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Leading learning and skills

**Learning and
Skills Council
Wiltshire and
Swindon**

**Annual Plan
2007-08**

March 2007

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

Local Annual Plan 2007/08

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Introduction

This annual plan builds on the successes of previous years and supports our vision for the area, “Working in Partnership to provide a responsive and sustainable learning and skills sector in Wiltshire and Swindon which will deliver the training that meets learner and employer needs, enabling the local population to realise their full potential”

We are fortunate to work in a part of the country that – as a whole – is economically prosperous, with high levels of employment and inward investment. However we can't be complacent or lacking in ambition for those people who are disadvantaged within our communities. We need to ensure that we have the programmes and systems in place to engage individuals and employers in order for them to achieve their ambitions and have the skills necessary to compete in the Global Economy.

We clearly face some significant challenges. For example, the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is rising. Also, the numbers of adults with qualifications, who are economically active in Wiltshire and Swindon, are below the regional averages at level 2, 3 and 4 by approx 2%. Wiltshire alone is close to these regional averages with Swindon considerably lower.

An estimated one in five of the working population in Wiltshire and Swindon lack the numeracy skills they need to perform their jobs with one in seven lacking literacy skills. This is a worsening picture at recruitment where one in four applicants lack numeracy skills and one in three lack literacy skills. All skill levels need improving including higher levels, where for example, the raising of Leadership and Management skills is essential to improve business productivity in our area.

Successes since last year include increases in achievement at level 2 and level 3 at 19 by 3% and 3.4% respectively. The final year of the Employer Training Pilot produced a further 2,200 employees with qualifications, giving a grand total, over the three year programme, of over 13,800 qualifications.

We have developed key actions to address identified needs. The Annual Plan illustrates how we will achieve these within the Annual Statement of Priorities.

We intend to make a real difference in the areas of employer engagement, economic development and the 14-19 agenda through the:

Expanded Train to Gain Service and Apprenticeship Programmes
Local Area Agreements (LAAs)
Development of 14-19 Specialised Diplomas

Wiltshire and Swindon LSC has an important leadership role in the delivery of quality learning and skills and, by working with partners, will enable local people and employers to pursue the training they want.

Marinos Paphitis
Area Director

Bryan McGinity
Chairman

Useful links:

Annual Statement of Priorities: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Publications/Recommended/Raising-our-game-our-annual-statement-of-priorities.htm>

Regional Strategic Analysis and Regional Commissioning Plan
: <http://lsc.gov.uk/Regions/South West/Publications/Latestdocuments/>

Local Context

Wiltshire is predominantly a rural county with high levels of military and agricultural land use. Swindon is the only large urban area. The northern part of the county benefits from its location on the M4 corridor. Swindon in particular has seen an influx of employment opportunities, and continues to attract and retain a high number of large companies. The Wiltshire and Swindon LSC area supports over 300,000 jobs.

There has been significant growth (6%) in the 16-19 age groups and this trend is set to continue until at least 2009. Furthermore, participation at 16 is rising. In Wiltshire this growth is impacting on School Sixth Forms, some of which now face capacity issues. One new sixth form opened in September 2006 and two other schools have bid for capital funding for additional accommodation. Longer term, growth in post-16 provision in Swindon is anticipated reflecting planned housing development and population growth

In Wiltshire there is a broad range of provision which meets most needs. School sixth forms offer a broad range of 'A' level subjects while currently, two general further education colleges together offer vocational opportunities in all subject sector areas and at all levels. To meet demand both Wiltshire and Salisbury Colleges are increasing capacity for learners wanting to undertake courses in construction trades. Fairfield Farm College complements the provision offered by the two FE colleges for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD). A broad range of opportunities for work based learning are provided by the FE colleges and a number of private training providers.

In Swindon post-16 learning is dominated by the two general FE colleges which offer a broad range of courses across all levels and subject areas. There are a small number of Swindon based work based learning providers. The school sixth form sector is very small with only two 11-18 schools. Both colleges have benefited by extensive capital investment recently and further capital development is planned. Swindon College and Farleigh College offer provision specifically targeted at learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, although whether this will enable implementation of 'Inclusion to Excellence' has yet to be assessed. Increasing participation in Swindon remains a key priority.

<i>Priority 1: raise the quality and improve the choice of learning opportunities for all young people to equip them with the skills for employment, further or higher education learning and for the wider social and community engagement</i>	
Actions	Success measures/targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop a flexible curriculum that provides high quality learning, with clear progression routes, that offers a diversity of opportunities to young people 14-19. • Implement the September Guarantee and increase participation in learning by 16-18 year olds • Ensure appropriate provision for young people with LDD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-19 on-line prospectus launched and fully functional – Sept 07 • Implementation of cohort 5 Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) and cohort 4 young Apprenticeships – Sept 07 • Increase in 16-18 participation in learning by 2% • LDD provision that meets learner needs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with Connexions to support delivery of local strategies to reduce number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET); continue promotion of EMA to improve take-up in local areas. Develop innovative ways of engaging young people in jobs without training by extending the 'On The Job Coaching' programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET reduced to 7% in Swindon and 5.6% in Wiltshire – March 08 • EMA take –up increased to 100% • “On The Job” Coaching programme extended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support relevant interventions to retain young people in learning, particularly at 17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in learning by 17 year olds increase by 2 % points in each area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and refocus, as appropriate, Entry to Employment (E2E) and other flexible provision that encourages young people to participate in learning post-16. • Increase positive outcomes from E2E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners complete E2E in 22 weeks • Positive outcomes increase to 55%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the Local Authorities to continue implementation of 14-19 learning strategies, including supporting development of local 14-19 partnerships as part of the wider Children’s Trust development. Support development of those partnerships successful in passing the Diploma Gateway criteria for delivery of specialised diplomas from 2008. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 partnerships prepare to deliver Diplomas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to raise achievement of level 2 and 3 at 19, particularly in Swindon where the rates of achievement are below Regional and England averages by working closely with /supporting providers to improve success rates in provision post-16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79% achievement at level 2 at 19 by July 2008 • Increase achievement at level 3 at 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise 16-18 capital projects to accommodate 16-18 learners growth and upgrade existing facilities consistent with curriculum developments, particularly introduction of specialist diplomas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support capital applications that contribute to local targets and the introduction of specialist diplomas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the volume and quality of employer engagement throughout the 14-19 phase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed coherent strategy and action plan that builds on existing arrangements

The National Employers’ Skills Survey (NESS) 2005 estimated that 17% of all businesses in Wiltshire and Swindon have vacancies. Many of these are ‘hard-to-fill’ (7%) or ‘skills shortages’ (4%) vacancies, with around one fifth being for high level skill occupations, such as managers and professionals. This pattern is similar to England as a whole.

The main causes of skills gaps are lack of experience or because staff have been recently recruited. In the area, 17% of all businesses experience skills gaps: this represents 5% (15,000) of the workforce and demonstrates a drop of 4% from 2003. The most significant skills gaps are in communication, customer handling, problem solving and technical and practical skills. It is reported that 53% of employers assess

whether their employees have skills gaps. Approximately, two thirds of employers train their staff in order to minimise these identified skills gaps. This situation is similar throughout the South West Region. We will help employers to up-skill their workforce through the Train to Gain Service, the Apprenticeship Programme and Further Education courses provided by the Colleges.

We will continue to fund learning for personal and community development and courses which have recognised progression routes, so that individuals achieve to their highest ability.

Priority 2: Raise the skills of the nation by giving employers and individuals the skills they need to improve productivity, employability and social cohesion	
Actions	Success measures/targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with providers in order to grow capacity to deliver Train to Gain (TtG) and increase number of employees gaining full level 2 qualifications and Skills for Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver TtG L2 targets for 07/08 • Providers work towards the “New Standard” for employer engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow the apprenticeship programme to meet local learner and employer needs and improve Apprenticeship completion rates at level 2 and level 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of 16-18 year olds and 65% of 19+ on programme completing their apprenticeship by March 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity for training in priority sectors particularly in Salisbury and South Wiltshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people in training in Construction and Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of employees with full level 3 qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.7% increase in L3 in provider plans – May 07 • Continued delivery of the RDA/ESF Employer Development programme 1200 L3s by Sept 08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local FE colleges in Wiltshire to increase range of Foundation degrees and other training opportunities at level 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a greater range of Higher Education Opportunities to meet employer needs (linked to LAA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase adult participation in learning: Develop programmes of learner engagement through Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL), Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC), Wider Family Learning (WFL), Family Literacy Language and Numeracy (FLLN) and through First Steps Learning (FSL) leading to a first Level 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed FE and ACL Provider Development Plans, increasing by 9.6% adult learners in community based learning – July 07

The overall quality of provision is satisfactory. Levels of achievement across the provider base are however variable with some providers performing below the national benchmark. Whilst the overall apprenticeship completion rate has remained relatively high at 56%, there has been a dip in positive outcomes from Entry to Employment, which correlates with the reduction in funding.

Priority 3: Raise the performance of a world-class system that is responsive, provides choice and is valued and recognised for excellence	
Actions	Success measures/targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support Salisbury College and Swindon College through financial recovery in order to maintain and grow capacity for learning and training in Swindon, Salisbury and South Wiltshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both colleges working towards financial category B Colleges meeting annual recruitment targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support Salisbury College's integrated improvement plan in order to raise standards and improve the quality of provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfactory Ofsted Inspection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve FE curriculum areas which have a success rate of <50% and WBL curriculum areas which have a success rate of <40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree actions plans with colleges and WBL providers – July 07
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the programme of capital investment in all FE colleges to improve the quality of accommodation and the provision of up to date resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 new capital projects approved

Wiltshire and Swindon's combined unemployment (UE) rate of 3.6% is below the national average of 4.9%, though marginally above the regional average of 3.5%. This figure masks Swindon's higher UE rate of 4.8%. Coupled with this, Swindon has the highest level of gross value-added (GVA) per capita in the South West and is the third most productive area in the UK, with GVA per head being 58% above the UK average. Wiltshire's productivity is relatively low only achieving 91% of the UK GVA per head average in 2002. This is similar to the South West as a whole, where the GVA per capita is 10% below the national average. The contradictory position of high economic growth and unemployment in Swindon may be explained by the fact that high technology and knowledge intensive sectors are significant sources of employment in Swindon, where lower level skills are not of benefit to the employers. These sectors generate high value added activity that can contribute disproportionately to economic growth, particularly in the GVA measure.

Employment projections show that there are more people looking for work than there are jobs available across the area. It is important therefore to offer opportunities for training and development across a range of occupations making these readily available for all prospective learners.

Priority 4: Raise our contribution to economic development locally and regionally through partnership working	
Actions	Success measures/targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership deliver outcome 2 of the Economic Development Block of Swindon's LAA. "Developing a local workforce with the right skills base for the Economy". Target Group is individuals without a L2 who are resident in the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) in Swindon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve stretch target of 130 L2s by July 07.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership deliver activities within outcome 2 and outcome 3 of the Economic Development Block of Wiltshire's LAA, namely, "A more competitiveness business base" and "A current and potential workforce that is equipped to meet the needs of employers". 	Deliver first year activities towards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business leaders with the knowledge and skills to maximise their business operations Providing a greater range of Higher Education opportunities to meet employer needs Improving the basic skills levels of adult learners, specifically those workers within Wiltshire public sector organisations Developing a local workforce with the right skills base for the economy targeting deprived areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Swindon Borough Council (SBC), the New Swindon Company and partners, support Swindon's Growth Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Construction Hub in Swindon as part of the National Academy programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working closely with partners, including the SWRDA and the two emerging Economic Partnerships across Swindon and Wiltshire, to help us better understand the needs of both existing and new employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support SBC and WCC establish Employment and Skills Boards for Swindon and Wiltshire Deliver employer/sector focussed workforce development programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to work with Job Centre Plus to deliver Welfare to Work Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Adult Learning Options and Skills Coaching Pilots with 410 adults engaging with the process Plan delivery of the new "Skills for Jobs" programme

Aggregate Volumes at 30 March 2007

LSC Funded Participation	16-18 (Learner Volumes)	Adult (Learner Volumes)
Number of FE learners (total)	7,868	19,007
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 4 and above	0	584
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 3	4,245	3,630
of which: Full Level 3 Learners	3,014	1,554
of which: First Full Level 3 Learners	1,597	630
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Level 3		248
Number of learners undertaking an Advanced Apprenticeship (Average in Learning)	378	276
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 2	4,920	8,524
of which: Full Level 2 Learners	1,972	1,450
of which: First Full Level 2 Learners	1,424	580
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Level 2		5,615
Number of learners undertaking an Apprenticeship at Level 2 (Average in Learning)	1,104	649
Number of FE learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	4,110	2,895
Number of Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target	704	349
Number of Train to Gain learners undertaking Skills for Life qualifications that directly contribute to PSA target		180
Number of FE learners undertaking Level 1 and Entry	3,275	7,272
Number of learners undertaking Entry to Employment (starts)	389	
Number of learners undertaking Safeguarded Adult Learning (Total)		10,630
of which: Number of learners undertaking Family learning, literacy and numeracy		250
of which: Number of learners undertaking Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities		1,050
of which: Number of learners undertaking Wider Family Learning		330
of which: Number of learners undertaking Personal / Leisure Learning		8,300
ESF Funded Participation		
Number of ESF Learners undertaking any ESF Activity	10	5
Number of ESF Learners not included in LSC Funded Participation table above		
Of which:		
Level 4 and above		
Full Level 3		
Full Level 2		5
Skills for Life that directly contributes towards the PSA target	8	8
Level 1 and Entry	8	8
Other ESF activity		

LSC Funded Outcome	16-18 (Learner achievements)	Adult (Learner Achievements)
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 3 qualification	1,955	836
Number of FE Learners achieving a First Full Level 3 qualification	1,171	288
Number of Train to Gain learners achieving a Full Level 3		147
Number of Learners achieving an Advanced Apprenticeship Framework	118	140
Number of FE Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification	1,164	823
Number of FE Learners achieving a First Full Level 2 qualification	265	216
Number of Train to Gain Learners achieving a Full Level 2 qualification		4,459
Number of Learners achieving an Apprenticeship Framework (at Level 2)	688	457
Number of FE learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification (s) that directly contribute to PSA target	2,445	1,677
Number of Advanced Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification(s) that directly contribute to PSA target	245	203
Number of Train to Gain learners achieving a Skills for Life qualification(s) that directly contribute to PSA target		422
Number of learners progressing to a positive destination from Entry to Employment	241	
ESF Funded Section		
Number of ESF Learners not included in LSC Funded Outcomes table above achieving a qualification at:		
Full Level 3	0	0
Full Level 2	0	15
Skills for Life qualification that directly contributes to the PSA target	8	24

Funding Summary	Funding (£)
FE 16 - 18	57,032,623
FE Adult	40,006,844
FE Additional Learning Support	8,971,310
Train to Gain	4,236,060
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships 16-18	10,251,435
Advanced Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships (Adult)	2,528,515
Entry to Employment	2,753,263
WBL additional learner / learning support	992,537
Safeguarded Adult Learning	1,411,873
ESF	0
Total	128,184,460

Fee Income and Other Activity Summary	Fee Income (£)	Number Of Learners
LSC Funded provision	7,935,127	
Not publicly subsidised / full cost	2,188,000	3,560

Area volumes and funding allocations are the sum of negotiated commissioning activity with individual providers; during this process, volumes in the Summary Statement of Activity will be subject to change.

Other Information

Equality & Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)

Regional EDIMs	Local Area Targets to Support EDIMs	Local Area Action
WBL		
For 2007/08 SW region Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participation in WBL should move further towards 4.7%.	For 2007/08 Wiltshire and Swindon Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participation in WBL should move further towards 5%.	Review WBL data to identify participation and of young people from BME groups. Explore underlying causal issues with providers.
For 2007/08 SW region participation of disabled people in WBL should move further towards the regional demographics of 18.4%.	Participation of disabled young people in WBL should move towards Wiltshire and Swindon profile of 10%	Review WBL data to identify participation of young people with a disability. Explore underlying causal issues with providers.
The South West LSC will work with providers to continue to break down gender imbalance in WBL promoting the business case for diversity. In line with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the LSC recommendations we will action the core initiatives, within the "Action for Change" publication (March 05), where appropriate, and work with stakeholders to address gender segregation.	In Wiltshire and Swindon appropriate targets for gender imbalance in WBL will be proposed	Review WBL data to identify participation gender and explore actions to address in line with 'Action for Change'.
For 2007/08 ensure the success rate target for WBL of 59% is supported for BME groups, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and male and female learners.	For 2007/08 Wiltshire and Swindon will encourage parity of achievement by BME groups on WBL in line with the area success rate of 55.7%	Review WBL data to identify achievement of young people from BME groups as part of an overall plan for improving retention and achievement at all levels.
FE		
For 2007/08 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participation, for the region, in FE should move further towards 4.7%.	For 2007/08 Wiltshire and Swindon Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participation in FE should move further towards 5%.	Review FE data to identify participation and of young people from BME groups and explore causal factors with local providers.
Work with FE providers to promote and support disabled learners to progress to level 3 qualifications. Participation of disabled people in FE should increase further towards the regional demographics of 18.4%.	Work with FE providers in Wiltshire and Swindon to support disabled learners to progress to level 3 and move towards participation rate overall in line with the local demographic of 16.4%	Review current levels of participation and achievement levels, by people with disabilities, in FE as part of an overall plan for improving retention and achievement at all levels.

The South West LSC will work with providers to continue to break down gender imbalance in FE promoting the business case for diversity. In line with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the LSC recommendations we will action the core initiatives, within the “Action for Change” publication (March 05), where appropriate, and work with stakeholders to address gender segregation.	In Wiltshire and Swindon appropriate targets for gender imbalance in FE will be proposed	FE data will be reviewed to identify participation by gender and implement recommendation locally arising from ‘@Action for Change’.
The South West LSC will work with providers to promote the benefits of education and training to increase the participation of male learners into FE.	In Wiltshire and Swindon the achievement of male learners in FE will be explored and appropriate targets for delivering greater parity will be set.	Explore with providers the achievement by males in FE and identify underlying causes for underperformance.
For 2007/08 ensure the success rate target for FE of 76% is supported for BME groups, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and male and female learners.	In Wiltshire and Swindon the success rate of learners from BME groups, learners with disabilities and relative achievement by males and females in FE will be explored. Appropriate targets for delivering greater parity will be set.	Explore in more depth success rates achieved by different groups of learners and incorporate into overall strategies for improving success rates in FE
Mental Health		
South West LSC will undertake appropriate research regarding disadvantaged groups and their learning and skills.	In Wiltshire and Swindon outcome of research will be used to inform a local strategy for delivering learning for people with mental health problems	
For 2007/08 the South West LSC will work with providers to implement the joint regional action plan, and encourage providers to develop appropriate impact measures.	Work with providers in the Wiltshire and Swindon area to support the regional action plan	