Learning+Skills Council

STRATEGIC AREA REVIEWS: RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

FINAL REPORT

Executive Summary

Annex

A: Organisational Breakdown of Respondents

B: Alphabetical List of Respondents to the Consultation

Executive Summary

Date

March 2003

Subject

The consultation on guidance to support local Learning and Skills Councils (local LSCs) and their partners in the undertaking of strategic area reviews (StARs) – as outlined in Circular 02/21 *Strategic Area Reviews* – was published in November 2002. The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the responses received as part of that consultation process.

The consultation period ended on 21 February 2003 and this report is based on 224 responses received before that date.

The report is divided into the following sections: a summary of the key messages that have emerged from the consultation; a statistical breakdown and analysis of responses by key question and sub-question, along with a sample of views expressed; an organisational breakdown of responses to the consultation; and an alphabetical list of all respondents to the consultation.

Among the respondents were: further education colleges; local LSCs; representative bodies; learning partnerships; schools and school sixth forms; local councils; sixth form colleges; trade unions; adult and community learning providers; local education authorities; higher education institutions; Jobcentre Plus; Connexions; and a national training organisation.

Full reports and lists of the participants at all StAR consultation events are available on request from the Success For All Implementation Team (see title page for full contact details).

Intended recipients

Local Authorities (LAs)/Local Education Authorities (LEAs), Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Jobcentre Plus, schools with post-14 provision/sixth forms, further education colleges, former external institutions, specialist colleges, adult education centres, community and voluntary providers, work based training providers, learndirect hubs and Ufi Ltd, higher education institutions, employers, Trade Unions, National Connexions Service, Learning Partnerships and heads of other key organisations.

Comment [JB1]: Please insert details

Status

For information.

Introduction

Background

1 The consultation on guidance to support local Learning and Skills Councils (local LSCs) and their partners in the undertaking of strategic area reviews (StARs) – as outlined in Circular 02/21 *Strategic Area Reviews* – was published in November 2002. (Note: several responses to the consultation process referred to the abbreviation SAR as causing confusion with self-assessment reports, also known as SARs. This document therefore uses the abbreviation StARs. Comments from responses to the consultation are quoted as received).

2 The consultation period on this guidance ended on 21 February 2003 and this report is based on 224 responses received to this consultation document before that closing date.

3 The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the responses received as part of the consultation process.

Contents

4 The report is divided into the following key sections:

- Section 1 provides a summary of the key messages that have emerged from the consultation;
- Section 2 presents a statistical breakdown and analysis of responses by key question and sub-question, along with a sample of views expressed;
- Annex A gives an organisational breakdown of responses to the consultation; and
- Annex B provides an alphabetical list of all respondents to the consultation.

Section 1: Overview of Key Messages

Summary of Responses

5 The following provides an overview of some of the key messages that have emerged from the consultation process.

6 The majority of respondents felt that that the toolkit would provide a useful means of support and guidance to local LSCs and their key partners in carrying out StARs. Furthermore, it was felt that this would help ensure some

consistency in the StAR process. However, it was also noted that at present the toolkit was not fit for purpose and that it would need to be improved.

7   The majority of respondents agreed with both the aims and scope of the StAR process. However, there was some concern expressed that non-LSC-funded provision needed to be effectively included, and more emphasis placed on the 14–19 agenda and adult and community learning.

8   Of those who stated a preference, the vast majority of respondents supported the values of the StAR process as set out in the consultation guidance.

9   A majority of those who responded directly saw sufficient flexibility for local LSCs in the process. The majority of all respondents stressed the importance on local office flexibility in conducting the process.

10   A majority of responses saw the seven-stage StAR process as providing the right framework. However, issues were raised over the timetable with concerns that the amount of time needed for some stages had been underestimated. In addition, it was emphasised that the process should not be seen as being rigid and linear, rather there should be flexibility around the sequence of the various stages.

11   Most respondents agreed that the range of stakeholders was a comprehensive list. In terms of encouraging stakeholder contribution to the process, respondents stressed that all stakeholders must be given a full opportunity to engage, including those groups which are traditionally hard to engage such as learners, non-learners, employers and the disadvantaged. Further, it was highlighted that good relationships must be built between the LSC and its stakeholders, with good communication throughout the process. Finally, it was also noted that there were strong benefits in clearly defining the roles, expectations and benefits of the StAR process to all stakeholders and in utilising existing local consultation mechanisms such as learning partnerships and local forums.

12   The majority agreed that previous review evidence should be utilised in the process and felt that the guidance gave sufficient scope for this. However, an important caveat was that this was subject to the previous evidence being fit for this purpose, robust, accurate and still valid.

13 A key message was the need for the LSC to be open, transparent and to trust in the StAR partnership approach. Other issues raised were the need for more regional working and cross-boundary co-operation, and the need to develop the capacity of LSC staff to undertake the process.

14 Many respondents stated that the gathering and analysis of information was a key area of concern. The respondents stressed that the local LSCs must have sufficient access to quality internal and external data in order to successfully undertake StARs. Many also noted there was already a wealth of information held by partners and stakeholders and the LSC should seek to utilise data and expertise where appropriate and possible from key partners.

15 Respondents noted that prioritising the simplest choice with the most immediate impact may undermine the more desirable need for a long-term vision over short-term wins. They also stressed that options which have the largest impact for the most learners may not always be the most advantageous or preferred ones. Several also pointed out that these two priorities may actually be contradictory, as that which is simplest and most immediate may conflict with that which has the largest impact on the largest number.

16 The majority supported the fact that the approach outlined for local consultation met the requirements of employers, learners and the local community.

17 Finally, in ensuring that the review outcomes were implemented successfully, it was highlighted by many of the respondents that the LSC as an organisation should focus on the following key areas:

   a ensuring buy-in to the process from all key partners and stakeholders and developing strong relationships with stakeholders in turn;

   b facilitating a transparent, open and fair process;

   c maintaining effective communication with all involved;

   d ensuring sufficient resources are made available for all stages of the process;

   e securing robust, reliable data and a strong evidence base for supporting strategic options;

   f setting clear and reasonable roles for all involved and managing expectations;

   g making sure key priorities are identified to maximise positive impact;

   h ensuring the capacity exists within the organisation and that necessary training and staff development are made available where appropriate; and

i   nurturing the shared ownership of the process.

Section 2: Statistical Breakdown and Analysis by Key Question and Sub-Question and Sample of Views Expressed

18   In the statistical breakdowns that follow some respondents may have offered a number of options for questions and so total percentages listed under any one question may exceed 100%. Similarly, some respondents may not have offered any response to the question, instead offering general comments on the circular. Throughout the report, percentages are expressed as a measure of those who responded to each question, not as a measure of the total number of respondents. In addition, with closed yes or no questions, while some respondents did give some form of reply, they may not have directly stated one or the other preference. In this case they have been categorised as 'not stated'.

19   A statistical breakdown and analysis of the key questions and sub-questions by organisation is also available on the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk - under documents/strategic area reviews.

Question 1A

How do you think the proposed toolkit might help in carrying out reviews?

20   There were 163 responses to this question, of which:

a   94 (58%) felt that the toolkit would provide a useful means of guidance and support for those conducting the StAR process;

b   70 (43%) stated that in its present form the toolkit was not fit for purpose and that overall it would need improvement and further development before the StAR process began;

c   52 (32%) noted that the toolkit would help ensure consistency in approach to the StAR process;

d   26 (16%) pointed out that the toolkit should best be viewed as purely for guidance and should not be seen as being prescriptive;

e   16 (10%) highlighted that the toolkit should be seen as a constantly evolving form of guidance which is updated throughout the development of the process to reflect the lessons being learnt; and

f   14 (9%) felt that it would be useful if some form of staff training were given to those who would be using the toolkit, in order for it to be fully effective.

Question 1B

Are there 'tools' for this process you would particularly recommend?

21 There were 169 responses to this question, which was interpreted in three key but distinct ways by respondents. Of these:

   a 79 (48%) stated that several of the tools were in need of improvement. Such a range was listed that it was not statistically meaningful enough to express these here. Suffice to say that in general all the tools were felt to be in need of some review and repackaging to make them more practical and reflective of their purpose;

   b 52 (32%) offered suggestions for new tools that they felt would benefit the overall toolkit, the main suggestions being the introduction of case studies of previous local LSC review work, lessons learnt and good practice documents, along with more practical tools such as checklists and questionnaires; and

   c 32 (20%) noted that some of the existing tools were useful with most tools receiving some recommendation.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 1

22 The Toolkit offers the potential for a consistent approach to Strategic Area Reviews, with the benefit of full analysis to inform future practice. It will be important the construction of the Toolkit does not itself become a barrier to review and development, but rather an easily accessible/usable document that adds value to the process. There are precedents for using nationally devised toolkits (ILT, Inclusive Learning, Disability Discrimination etc) where such toolkits have proved very helpful in focusing the process of review.

FE College

23 The toolkit would appear to be extremely useful in guiding the progress and process of Area Wide Reviews. It is comprehensive and allows for individual LSCs to select tools where most appropriate to their needs. In particular, the Strategic Area Review process map and the project management aide-memoire along with Tools 11–14 that guide analysis of provision + LSC choice are particularly useful. It offers breadth in terms of analysis and case studies are always welcome, particularly where there has not been previous work undertaken to build upon. The toolkit must ensure consistency across LSCs and encourage flexibility. Our area borders over 5 other LSC areas, links between local LSCs are essential to allow provision outside of one LSC area to be taken into account. Whilst having to ensure the toolkit is not promoted in a prescriptive way and that LSCs are allowed variation to meet particular Area needs/diverse

circumstances (no one size fits all), it should lead to the efficient and effective identification of priority areas/objectives to be incorporated in the Area delivery plan.

Local Council

24   The toolkit is a worthy attempt to cover most of the issues involved in the strategic planning process but varies in quality and usefulness. Of those tools currently fully available from the website tool 7 + tool 10 + tool 16 are particularly informative. However, in general, there is a danger of attempting to form one framework to try and fit all local circumstances. The Local Learning and Skills Councils need considerable discretion in order to achieve the main thrust of Success for All and in particular that document's insightful statement concerning the need for recognition of local variation in order to meet learning needs in the context of a general standards framework.

FE College

25   The discussion with providers on their Mission and contribution is an immediate and valuable part of the process.

Sixth Form College

26   This is a varied set of tools which will identify what is happening locally, but will these tools identify 'Good Practice' which happens outside the local LSC area and how will they be advised so that these other methods of good practice can be embraced by all LSCs. There is a lot of good practice in the community which is not recognized by current establishments, how can this be incorporated?

Learning Partnership

27   It *should* ensure standardisation across the country.

School/School Sixth Form

28   By providing consistency and comprehensiveness to all parts of review and ensuring that the needs of learners, employers and communities stay at the centre of all stages of the review. By providing clear 'jargon free' guidance to all stakeholders about the review process so that they can clearly engage with the review. By ensuring reviews add to existing research/structures and do not duplicate with that which has already been undertaken.

Representative Body

29 The Circular and its associated extensive Toolkit have been prepared thoroughly and thoughtfully. Given the fact of Strategic Area Reviews, the LSC cannot be faulted in its attempts to ensure that the process is undertaken to high standards of professionalism and fairness, and that the focus is at all times on improving the opportunities and learning experiences available to students. Clearly the Toolkit will be a helpful resource for all concerned, and will also help to establish common standards of good process in the conduct of reviews.

Representative Body

Question 2A

Do you agree with the aims and scope of StARs?

30 There were 169 responses to this question, of which:

    a 118 (70%) agreed with the aims of StARs and 14 (8%) did not;

    b 41 (24%) responded in some form but did not state a yes or no preference;

    c 105 (62%) agreed with the scope of StARs and 21 (12%) did not; and

    d 37 (22%) did not state a preference.

Question 2B

Are there other aspects of provision they should cover?

31 There were 169 responses to this question, of which:

    a 61 (36%) stressed that other non-LSC-funded provision needed to be considered more closely as part of the StAR process;

    b 29 (17%) wanted to see more of an emphasis placed on 14–16 provision in light of the 14–19 agenda in general;

    c 23 (14%) wished to see more focus on ACL;

    d 12 (7%) felt the voluntary sector needed to be considered more explicitly;

    e 11 (7%) raised the issue of the HE sector in general and progression to HE;

    f 8 (5%) noted the important role that information, advice and guidance (IAG) must be given as part of the StAR process;

    g 5 (3%) highlighted learning partnerships;

    h 4 (2%) felt franchising arrangements should not be overlooked; and

    i 3 (2%) saw the need for more emphasis on skills provision.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 2

32 Yes the aims and scope of the review are appropriate. With the aims and scope there should be explicit coverage of the needs and provision for people with

disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Without this a coherent response to the legal duties the LSC has to this group will not emerge. It may be necessary to set specific priorities for review, such as provision for those excluded groups identified in the Inclusive Learning report.

<div align="right">Representative Body</div>

33   We agreed that the aim of the SAR process should be to identify what is provided and by whom; what needs to be provided and by whom and whether any changes need to be made to current provision.

<div align="right">Trade Union</div>

34   The aims are appropriate; but the scope is inappropriate and narrow given the government's focus on 14–19 education. The scope should be on the wider 14–19 agenda and LEAs should be fully involved in an equal partnership basis with the LSC as set out in the recent publication *14–19: Opportunity and Excellence*. This sets out clearly the need for Chief Education Officers and Local Learning and Skills Executive Directors to give a clear, forceful and continuing lead in helping to drive the 14–19 agenda forward, ensuring that institutions and other providers working closely together, seize all the opportunities that the 14–19 agenda offers.

<div align="right">Local Council</div>

35   I have concerns about the statement regarding possibilities for distinct 16–19 provision. We are a broad based general college of further education. Our most recent analysis suggests that only 12 per cent of our programmes are delivered solely to students in this age bracket while 13 per cent are delivered solely to those above it leaving 75 per cent mixed. Any requirement to differentiate could severely undermine the viability of many of the courses we offer and therefore the opportunities they provide for learners in either category.

<div align="right">FE College</div>

36   It is essential that Strategic Area Reviews take account of the emerging priorities and needs of minority ethnic learners, employers and local communities. This needs to be made explicit in the aims and the subsequent guidance and toolkits that are produced. It is essential that local LSCs identify and address the range of issues and needs of minority ethnic employers, minority ethnic learners and local minority ethnic communities.

<div align="right">Representative Body</div>

37   We are concerned that decisions might be taken about the viability of school sixth forms without due regard for individual circumstances/unique conditions that apply – particularly in rural settings ill served by public transport with a selective system.

School/School Sixth Form

Question 3A

Do you agree with the values listed in section 2?

38   There were 164 responses to this question, of which:

     a   135 (82%) agreed with the values listed in section 2;

     b   5 (3%) disagreed; and

     c   26 (16%) did not state either yes or no.

Question 3B

Are there other values that should underpin StARs?

39   There were 164 responses to this question, of which:

     a   given the overwhelming majority that agreed with the values expressed, 112 (68%) did not state the need for any other values;

     b   32 (20%) felt that there should be a keen emphasis on the values of transparency, openness and collective ownership;

     c   27 (16%) saw the need to emphasise needs and choice;

     d   21 (13%) stressed that the reduction of bureaucracy, or at least not creating any new layers of bureaucracy, were important considerations;

     e   10 (6%) suggested the importance of value for money;

     f   10 (6%) raised the issue of expressing cross-boundary co-operation as a key value;

     g   8 (5%) highlighted the need to build capacity across the organisation as an important value in the StAR process;

     h   4 (2%) noted access and inclusion; and

     i   1 (1%) raised the issue of citizenship and learning for learning's sake.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 3

40   We are largely supportive of the values outlined in the consultation document. We agree that the efficacy of the SARs will depend on the collaboration and collective ownership of all the strategic players and stakeholders. This sense of ownership is critical and it underlines the importance of the qualities of leadership, sensitivity and understanding that will be required on the part of those who will be charged with implementing these arrangements.

Comment [JB2]: missing word?

41   Agree fully with the values articulated. The promotion of cooperation between institutions should also serve the purpose well of ensuring viability and value for money compared with previous models based on competition.

42   Since our consortium arrangement works through collaboration, we welcome the Review's focus on 'Active promotion of collaboration and co-operation between providers' and hope that consortia such as ours will be supported. We welcome too the commitment that the SAR process will not impose 'extra burdens or bureaucracy on employers, individual learners or providers'.

43   We support the values as stated, particularly the need for collaborative approaches to provision. It has to be recognised, however, that funding and target mechanisms inherently encourage competition, so that the emphasis on collaboration needs to be focused.

44   The Association recommends that the document must make reference to the need for the reviews to promote sustainability and continuity of provision. In particular, local LSCs must recognise and take account of the implications of their work for the recruitment and retention of teaching staff in schools and colleges. It is further imperative that the strategic area reviews do not serve to further exacerbate the problems of teacher supply and retention which has been to the detriment of the provision of high quality learning opportunities.

45   We agree with the values listed. There needs to be specific mention made of the way in which engagement is undertaken to ensure the participation of learners both those currently involved in LSC provision and those who could be. The expression of the value of listening to the target group is hidden in the general statement about learners.

Question 4A

Does the process give local LSCs sufficient flexibility?

46   There were 161 responses to this question, of which:

a   76 (47%) felt that the process gave local LSCs sufficient flexibility;

b   16 (10%) stated that they thought it did not; and

c   69 (43%) did not state a yes or no response; however, of these, the majority used the question as an opportunity to highlight the view that local LSCs should be given as much flexibility as is possible in the process.

Question 4B

What aspects of the StAR process do you think should be managed centrally?

47   There were 161 responses to this question, of which:

a   117 (73%) saw the monitoring of progress, ensuring consistency and quality as key issues which should be centrally managed;

b   29 (18%) noted the importance of managing and disseminating good practice from the centre;

c   21 (13%) felt that data support should be something which was managed from the centre;

d   17 (11%) raised the point that staff development, support and capacity building were key issues for central management;

e   15 (9%) stressed that there were no issues which merited being centrally managed;

f   13 (8%) raised the issue of benchmarking;

g   11 (7%) highlighted specialist provision as a consideration;

h   10 (6%) felt that any appeals should be managed from the centre;

i   9 (6%) noted that the centre had a role in managing national partner links;

j   7 (4%) raised the issue of funding and resources;

k   2 (1%) saw a central role in providing legal advice; and

l   2 (1%) felt that the toolkit should be managed by the centre.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 4

48   It is crucial that LSCs co-operate with one another so that reviews cover meaningful travel to school and college areas. There is significant cross-boundary traffic in this area.

FE College

49   Only if the local LSC is given sufficient autonomy will it be able to truly meet the needs of the communities it serves. The voluntary sector is in place and is able

to communicate with members of all the targeted groups. The local LSC will need to collaborate closely with the voluntary sector and have the flexibility to respond quickly and act locally.

<div align="right">Adult & Community Learning Provider</div>

50 Appears to be sufficient flexibility, but perhaps guidance or sharing of best practice could be managed centrally to avoid each LLSC re-inventing the wheel.

<div align="right">Others</div>

51 The only aspect of the SAR that might need central supervision is some checks to ensure that local LSCs are being as inclusive and transparent as possible when they consult during the review and promote the results afterwards.

<div align="right">Jobcentre Plus</div>

52 There appears to be sufficient flexibility within the process of planning and formulating a Strategic Area Review. However, whilst it is not mandatory to use the materials within the 17 tools, it is not clear how far LLSCs can (or should) stray from the standard format. There will clearly be a tension between creating 47 Reviews with a 'common, national approach', and attempting to ensure each review reflects the vast variety of differences between each of the 47 regions. The selection and presentation of qualitative and quantitative statistics should be managed centrally. This would ensure that all 47 LLSC are judged on the same numerical data, which would make analysis and target setting (benchmarking) more measurable and transparent.

<div align="right">Representative Body</div>

53 Local LSCs need to be allowed to implement strategic area reviews flexibly, within a broad national model. Central management may however be needed in the consideration of data reporting. If data from each Local LSC area is to be collated to form a national picture, then all colleagues need to be clear that they are collecting data according to the same parameters. If this is not approached in this way, comparisons between local areas are not meaningful.

<div align="right">Learning Partnership</div>

54 The Strategic Area Review is essentially a local review, taken in the context of national priorities. Local LSCs will need to work closely with other neighbouring LSCs. In London this means not only a pan-London mix but also the inclusion of authorities abutting London.

<div align="right">Local Council</div>

55 One of the key issues will be ensuring consistency of practice across the 47 arms of the Council. This will need to be done centrally. Given variations in the size and complexity of LLSCs, we can see that practice locally may vary. However, this must be done within an overall plan, which must be led by the centre and include training and preparation for the local staff. In London given the complexity of travel to learn patterns, there may be a need to establish an overarching group to monitor the process and delivery of the Reviews.

FE College

Question 5A

The guidance proposes a seven-stage process for reviews. Does this provide the right framework?

56 There were 159 responses to this question, of which:

    a 96 (60%) saw the seven-stage process for reviews as providing the correct framework;

    b 31 (19%) felt that it did not; and

    c 32 (20%) did not state a preference.

Question 5B

Are there other actions you would like to see?

57 There were 159 responses to this question, of which:

    a 57 (36%) felt that the seven-stage framework presented some timetable problems and underestimated the time needed for several stages of the review;

    b 38 (24%) stressed that the process should not be seen as a linear stage-by-stage approach, rather there should be flexibility for stages to change order, run concurrently as well as overlapping in some cases;

    c 24 (15%) emphasised the need for partner engagement at all stages of the process;

    d 22 (14%) stressed that any lessons learned whilst conducting the reviews needed to be fed back into the system;

    e 10 (6%) highlighted the point that StARs should not simply be viewed as a single process, rather part of an ongoing series of reviews. This should not be overlooked; and

    f 7 (4%) felt that this seven-stage approach was too prescriptive.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 5

58 While accepting in broad outline the process proposed for reviews, we would note that – in contrast to the more elaborate description offered in Section 3 and later – neither the brief summary included at paragraph 51 nor tool 2 give an

indication of the importance of engaging partners at all stages of the review process. In our view it will be critical, if reviews are to command the confidence of all those involved, to signal as widely as possible the interactive nature of the process.

Representative Body

59 The timetable, involving seven stages, proposed by LSC for implementing Strategic Area Review is ambitious. The areas covered by local LSCs are substantial and the patterns of provision are complex. The breadth and level of detail contemplated by the LSC is not clear, but there are concerns about the quality of the data available relating to different parts of the post 16 sector and the weight of conclusions and interpretation that might be placed on this. As an example, the LEA ACL sector are still in the process of adopting a uniform and consistent data collection, and are still in the early stages of ALI inspection and provider review. The notion that information gathering of a quality that is reliable, comprehensive and widely trusted by stakeholders can be conducted in six months is optimistic, as is the time envisaged for a further and similar period in which to form strategic options.

Representative Body

60 A stage approach seems logical and sensible, although over an 18-month period, the scenario can change quite dramatically. Review may need to take account of issues such as short term funding, new and different external (non LSC) funding opportunities, demography (e.g. refugees) etc.

Adult & Community Learning Provider

61 Within the two years envisaged much will have changed. How will the process be maintained as dynamic and relevant?

HE Institution

62 In carrying out the planning stage, it was stressed that the local LSC needed to communicate clearly when the planning stage was complete so that all parties were aware of the progression of the SAR and the changing circumstances for their involvement. It was accepted that the plan should not be a static document and may need to be fine-tuned as the process develops.

Consultation Event

63 As a theoretical framework it is appropriate. In some cases, the cycle could take two years, or more. At certain points, the review will be informed by other

activity which takes place on a different timescale, e.g. inspections and provider performance review might remove some provision during a review. It is likely that continuing government initiatives will appear to alter the landscape. There needs to be an indication in the model that the process is continuous and iterative, with progress reporting at set stages, which LSC national might monitor.

<div align="right">Others</div>

64   It was agreed that Strategic Area Reviews should not be viewed as a one-off exercise rather as a continuous dynamic process with a dual role in:

- increasing responsiveness to demand and driving up quality within delivery networks and, at the same time
- influencing policy change to enable greater responsiveness.

<div align="right">Consultation Event</div>

65   The framework should have an addition, namely decisions on a rolling process and annual timeframes. One needs to ensure that the planning cycles of Area Reviews, delivery plans, and updates coincide with the planning cycles of as many participating organizations as is possible.

<div align="right">Learning Partnership</div>

Question 6A

Do you think the range of stakeholders to be involved is comprehensive?

66   There were 166 responses to this question, of which:

a   100 (60%) saw the range of stakeholders as being comprehensive;

b   29 (17%) did not;

c   4 (2%) felt that it was too comprehensive; and

d   34 (20%) did not state any preference.

Question 6B

How can stakeholders be encouraged to contribute effectively?

67   There were 166 responses to this question, of which:

a   52 (31%) pointed out that stakeholders would be encouraged to contribute effectively to the StAR process if all were given a full opportunity to engage;

b   47 (28%) emphasised the key role of partnership building and felt that it was important to ensure that good relationships were constructed between the LSC and its key stakeholders;

c   45 (27%) highlighted the issue of needing to reach those groups which were traditionally hard to engage such as learners, non-learners, employers and the disadvantaged;

d   42 (25%) felt that stakeholders were more likely to contribute effectively if their roles, expectations and the benefits of the StAR process were clearly defined and set out from the onset;

e   (23%) noted that the key to effective engagement would be maintaining good communication links;

f   36 (22%) stressed the importance of utilising existing local consultation mechanisms such as learning partnerships and local forums, rather than creating new layers of consultation;

g   13 (8%) saw the key being ensuring local ownership of the process; and

h   6 (4%) noted that it would be important to engage all key stakeholders early on in the StAR process.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 6

68   Yes it is comprehensive. It will be important to convince smaller organisations that their views and interests will really matter alongside those of bigger neighbours.

Adult & Community Learning Provider

69   While the principles behind this are welcomed I believe in reality there is a long way to go in developing relationships which overcome the vested interests of the various parties to ensure that we all work in the interests of learners.

FE College

70   Build on existing groups and consultation mechanisms to avoid yet more meetings.

Learning Partnership

71   If they are to be truly effective, SARs must avoid falling into the trap of becoming bureaucratic, paper-generating exercises that only a handful of officials and senior managers at the LSC understand. Each of the contributing organisations and sectors must be drawn effectively into the planning process. This could be done by deliberately welcoming each individual stakeholder into the planning process and making sure that its distinctive contribution to the SAR is recorded in the resulting plan document.

Local Education Authority

72   The reference to 'learners' needs expanding. They are not a homogenous group. We may need to segment them by age, gender, ethnicity, employment to

get a range of perspectives. Learning partnerships could assist by securing interest from learners and community groups. There may need to be incentives to secure the learner's voice in these reviews. Stakeholders can be drawn in more effectively if they are aware of the process, purpose and criteria of the review.

Local Council

73   The list of stakeholders is comprehensive. In order to contribute effectively, sufficient time needs to be built into the process to allow the stakeholders to respond. However, not all stakeholders have an equal contribution to make to the process. Providers are key repositories of knowledge and research and the process should not seek to reinvent wheels.

HE Institution

74   We believe strongly that the Diocese should be included in your list of groups who ought to be consulted on Strategic Options, and we believe strongly that the individual Governing Bodies of Catholic Schools in an LLSC should be consulted too, as they are in law employers of staff and providers of educational provision within their area.

School/School Sixth Form

75   The range is comprehensive, but there will be difficulty in achieving an appropriate balance between interests.

School/School Sixth Form

76   Learning Partnerships' members mirror the diverse learning providers and stakeholders who will be included in the Strategic Area Reviews and therefore already have a firm foundation and positive working relationship to take some of the issues forward which will arise as a result of the review.

Learning Partnership

Question 7

Does the section 'Building on previous work' give enough scope for use of previous review evidence?

77   There were 160 responses to this question, of which:

   a   115 (72%) saw the section 'Building on previous work' as providing enough scope for the use of previous evidence;

   b   28 (18%) stated that it did not; and

   c   17 (11%) did not state either way.

78 However, the majority of respondents raised the key point that while it was important to use previous evidence, this should only be done following rigorous checking of the quality and appropriateness of this evidence. It was also stressed that this evidence should only be used where it could be transparently demonstrated to all key stakeholders that it was fit for purpose, robust, accurate and still valid.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 7

79 This could be extended to make explicit reference to reviews and inspections of provision carried out by local authorities, LEAs, Ofsted and ALI and to validated self-reviews carried out by the institutions themselves within a given timescale, say up to two or three years before commencement of the Area Review. The LSC already gather huge amounts of data from providers and it is its responsibility to do the joined up thinking so that data gathered for other purposes meets the needs of Strategic Area Reviews.

Local Council

80 The section makes much of previous review evidence and is satisfactory in this respect. There should surely also be encouragement to learn from best practice and national work, as well as previous reviews of the area concerned.

Representative Body

81 There is need for an evaluation process that is transparent and which will assess the validity and rigour of any previous work that is brought into the process. It is important that any evidence gathered earlier is accepted as valid and this remains accurate and relevant. It would also be helpful if all reviews used a similar evidence base to ensure consistency, with allowance for local variation.

FE College

82 Yes, although care must be taken to ensure the quality of the work which is incorporated. Work should be reviewed and updated prior to use.

HE Institution

83 Broadly – however this should not just be area-based. LSCs need to draw from nationwide findings in review evidence.

School/School Sixth Form

84 Previous work may not be up-to-date. It depends on what it is and how it is used and interpreted.

<div align="right">School/School Sixth Form</div>

85 Many of these subjects have been studied in depth. The LEA, Ofsted and Learning Partnerships are all able to contribute to this.

<div align="right">Learning Partnership</div>

86 We're often bad at this and re-invent the wheel. *Much* evidence is already in the public domain.

<div align="right">Sixth Form College</div>

Question 8

Are there ways in which the LSC should work differently, either locally or nationally, to ensure that StARs are effective?

87 There were 158 responses to this question, of which:

  a 53 (34%) felt that the LSC as an organisation needed to be more open, transparent and show more trust in partnership;

  b 35 (22%) emphasised the need for more flexibility at local level;

  c 30 (19%) saw the need for greater consistency across the organisation;

  d 25 (16%) highlighted that there should be more regional working and cross-boundary co-operation between neighbouring local LSCs;

  e 24 (15%) stressed that the organisation must develop its capacity in order for it to deliver StARs effectively;

  f 23 (15%) noted that data issues needed to be resolved;

  g 19 (12%) highlighted the need for the organisation to reduce or minimise bureaucracy;

  h 9 (6%) wanted StARs to be seen as the core business of the LSC as an organisation;

  i 4 (3%) felt the LSC should assert its role more in local planning and funding;

  j 3 (2%) wanted the LSC national office to be mindful that the local LSCs were all beginning the StAR process from different start points; and

  k 2 (1%) noted the importance of clarifying the role of the steering group in the StAR process.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 8

Comment [JB4]: attribution? – do you know which respondent said this?

88 Local LSCs should utilise major, long established providers as collaborative partners in the process itself. This would (a) recognize and utilise their knowledge, expertise and direct customer interface; and (b) demonstrate the

commitment of the LSC and the providers to building a stronger trust relationship between one another. This need not be seen as a way of maintaining the status quo, as the review process has clear aims and has to demonstrate that current provision will deliver national and local objectives.

<div align="right">FE College</div>

89 The effectiveness of reviews will, in our view, be dependent upon the robustness of the evidence presented, and the willingness and powers afforded to local LSCs to implement any changes deemed desirable. Further, adequate funding to ensure that identified gaps are filled, or weaknesses improved will be vital to the longer term improvement of 16+ teaching and learning.

<div align="right">Connexions</div>

90 While LLSCs need to do thorough groundwork on the Plan they should be looking for early consultation with providers and local and regional partners to co-create a process everyone owns and has confidence in, with good communications to ensure no surprises. Nationally, as well as locally, LSC should work strategically to pull together the outcomes of all local/regional reviews and research to identify regional and national, as well as local, issues and trends.

<div align="right">FE College</div>

91 The SAR may have significant effect on provision funded by other organizations. For example the review of provider missions may have implications for the contribution that is made to non-LSC funded provision. Although the focus of the review is correctly on LSC provision, the implications for other bodies and individuals should be given sufficient weight in the guidance to provide adequate safeguards. This may affect the findings of the SAR or how the decisions reached are implemented.

<div align="right">Jobcentre Plus</div>

92 By ensuring that all providers and stakeholders understand the principles by which the local LSC intends to operate the Review. This is particularly important in the key areas of value for money, quality of provision and choice.

<div align="right">Trade Union</div>

Question 9

Are there approaches to information gathering and analysis you would recommend, or particular sources of evidence?

93 There were 147 responses to this question. While some respondents answered this question directly and offered suggestions to information gathering and analysis, the key responses were more general expressions of concern around data issues and the StAR process. As such, the main messages that emerged from the respondents on this question were as follows:

    a   66 (45%) stressed that key local partners and stakeholders had both the necessary data and the expertise to assist the local LSCs in conducting the StAR process. It was highlighted that the local offices needed to work closely with these partners to utilise these resources;

    b   55 (37%) emphasised the need for the development of common standards and approaches to information gathering and analysis across the LSC as a whole;

    c   50 (34%) stressed the need for access to sufficient and robust internal and external data for the StAR process to be credible and effective;

    d   47 (32%) highlighted the importance of data consistency and comparability across all information sources used in the StAR process; and

    e   13 (9%) noted that local office staff must have the capacity to deal with the data.

94 In terms of particular sources of evidence which should be used in the StAR process, most respondents highlighted the wealth of key data that was available amongst the key stakeholders as a whole, though notable suggestions were making more use of value added and incorporating management information systems.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 9

95 One concern is that the 'information gathering and analysis' stage is planned to take place approximately July 2003 to February 2004, whilst implementation will not begin until, say, April 2005 onwards. This could suggest that information gathering and analysis are static features; processes that can be done once and will then inform provision for the foreseeable future. It would be preferred to see the information gathering and analysis process as on-going threads throughout the review, acknowledging the dynamic nature of the national and local economies and the need for the SAR to produce a delivery plan that is sensitive to economic and related factors in the economy.

Learning Partnership

96 It is always difficult to gather statistically reliable consistent information from different providers. Stakeholder briefings will be required and a balance needs to be found between the need for sophisticated detailed information and a

simple approach that all providers can follow. Even with a simple approach there is always a tendency for providers to place an interpretation on data. Thus outcomes must be tested for validity.

<div align="right">Trade Union</div>

97 We suggest that the LSC make full use of the extensive evidence and expertise held by stakeholders. LEAs have professional research and statistics teams producing sophisticated data analyses.

<div align="right">Local Education Authority</div>

98 The College fully supports the Council's drive to reduce bureaucracy and understands the decision not to burden colleges with additional demands for information. However, given that current information gathering and review processes are still very much in their infancy, there is a tension between the desire to reduce bureaucracy in this way and the need for confidence in the accuracy of the information being used for decision making on such a potentially grand scale. Consequently the College is keen for the Council to make every effort to ensure the highest possible degree of transparency in its use of information and to give colleges the opportunity to comment on and respond to it. Indeed colleges will welcome the scope of the reviews and the insight afforded by information on provision in school sixth forms and work-based learning across all sectors which has thus far been unavailable to them.

<div align="right">FE College</div>

99 An important approach will be to work with LEAs to make the best use of available data and to align the data specification with data that is already available. Paragraph 93 concludes with the statement: 'This analysis of information must be transparent and robust to give learners, their communities and employers confidence.' In addition to those named it will be important to give providers confidence.

<div align="right">Local Education Authority</div>

100 Most NTOs/SSCs will have skills foresight documents/workforce development plans and plans for training in their sector. In the main these will be regional (as a minimum) and must be taken into account within any strategic review. Many of our sectors are doing well but are not large and are overlooked by other bodies.

101 A mixture of sources should be used, including Learning Partnerships, consultants and direct data collection by LLSCs. Excessive use of consultants should be avoided. Learning Partnerships should be challenged to show that they could provide a robust and reliable input.

102 Given that 'reviews may recommend radical changes to provision locally, so it is essential they are based on robust statistical evidence' (para 86), there is a need to share construction of the data into information to ensure rigour and accuracy. Methodology for the interpretation and re-interpretation of data must be understood and agreed by stakeholders and reviewers.

Question 10A

When developing strategic options, do the four points in paragraph 101 provide the right framework for making choices about provision?

103 There were 156 responses to this question, of which:

  a 57 (37%) agreed with the four points outlined on developing strategic options;

  b 34 (22%) did not; and

  c 66 (42%) did not state a preference in terms of yes or no; rather they used the opportunity to express reservations about the points stated.

104 The key reservations were that prioritising the simplest choice with the most immediate impact may undermine the more desirable need for a long-term vision over short-term wins. It was also stressed that though the guidance stated an additional priority for options which have the largest impact for the most learners, such options may not always be the most advantageous or preferred ones.

105 Several respondents also pointed out that these two priorities may actually be contradictory, as that which is simplest and most immediate may stand in contrast with that which has the largest impact on the largest number.

Question 10B

Are there other factors for the LSC to take into account?

106 There were 156 responses to this question, of which:

  a 33 (21%) stressed that developing and improving existing provision in the sector was vital;

b 33 (21%) highlighted that focusing on long-term strategy was more important than the emphasis on short term 'quick' wins;

c 26 (17%) noted that those choices which have the largest impact for the most learners may not always be the most preferable options;

d 25 (16%) pointed out that meeting skills needs and the needs of the learner were of paramount strategic importance;

e 18 (12%) raised the importance of collaborative approaches;

f 16 (10%) noted that covering gaps in existing provision would be a key consideration;

g 15 (10%) stressed that affordability and value for money should not be overlooked; and

h 2 (1%) felt that influencing non-LSC provision would also be an important concern.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 10

107 We agree that involving stakeholders early in the review process is the best way to increase ownership of the process and acceptance of difficult decisions. However, the interests of the supply side in this process should be secondary to those of the demand side.

Representative Body

108 The key phrase was seen to be 'widely recognised'. There was a strongly shared view that the starting place for the Reviews needed to be one that had shared local buy-in amongst the Learning and Skills Council's local stakeholders and partners. This would call for strong facilitative leadership on the part of local arms of the Learning and Skills Council.

Consultation Event

109 The four points outlined are clear central factors. If organisations are being encouraged to specialise and identify in their mission statements their strengths, then this factor should be investigated in reviews to ensure that organisations have accurately reported strengths rather than aspirations.

FE College

110 We note from the Council's report from its January meeting that e-learning is at the core of Success for All and welcomes this emphasis. In order to inform the process of formulating strategic options, there is a case to be made for the provision of central advice and guidance from the LSC on the role of e-learning to support LLSCs in this area.

Comment [JB6]: attribution? – do you know which respondent said this?

Comment [JB7]: and again – para 104 or 101?

111 The most important factor for the LSC to consider, if it is to implement review outcomes successfully, is how it will ensure that those involved in the process have the knowledge and expertise at ground level to make judgements about school/college provision.

112 It is important that any change has the learner as the central priority. Will the 'impact' be for the benefit of the learner as a first priority? If so, the paragraphs provide a suitable framework. It is vital that there isn't a case of change for changes sake.

Comment [JB8]: para 101?

113 We agree that early engagement of stakeholders is important to the quality of the review. However as we stated above we believe that the reviews should keep their eye on the pragmatic aim of excellent provision for 16–19 year old learners, rather than the ideological aim of distinct provision for this age group.

114 If the LSC really does intend to use this hugely complex process to carry out area reviews, it must create a long-term vision for the range and quality of services in an area in which to locate operational decisions. The noted paragraph invites short-term and apparently quick fixes without an overarching framework.

Comment [JB9]: ditto.

115 From this organisation's point of view, as an 11–18 Specialist Sports College, it is essential that our own vision and that of the Sports Colleges network is included in the range of options being considered in the review. For specialist schools with Sixth Forms in general, you may wish to approach the Specialist Colleges Trust (recently the Technology Colleges Trust).

116 The LSC needs to actively involve members from the different minority groups. Such involvement will be irreparably damaged if the minority groups perceive that the process is in any way superficial. This may prove to be difficult to maintain if these groups feel that the major vested interest, who may be better prepared or more articulate, are dominating the decision-making.

Question 11

Does the approach outlined for local consultation meet the requirements of learners, employers and the local community?

117 There were 157 responses to this question, of which:

> a 88 (56%) of respondents felt that the approach outlined for local consultation met the requirements of learners, employers and the local community;
>
> b 44 (28%) felt that it did not; and
>
> c 25 (16%) stated no preference.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 11

118 While accepting that the guidance set out in the circular will provide an adequate basis for formal consultation with the whole range of stakeholders, in our view it does not fully incorporate the commitment to partnership with key providers to which LSC adopted following *Trust in the Future*. Consistent with that commitment, we believe that there should be much greater engagement of those key partners at every stage of the review process – including the overall management of reviews, data gathering and analysis, and the development and assessment of strategic options – as much as through formal consultation.

Representative Body

119 The role of the bodies involved in the local consultation should be clarified in relation to their involvement in the light of recommendations made in the area delivery plan e.g. in terms of the LEA – what is the relationship with the LSC? What implications are there for the future relationship between the LEAs and the LSCs? This response links to para 123 on p24 and Q12.

Learning Partnership

120 If the participation of communities and the socially excluded is meant to be genuine then the *full* involvement of the voluntary and community sector (i.e. in the steering group) is key – as is adherence to compact principles of consultation.

Representative Body

121 Concerns that the approach outlined for local consultation does not meet the requirement of the learners, employers and the local community. This is not because the process is flawed in design, but because the prior mentioned timescale of 3 months will be insufficient to consult with such a wide spectrum of recipients. Many learners, employers and those within the local community

will be unfamiliar with such a consultation, and therefore greater time should be allocated to the process if it is to be successful. 'Consultation fatigue' is a real factor in achieving adequate response. It will be essential that this consultation takes place in a way that makes stakeholders believe that their contribution is valued and will be taken into account. There should also be adequate feedback.

<div align="right">Others</div>

122 It was felt that joint planning followed by engaging development and consideration of the alternatives was likely to lead to a more robust and owned set of options than a process that was less engaging from the beginning.

<div align="right">Consultation Event</div>

123 It looks very detailed and covers all the key points – I'd be especially keen to involve those 'excluded currently from learning' and engage with them and gain their views.

<div align="right">School/School Sixth Form</div>

124 The word partnership was used frequently to describe the relationship between local Learning and Skills Council arms and providers. Indeed, the strong view was that the Learning and Skills Council would only succeed in making the supply of information, advice, guidance and learning provision more responsive by working in partnership.

<div align="right">Consultation Event</div>

Question 12

What do you think are the most important factors for the LSC if it is to implement review outcomes successfully?

125 There were 164 responses to this question, of which:

    a 78 (48%) highlighted the importance of ensuring buy-in to the process from all key partners and stakeholders for the LSC to implement review outcomes successfully;

    b 65 (40%) in turn stressed that it would be vital to develop strong relationships with stakeholders;

    c 59 (36%) emphasised the importance of facilitating a transparent, open and fair process;

    d 47 (29%) noted that it would be important to maintain effective communication with all involved;

    e 39 (24%) highlighted the need to ensure that sufficient resources were made available for all stages of the process;

    f 39 (24%) stressed the need to secure robust, reliable data and a strong evidence base for supporting strategic options;

g   27 (16%) felt that it would be important to set clear and reasonable roles for all involved and managing expectations;

h   26 (16%) noted that a key area would be making sure key priorities were identified to maximise positive impact;

i   25 (15%) stressed the need to ensure the capacity existed within the organisation and that necessary training and staff development would be made available where appropriate;

j   19 (12%) saw a key issue as nurturing the shared ownership of the process;

k   18 (11%) pointed out timetabling and timing issues;

l   15 (9%) stressed that any strategic decisions must lead to meaningful change and must be backed by the necessary political drive and will;

m   11 (7%) noted the need to achieve the correct balance between the short term and the long term;

n   11 (7%) highlighted the need to secure rigorous monitoring of the process;

o   8 (5%) emphasised that there must be strong leadership from the local LSCs; and

p   6 (4%) raised the issues of overcoming any obstacles and potential legal issues that may arise through the process.

Sample of Views Expressed on Question 12

126   If this is successful it will be a process that we undertake together, and not be a process whereby the LSC is doing things to other organisations.

FE College

127   A critical success factor will be the engagement of key partners/stakeholders. The agenda for review must become their agenda.

Learning Partnership

128   The most important factors are:

- quality of the review (including staff ability to undertake the review)
- ensuring engagement of all stakeholders
- conducting the review with openness and transparency.

FE College

129   Transparent method of developing the process is needed

- Ensuring all providers feel that they have equality in terms of status, review requirements, consultation and so on.
- Ensure that responsibility in implementation is focused and applied to those who have the necessary knowledge and position to carry out tasks.

- Ensure providers have collective responsibility for implementation and that local communities/districts incorporate strategies into their plans.

<div align="right">Local Council</div>

130 There was a strong sense from a number of participants that they had 'seen it all before' in terms of how a range of public bodies attempt to involve them; on most occasions in the past the processes for engaging them (even those that are well constructed) had not led to a real impact for learners, potential learners and diverse communities; one suggestion for ensuring the SAR process was different was to start from the community and learner perspective and to use this as the measure of success throughout the process. Significant effort should be put behind ensuring a wide range of people from the community were engaged.

<div align="right">Consultation Event</div>

131 This will rely entirely upon the results of the outcomes of the review and a realistic timeframe. Everything is resource driven and if the funding necessary is available, implementation within a realistic timeframe should be achievable.

<div align="right">School/School Sixth Form</div>

132 The most important factors are:

- Credibility of data
- Reduction of bureaucracy
- The Review must undertake full consultation with individual stakeholders to agree the data published otherwise it could lead to quite significant legal challenges by those stakeholders.
- A clear indication of how the Strategic Area Reviews will impact on the Ofsted/ALI Inspection process and vice versa.
- Credibility of the final report on the Strategic Area Review not being out of date.
- The LSC must ensure that it finds out what learners/employers need rather than what the LSC believes that they want.

<div align="right">FE College</div>

133 To have involved all stakeholders fully inclusively from the outset of the SAR process. To have involved all stakeholders openly and transparently in formulating the proposals arising from the SAR. To have involved all stakeholders in an empowered rather than a directed way in agreeing how the proposals will be implemented. The involvement of all throughout the process, should allow for the successful implementation of the review outcomes, as everyone will have had ownership of it.

134 It was recognised that not everything could be addressed at once. But, with the long-term strategy to make learning more responsive clearly in sight, it was stressed that notable momentum could be created through some early wins in moving towards achieving this vision.

Consultation Event

Annex A: Section 1: Organisational Breakdown of Responses

135   The organisational breakdown of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Organisational breakdown of respondents.

Organisation type	Number of responses
Further education (FE) college	69
Local LSC (including consultation events)	47
Representative body	23
Learning partnership	18
School or school sixth form	13
Local council	12
Sixth form college	10
Trade union	8
Adult and community learning (ACL) provider	7
Local education authority (LEA)	4
Higher education (HE) institution	4
Other	4
Jobcentre Plus	3
Connexions	1
National training organisation	1

Annex B: Alphabetical List of Respondents to the Consultation

Acklam Adult Education Centre

Angley School

Anonymous

Arts Institute at Bournemouth

Ashford High School

Askham Bryan College

Association for College Management (ACM)

Association of Colleges (AoC)

Association of National Specialist Colleges (NATSPEC)

Association of North West Unitary Councils

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

Barking College

Barnsley Learning Partnership

Beryl Pratley Consultancy

Birmingham and Solihull Jobcentre Plus

Bishop Auckland College

Bishop David Brown School

Blackburn College

Borough of Poole, School Advice and Support Service

Bournemouth LEA

Bradford College

Brighton Hove and Sussex Sixth Form College

Brockenhurst College

Bromley Adult Education College

Buckinghamshire Lifelong Learning Partnership

Bury Learning Partnership

Bury MBC Lifelong Learning

Calderdale College

Calemcal Ltd, Progressive Management and Information Resources

Cambridgeshire County Council

Canterbury College

Capel Manor College

Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Community College

Carshalton College

Catholic Education Service

Cheshire County Council

Chessington Adult Education Services

Chichester College

Christ the King Sixth Form College

City College, Brighton and Hove

City College, Norwich

College of Richard Collyer

Commission for Racial Equality

Community Work Assessment Consortium for North East England

Connexions Cornwall and Devon

Coventry Education Service

Crawley College

Croydon Continuing Education and Training Service (CETS)

Dame Hannah Rogers School

Dartford Grammar School

Dayncourt School and Specialist Sports College

Dearne Valley College

Derby College

Derbyshire County Council

Devon and Cornwall Jobcentre Plus

Devon County Council

Dewsbury College

Diocesan Schools Commission

Dorset Community Action

Dunstable College

East Durham and Houghall Community College

East Riding College

East Thames Lifelong Learning Partnership

Eggbuckland Community College

Essex Local Education Authority

Federation of Small Businesses

Friary School

Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors National Training Organisation (FFINTO)

Further Education (London Region) Services (FELORS)

Gateshead and South Tyneside Jobcentre Plus

Gateshead College

Guildford College

Harrow College

Hartpury College

Heysham High School

Hills Road Sixth Form College

Huddersfield Technical College

Humberside Learning Consortium

Huntingdonshire Regional College

John Leggott Sixth Form

Kent County Council

Kesteven and Grantham Girls School

LSC Bedfordshire and Luton

LSC Berkshire

LSC Birmingham and Solihull

LSC Black Country

LSC Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole

LSC Cambridgeshire

LSC Cheshire and Warrington

LSC County Durham

LSC Coventry and Warwickshire

LSC Cumbria

LSC Derbyshire

LSC Devon and Cornwall

LSC Essex

LSC Gloucestershire

LSC Greater Manchester

LSC Greater Merseyside

LSC Hampshire and Isle of Wight

LSC Herefordshire and Worcestershire

LSC Hertfordshire

LSC Humberside

LSC Kent and Medway

LSC Lancashire

LSC Leicestershire

LSC Lincolnshire and Rutland

LSC London Central

LSC London East

LSC London North

LSC London South

LSC London West

LSC Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire

LSC Norfolk

LSC North Yorkshire

LSC Northamptonshire

LSC Northumberland

LSC Nottinghamshire

LSC Shropshire

LSC Somerset

LSC South Yorkshire

LSC Staffordshire

LSC Suffolk

LSC Surrey

LSC Sussex

LSC Tees Valley

LSC Tyne and Wear

LSC West of England

LSC West Yorkshire

LSC Wiltshire and Swindon

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Local Education Authority

Learning Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Leeds College of Technology

Leicester College

Lewisham College

Lincoln College

Linkage College

Liverpool Community College

Local Education Authorities Forum for the Education of Adults (LEAFEA)

Local Government Association (LGA)

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

London Borough of Sutton

Longhill Link Up Trust

Luton Sixth Form College

Manchester Enterprises

Medway Council

Merton LEA

Mid-Beds Adult Education Consortium

Middlesex University

Milton Keynes College

Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes Lifelong Learning Partnership

Myerscough College

Napaeo – The Association for Land Based Colleges

National Association of Educational Inspectors Advisers and Consultants

National Association of Head Teachers

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

National Contract Service

National Information and Learning Technologies Association (NILTA)

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

National Union of Teachers (NUT)

Newcastle College

Newcastle Learning Partnership

Newham College of Further Education

North East Midlands Open College

North Lindsey College

North Trafford College of Further Education

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

North West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

North Yorkshire Learning Partnership

Northampton Town Learning Partnership

Notre Dame Sixth Form College

Orchard Hill College

Oxfordshire County Council Lifelong Learning Services

Oxfordshire Learning Partnership

Preston College

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College

Rathbone Training

Reading Lifelong Learning Partnership

Reaseheath College

Richard Huish College

Ridgeway School

Robert Clack School

Robert Manning Technology College

Royal Forest of Dean College

Royal National Institute of the Blind

S7 – Consortium of seven Surrey sixth form colleges

Salford College

Scarborough Sixth Form College

School Advice and Support Service, Borough of Poole

Skelmersdale College

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

South Birmingham College

South East Derbyshire College

South Thames College

Southampton City Council Lifelong Learning Partnership

St Helens College

St John Rigby College

Stanmore College

Stephenson College

Stockton Riverside College

Strode's College

Suffolk College

Sutton College of Learning for Adults

Tameside College

Thames Valley University

Thurrock Adult Community College

Tong and Yorkshire Martyrs Sixth Form College

Tyne and Wear Work Based Learning Providers Network

Ufi/Learndirect

University of Derby (2x)

Wakefield College

Wakefield District Learning Partnership

Warrington Learning Partnership

West Cheshire College

West London Learning Partnership

Wilberforce College

Wirral Learning Partnership

Worcester Sixth Form College

Workers' Educational Association

York College

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum

Zodiac Training Limited