employer-led excellence for skills training. They provide a means for direct involvement by employers in the design and delivery of learning. The NSA network will be a key component of the provider and supply infrastructure in addressing skills shortages in specific sectors and industries. In 2008/09 we will fund delivery of NSAs in specific sectors and industries.
- 65 NSAs will be a key part of our overall strategy to commission high-quality, employer responsive provision in a demand-led system. All delivery will be through provider allocations or tendered where there is a shortfall. All delivery providers will need to be affiliated to the NSA and be working towards their quality standards, including Part B of New Standard for employer responsiveness. In 2008/09 we will fund delivery of NSAs in the following sectors:

Round 1 approved NSAs

NSA for Manufacturing (Semta)

- 66 A regional Spoke Manager is working with employers to raise awareness of benefits of skills training and with providers to upskill assessors and trainers to meet NSA quality standards. The South West lead provider is Swindon College.

NSA for Construction (NSAfC)

- 67 Two NSA centres of excellence will set up in the region during 2008/09 at Swindon and Taunton; both are town centre regeneration and house-building programmes and other projects may be considered during the year.

NSA for Financial Services (NSAFS)

- 68 City of Bristol College will be the lead provider of a specialist network initially based on providers in Gloucestershire. A Dorset and Devon & Cornwall network is actively being developed. NSA activity will initially focus on 14-19 provision including 14-19 Diploma, Level 2, Level 3 and a new suite of Apprenticeships. Additionally work is under way with Higher Education to develop new accredited Leadership and Management programmes alongside foundation degree provision.

NSA for Food & Drink

- 69 Regional developments are at a formative stage and the South West Food & Drink Network is negotiating to enhance activity across the whole food chain through an agri-food Academy. A Fine Food Academy is also planned which will link food manufacture with the retail operations.

Round 2 approved NSAs

NSA for Nuclear (Cogent)

- 70 During 2008/09, the regional NSA hub will focus on developing a skills programme for the employer, relating to decommissioning of sites along the Severn estuary and Devonport.

Infrastructure

- 71 We are a responsible government-funded organisation: rather than funding the same providers year after year, we take great care to test the market. This ensures that our learning and skills provision continues to meet the changing needs of learners and employers.
- 72 We take an active interest in the overall volume, pattern and range of learning and skills activity that individual learners and employers can choose from in each area. We also analyse delivery to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and that equality of opportunity exists throughout our learning and skills provision in the South West.
- 73 We want to invest in the capacity of the FE system so that it is continually able to respond to future challenges and where necessary, we want to encourage a diverse provider base to increase choice, quality and stimulate the delivery of innovative provision. One way we will achieve this is through the use of open and competitive tendering processes where this will result in improved quality or choice for learners and employers. Where we have good and excellent providers, we will help them to grow so that they can continue to offer the breadth and depth of provision we need in the region.

Quality

- 74 Quality improvement will be a key driver of our commissioning decisions to ensure that we secure good quality provision for learners and employers and continue to eradicate poor provision from the market.
- 75 We will support colleges and providers that are performing well to perform even better, and we will challenge colleges and providers that are satisfactory but not improving. As part of this more rigorous approach to securing the best provision, we will assess performance against minimum levels of performance from the 2006/07 academic year, based on the new measures for calculating success rates
- 76 These minimum levels will be used by Ofsted as part of the college and provider performance report. Where a substantial proportion of provision is identified as inadequate or underperforming, a 'Notice to Improve' will be issued. We will address mediocre provision through a regional approach to improvement indicators that will focus, though not exclusively, on areas that are in danger of slipping below minimum performance levels if the bar is raised. Improvement indicators will form part of the funding agreement or contract which we hold with colleges and providers (to be confirmed).
- 77 The National Improvement Strategy sets out how the Quality Improvement Agency and partners such as the LSC will provide support to colleges and providers. The Strategy includes the expectation that the contracts and funding agreements we hold with providers ensure that they have appropriately qualified and trained staff in accordance with new requirements.

78 Related strategies

The **LSC Single Equality Scheme** describes our commitment to placing the promotion of equality and diversity at the centre of every aspect of our work. The scheme includes our national Equality & Diversity Measures (EDIMs). The document can be found at:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/equality-diversity/ses.htm>

South West EDIMs for 2007/08 were published in January 07

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/SouthWest/sw-edims-jan07.pdf> and will be updated early in 2008. The new EDIMs will be available at:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Aboutus/regionalannualplans/>

The **Regional Economic Strategy (RES)** for the South West provides a shared vision for the development of the regional economy. The Strategy concentrates on improving the economy and ensuring that more people can participate in that economy. The Regional Skills Partnership, of which LSC is a member, is charged with delivering skills for the regional economy as outlined in the RES delivery framework 2006-09. The RES can be found at:

<http://www.southwestrda.co.uk/South-West-Regional-Economic-Strategy/>

The **LSC South West Skills Action Plan (RSAP)** aims to influence the mix and balance of skills provision across the region from 2008 and informs our Regional Commissioning Plan. It sits alongside key national policy documents such as the Leitch Implementation Plan and the LSC Statement of Priorities 2008/09. At a regional level it sets out the LSC's contribution to the Regional Skills Strategy, which supports the South West's Regional Economic Strategy. The RSAP will be available on the LSC website early in 2008:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Aboutus/regionalannualplans/>

Each of the four Area teams of the LSC South West has prepared **Local Area Statements of Need**, setting out their key challenges, actions and measures of success for 2008/09. These documents draw upon regional and local intelligence and the experience of joint working on the learning and skills agenda, increasingly with respect to 14-19 plans and Local Area Agreements. The four documents are available at:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Aboutus/localannualplans/>

The South West **Learning for Living and Work Strategy** supports the national strategy of the same name and aims to improve education and training opportunities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The strategy can be found at:

http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/SouthWest/Regional_LLDD_Strategy_v7.pdf

A draft of the **SW LSC/Jobcentre Plus Joint Plan** is currently being developed with the intention of publication by the end of December 2007. When published, the Plan will be available at:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Aboutus/regionalannualplans/>

The **South West Regional Improvement Framework 2007/10** has been prepared on behalf of the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership. The Framework supports the move to a self-regulating further education (FE) system and addresses Leitch Review recommendations that the FE system should transform itself to become responsive to the demand from learners and employers for world-class skills. The Framework can be found at:

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/SouthWest/sw-quality-framework-2007-10.doc>

A **Regional Capital Plan** for the period 2007-11 sets out LSC priorities for capital investment in the South West region that will enable the LSC to deliver its key goals of: raising participation, achievement and progression among young people and improving the skills of the adult workforce. The Plan is available at:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/Aboutus/regionalannualplans/>

79 Glossary

CWDC: Children's Workforce Development Council

E2E: Entry to Employment

EDIMs: Equality and Diversity Impact Measures

EMA: Education Maintenance Allowance

ESF: European Social Fund

ESOL: English for speakers of other languages

FE: further education

Full Level 2: equates to five GCSEs at grades A* to C

Full Level 3: equates to two GCE A-level passes or equivalent

HE: higher education

LAA: local area agreement

NEET: not in education, employment or training

NSA: National Skills Academy

NVQ: National Vocational Qualification

OLASS: Offender Learning and Skills Service

PCDL: personal and community development learning

Progression pathways: a high-quality, coherent curriculum offer for entry and Level 1

QCF: Qualifications and Credit Framework