

LSC London Region: Statement of Priorities

The Learning and Skills Council London Region sets out its priorities, including key actions for 2005-06

July 2005

Of interest to everyone involved in improving skills and learning opportunities across London

Transforming post-16 learning and skills in London

Introduction

London is a global city of great contrasts. It delivers almost 20 percent of the UK's GDP, is home to 17 percent of its workplaces and has a unique role as the region renowned for its business and financial services, creative industries and visitor attractions. At £116.44 billion, London's economy is larger than that of Finland, Portugal and the Republic of Ireland.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has an important leadership role, providing drive and direction to the delivery of world-class learning and skills throughout London.

At the LSC we recognise that the only way for us to achieve our ambition of world-class delivery is to work closely with our local, regional and national partners across all sectors. In preparing our priorities for 2005-06 we have taken on board the findings from the Strategic Area Review process, which involved an unprecedented amount of consultation with London's employers, learners, education and training providers, partners and stakeholders.

In striving to create world-class skills for London, the LSC needs to tackle the legacy of low skills, low qualifications and the economic inactivity this can create. At the same time we must deliver the employability skills needed in the capital now and provide skills for a sustainable future.

The LSC's job is to invest public money to deliver the skills needed by employers and learners, ensuring that we derive maximum benefit from every pound that's spent.

This regional statement of priorities provides direction for London's five local LSCs and their delivery partners. These priorities provide an effective and efficient framework to meet the learning and skills needs of employers and individuals across the region.

Regional statement of priorities

The Skills We Need, published on 2 December 2004, sets out the background and context for the work of the LSC throughout England. In adopting the national priorities we have been influenced by the outcome of the Strategic Area Review process, the Economic Development Strategy of the London Development Agency, the Mayor's Plan and the London Skills Commission's regional skills partnership proposals. We have taken into account London's employment, skills and demographic profiles, and have identified key growth sectors, areas of sectoral or occupational mismatch, the geographical distribution of specialist provision, and critical skills gaps and shortages.

Our priorities

- 1 Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers and individuals.
- 2 Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high-quality, relevant learning opportunities.
- 3 Transform further education (FE) so that it attracts and stimulates more business investment in training and skills development.
- 4 Strengthen our role in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help all individuals into sustained employment.
- 5 Strengthen our capacity to work effectively at a regional level.
- 6 Improve the skills of workers who are delivering public services.

Recognising and meeting the needs of our diverse communities is at the forefront of everything we do. In implementing our regional priorities we will address their needs and reach out to those individuals who are most disadvantaged. We will challenge discrimination and promote equality across all LSC-funded provision, while continuing to monitor progress through our equality and diversity impact measures.

Partnership working

The London LSCs work across the capital with the many strategic and corporate organisations that populate this world-class city. We work closely with the public sector, which accounts for 25 percent of all workplaces in London, and continuously seek to strengthen our relationships with the key private sector companies and their representative bodies.

The London Skills Commission – the regional skills partnership

We are particularly concentrating on reinforcing our significant contribution to build on the excellent partnership work undertaken by the London Skills Commission and to continue working with key London partners and stakeholders including the London Development Agency, local authorities and Jobcentre Plus. This partnership approach will ensure that our priorities complement those of other major funders with similar objectives.

Led by the LSC and the London Development Agency, the London Skills Commission has taken on the role of the regional skills partnership to ensure that the skills needs of the London economy are met. The partnership includes all the key stakeholders engaged in achieving this objective and our regional priorities are closely aligned to their shared vision: for London to achieve a healthy and dynamic labour market that is accessible by all its residents and that delivers benefits to employers, employees and the wider community.

Building on the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA), the London Skills Commission is committed to:

- enabling London's businesses to recruit from a highly-skilled labour market and to access the training they need to maintain growth
- motivating Londoners of all ages to make informed choices about education and training, and to realise their potential, including enhanced support for those not currently engaged in work or learning, and for those wishing to gain or progress in employment
- delivering high-quality skills and employment provision that is increasingly responsive to the needs of employers and learners, informed by up-to-date skills and employment research, and delivered within a market-sensitive learning infrastructure comprising agencies that are all working towards a shared vision
- recognising the contribution made to the economy of London by its diverse communities and ensuring that everyone benefits equally from the success of our region.

Case study: Skills Alliance

A new social partnership in London South is helping to bridge the gap between the demands of employers for a skilled workforce and the training available through local providers.

The London South Skills Alliance was formed by LSC London South, the South London Learning Partnership and South London Business in response to the Government's Skills Strategy White Paper and consultation with key stakeholders.

LSC London South's Chairman Richard Carter said: "Employers' needs are at the heart of our work at the LSC. We are committed to ensuring that training provision for young people and adults meets the skill needs of business and industry. The launch of the Skills Alliance is a significant step forward in this direction."

Part of South London Business Learning Brokers service, which is operated in partnership with Business Link for London and financed by the LSC through the European Social Fund, the Skills Alliance aims to ensure that the demands of the business community are reflected in the planning and priorities of training providers and funding agencies.

The members of the Skills Alliance meet quarterly to discuss issues raised by employers, training providers, representative groups and government agencies. They aim to: engage employers, trade unions and their representative organisations in taking forward the Skills Strategy; increase the responsiveness and accessibility of provision; pool existing data about demand and training needs; and promote collaboration between the key agencies involved in delivering skills and business support.

In addition, the Skills Alliance has been developing new programmes to support key policy areas, monitoring progress made to date and offering suggestions to the Government about improving the Skills Strategy.

Plans are already underway for the Skills Alliance to start receiving regular, direct information feeds from borough employer groups, training provider groups and the LSC's sector skills action teams. Based on the London South model, other skills alliances will be established across the capital, reporting into a Regional Skills Partnership.

The employment and skills profile for London

London is a net contributor to the Exchequer. Trade with the remainder of the UK accounts for 75 percent of the region's total (*source: London Project report 2004*) and results in substantial mutual gains. To some extent, London acts as a gateway to the rest of the UK, with a gradual outreach of "London-centred activity" to other parts of the country.

Our region's economic strength is rooted in human talent. It is expressed through knowledge-based creative and cultural industries, and through service industries such as tourism, all of which compete internationally for London's workforce and markets. In order to sustain our region's economic success we must create the right conditions for London to attract and retain its workforce.

Qualifications

Our region's labour market is characterised by the polarisation of skills and jobs. The world-city nature of London drives a high-skill economy that is dependent on world economic cycles.

Many of London's economically active residents are highly qualified: 37 percent of them have qualifications at Level 4 and above. The greatest increases in employment over the last 20 years have been for managers, who now account for one in six of London's workforce, with business professional and associate professional occupations accounting for a third of the workforce.

Another feature of London's economy is the plentiful supply of low-skilled jobs driven by the retail and hospitality sectors: 47 percent of London's economically active residents have qualifications at Level 1 or 2, or have no qualifications at all. The evolving structure of London's industries is mirrored in the occupational structure. Changes generally follow the national trend towards higher-skilled occupations, meaning that the low-skilled jobs in the service sectors are most at risk.

Population

With a population of 7.4 million, London accounts for just over one-seventh of the English total. Compared to the rest of Great Britain, London:

- boasts a higher proportion of people of working age
- has fewer people aged 65 or over (12 percent compared to 16 percent nationally)
- will experience population growth of 7.5 percent by 2011
- is particularly attractive for young working people (29 percent of the population are aged between 25 and 39, compared to less than 22 percent nationally)
- will have 8.6 percent more young people under the age of 19 by 2011.

London is the most ethnically diverse city in the country. According to census data, 29 percent of its residents come from a non-white ethnic minority, compared to a national average of 9 percent. More than 300 languages are spoken in the region. Characteristic of a world city, this diversity is a strength, yet it also presents a significant challenge: 47 percent of all the country's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision is delivered in London.

Sectors

Service industries dominate the London economy, as they do in most of the country.

Business services have seen the strongest growth in employment over recent decades and this is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. They employ a quarter of London's workforce, whereas the figure for Britain as a whole is one-sixth. Manufacturing has seen the greatest decline: its share of London's employment more than halved between 1981 and 2003.

The labour market

The labour market is buoyant. The overall vacancy rate is estimated to be 2 percent (August 2004) but this masks skills shortages and high turnover in some sectors, notably construction and public services like health and teaching.

The November 2004 Labour Force Survey for London indicates that the trend in the employment rate appears to be falling, although there is little difference between the rate in the latest period and that of a year ago. Unemployment in London stands at 7 percent, which compares unfavourably to the South East rate of 3.6 percent and the UK rate of 5.1 percent, and our economic inactivity rate of 25.1 percent is above the UK rate of 21.9 percent (*source: ONS First Release November 2004*). At 1.4 percent, the London Borough of Richmond has the lowest claimant count as a proportion of the resident working age population and Tower Hamlets has the highest at 5.6 percent. However, unemployment levels among some communities and in some housing estates are extremely high.

London attracts skilled workers from a wide geographical area, meaning that a decreasing employment rate is likely to make it more difficult for unskilled London residents to find employment.

Regeneration

Numerous intervention activities are taking place to regenerate areas of London. Some are on a very large scale, including Terminal 5, Kings Cross and Paddington. We are, for example, already investing almost £700 million in education and training across the three local LSCs that cover the Thames Gateway. Some are much smaller neighbourhood initiatives, such as New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal.

Regeneration developments can, however, sometimes fail the very people they are meant to serve when the new jobs created go to people moving into the community rather than the local residents. The London LSCs are working with the London Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus and the other major partners to ensure that the residents of all regeneration areas have the opportunity to gain the skills needed for them to take advantage of the renewal. We will work with high-quality providers to ensure that the best opportunities to acquire relevant skills are made available.

Case study: Tapping London's skills reservoir

According to research conducted in March 2005, London has a reservoir of migrants and refugees whose existing professional qualifications or vocational skills remain largely untapped.

Many migrant and refugee workers with qualifications and skills gained overseas find that they are unable to continue with their chosen professions in the UK for a variety of reasons, including inter-cultural, educational and language complications.

The Migrants and Refugees' Qualification Programme addresses these issues by matching overseas qualifications and experience with the UK equivalent, as well as recommending the next steps to be taken. Those participating in the programme need only be resident in the UK, with the right to work.

The result of a pan-London project, the programme was developed through an exchange of ideas between members of the National Academic Recognition Centre (NARIC), the National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications and the LSC. Funding for the project's collaborative framework was provided by London's five local LSCs and the London Development Agency. The DfES also contributed to the project management costs involved.

The programme offers migrant and refugee clients the opportunity to embark on a three-step process involving an assessment of their overseas qualifications and English language proficiency; recommendations regarding training needed for them to become qualified and competent to UK industry standards; and one-to-one counselling and guidance to help them follow a personal development plan and take advantage of work experience opportunities.

As well as enabling London's migrants to realise their full potential, the programme is helping to alleviate the region's severe skills shortages, particularly in the areas of construction, health, business and office administration, transport and distribution, and the IT industry.

Since December 2004, NARIC has seen an increase in referrals by information, advice and guidance partnerships, for which the LSC is now responsible. It's still relatively early days, but the programme clearly has the potential to deliver real economic benefits to the capital, while providing invaluable support to London's migrants and refugees.

The learning and skills balance sheet

Sectoral and occupational mismatch

Just over 16 percent of employers have reported skills gaps, compared to a national figure of 22 percent, and 4 percent have reported a “hard to fill” vacancy, again compared to 8 percent nationally. The main mismatches are technical or practical job-related skills, customer-handling skills and computer literacy skills. Higher-than-average skills gaps have been reported in the hotel and catering sector and in administrative and sales occupations (*source: London Employer Survey*).

Improving the skill levels of the workforce delivering public services is a key part of the Government’s five-year strategy for education and is central to the reform of public services. The public sector makes a significant contribution to the London economy, with 25 percent of employees in public service jobs in central and local government, healthcare and education. The survey also indicates general concerns about education and training in three areas:

- employability of young people and the need, for example, to develop the softer skills of teamwork and customer service
- training opportunities in the associate professional/technician grades (Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications)
- transferable skills that enable people to move and progress between sectors, such as ICT, language and communication skills.

As all Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) become fully operational there will be a series of agreements identifying particular skills requirements and covering the needs of employers in their sector. London is piloting agreements with four SSCs – Construction Skills, e-skills, SEMTA and Skillset – prior to a national rollout. Further agreements will be developed as other SSCs become ready to enter into discussions on their sector’s needs. We will work closely with Trade Unions and the Union Learning Representatives network to better respond to the identified needs of workers.

We are also supporting SkillCity 2005. This is a large-scale interactive event that will inspire young people to take up vocational skills training programmes and career paths. It focuses particularly on those skill areas where employers are reporting the most severe shortages and recruitment difficulties.

Distribution of specialist provision

London is well served by providers in most areas. One exception is work-based learning, where developing the capacity of more high-quality work-based learning providers across London will be a priority for 2005-06. Although much good work has been carried out over the last three years to match provision to demand and improve quality, providers including FE colleges, are still perceived as needing to be more responsive to the skills needs of employers.

We will continue to work towards matching the Centre of Vocational Excellence programme to areas of demand for associate professional/technician grade (Level 3) training in certain sectors. The more general issue raised by the Strategic Area Review process is the need to link ESOL and Skills for Life provision with vocational training to improve employment opportunities for low-skilled individuals. This is particularly important where regeneration programmes are investing heavily in specific geographical areas. With 47 percent of national ESOL provision being delivered in London, it is vital for us to ensure that this activity succeeds in increasing learners’ employability. London’s ESOL provision has also been identified as a key area for action in the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit London Project Report.

The first 16-19 Fashion Retail Academy is planned for central London in 2005-06 through a partnership with the Arcadia Group, DFES, LSC and the London College of Fashion. This is one of a number of such Skills Academies planned for London. Ten Academies have been opened in London with a further 20 or so planned. There is also at least one 16-19 Academy planned for London. This will be located in west London.

Developing the learning infrastructure

Patterns of provision

We have a budget of more than £1 billion for 2005-06 to fund a wide range of provision. This will involve numerous organisations in delivering education and training throughout London, including:

- 55 colleges
- 175 work-based learning providers
- 33 local authorities delivering adult and community learning
- 247 schools with sixth forms
- many other providers from the private, public and voluntary sector.

Some additional education and training is also funded by the LSC in London through the ESF Co-financing programme. Participation rates for young people aged 16 to 19 vary according to area and London has not yet achieved the national target of 85 percent of 19 year olds achieving a Level 2 qualification. We will also work with the London Development Agency and others to develop a comprehensive e-learning strategy for post-16 learning and skills development across the capital.

London has established 49 Centres of Vocational Excellence spanning many key sectors. During 2005-06 we aim to develop a further 13, covering a broad range of sectors.

The provision of Apprenticeship opportunities is increasing as more employers use the Apprenticeship programme. However, we have identified a number of gaps, for example in high-quality providers of Level 3 ICT Networking and Apprenticeship opportunities in the creative sector, and will be working to extend the range of opportunities available.

There has already been some significant investment in renewing the FE estate and this will continue over time. During 2005-06 we will develop a Regional Capital Strategy in line with national guidelines and will encourage applications that help redevelop college premises to a higher standard.

Priority themes from the Strategic Area Review process include achieving better choice for young people, more parental confidence through improved 16-19 provision, and stronger links between 14-19 providers to ensure wider vocational opportunities and better pathways to higher education. We will be developing a 14-19 learner entitlement for London and will be publishing a London LSC 14-19 Framework to clarify the way forward.

One major concern emerging from Strategic Area Review is the provision for young people and adults who have special educational needs. On the completion of a national review, we will undertake a regional review in partnership with local education authorities, health services, Jobcentre Plus and others to improve the range of provision in London and to reduce the need for learners to study away from home.

Levels of learning

The focus of public investment for adults is to ensure that they are at least equipped with the skills regarded as the basic minimum for employability. This is deemed to be Basic Skills and Level 2 vocational qualifications or five GCSEs at grades A to C or equivalent.

We are making good progress with our Skills for Life targets but face greater challenges as we focus on those for 2007. To achieve the Government's targets it is important to move towards most of the Skills for Life and ESOL provision being incorporated into the qualifications framework. London's skills profile suggests that there will be a significant demand for the Level 2 entitlement, in addition to the high levels of 16-19 and ESOL/Skills for Life participation across the region.

In keeping with the labour market profile in London, demand for Level 3 courses is high. Those we fund will be delivered primarily through A-levels in school sixth forms and vocational qualifications utilising the Centre of Vocational Excellence programme and linked to the needs of the London economy and its key sectors. We will work with our providers and stakeholders to encourage greater personal and employer investment in higher-level skills and to promote progression opportunities.

Quality of provision

This year London schools achieved better than the national average results for five+ A* to C GCSE passes. Post-16 results continue to improve and participation rates in education and training in London equal the national average. However, there is still a significant variation between areas and between institutions. Through the introduction of a "London Learner Entitlement" offer we will ensure that all young people, wherever they live or learn in London, have the opportunity to make appropriate progression in education and training. Working with FE colleges and other providers we have made sound progress in tackling the quality of provision and its distribution across the region, and are addressing areas of weakness.

Many initiatives are already taking place to improve 14-19 provision. The seven London 14-19 Pathfinders in Harrow, Islington, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Westminster are testing the local delivery of 14-19 education and training, developing effective models on which the LSC will build. Local partners are working together across London to develop local strategies and respond to identified needs. In many areas this has resulted in partners agreeing local curriculum entitlements. Working closely with our local education authorities and Connexions, we will promote the most effective models and ensure that such developments become part of a coherent London-wide approach.

Although success and achievement rates are rising, they need to accelerate further. We will move funding towards successful providers: it is vital that all providers ensure that learners are on the right courses and are pursuing the appropriate qualification outcome. Another theme that emerged from the Strategic Area Review process is the need to ensure that both careers education and guidance in schools and the Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) infrastructure for young people and adults are responsive to learners, and can subsequently support them in identifying career choices and selecting the appropriate course to aid their progression.

A number of FE colleges have recently had excellent Inspection reports and there have been several very good 14-19 area inspections in London. We are seeking to capitalise on these, together with the experience of those providers awarded Beacon status, to share best practice in management and curriculum development.

We have a formal relationship with the Adult Learning Inspectorate at a regional level and with Ofsted at a local level. By maximising these links, we will address quality improvement issues and provide the necessary support so that all our providers can deliver a quality learning experience to their communities. We will support this process by applying best practice arrangements developed by Beacon providers and Centres of Vocational Excellence, both regionally and nationally.

Case study: Vocational training

LSC London Region's Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) programme is progressing according to plan.

Aimed mainly at adult learners, the objectives of the national CoVE programme are to:

- increase the number of adults qualified in economically important vocational skills at Level 3
- encourage greater collaboration amongst providers
- secure better vocational learning opportunities for all
- drive up employer/provider engagement
- establish 400 CoVEs by March 2006.

A total of 21 CoVEs – some with full status, others with interim status – were granted between March 2004 and May 2005 to London-based providers keen to address the region's vocational skills needs.

Lead provider

Southwark College
 South Thames College
 Westminster Kingsway College
 London College of Beauty Therapy
 Tower Hamlets College
 Quest
 NewTec
 Newham Sixth Form College
 Havering College
 Hackney Community College
 Barking College
 Lewisham College
 Greenwich College
 Four Counties Training
 Capel Manor College
 Merton College
 Bromley College
 Richmond-upon-Thames College
 Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College
 Stanmore College
 Quantica

CoVE title

Career Pathways in the National Health Service
 Music Technology
 Public Administration
 Beauty, Retail & Holistic Care
 Business & Financial Service
 QuBex – Business Administration
 Childcare
 Digital & Broadcast Media Technicians
 Electrical Installation
 Construction Skills & New Building Techniques
 Domiciliary Care
 Catering
 Tourism
 Rail Competence Centre
 Floristry and Business Enterprise
 Automotive Engineering
 Electro-Technical
 Coaching Leisure & Fitness
 Broadcast Media & Animation
 Early Years
 Transport & Logistics

Key actions

Priority 1 Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers and individuals

- Work with groups of employers, Sector Skills Councils, Business Link for London and Trade Unions to deliver specific programmes of activity for the major sectors in London on a theme or sector basis. Examples include the FRESA Construction Flagship and the Thames Gateway.
- Develop Entry to Employment, Employer Training Programmes and Apprenticeships to better meet the needs of London's employers.
- Ensure that the balance of provision reflects London's unique set of skills priorities, including progression to higher skills levels where appropriate.
- Deliver the four pilot Sector Skills Agreements in collaboration with the Sector Skills Councils and continue to work with other skills councils as they develop their requirements.
- Work with the Association of Colleges, Association of Learning Providers, work-based learning networks, Adult and Community Learning and the voluntary sector to engage them fully in ensuring that the system is flexible and responsive to rapidly changing demand and new skills gaps.
- Develop a capital strategy for FE in London to renew the FE infrastructure in ways that make it responsive to particular market segments, employers, adult learners and 16-19 year olds.

Case study: Boosting productivity

Ford Motor Company has improved the skills of more than 100 of its production and maintenance staff through the Profit from Learning programme.

In April 2004, the Ford Motor Company approached LSC London East and the London Development Agency to explore the most effective way to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the organisation through workforce development.

The Profit from Learning programme, an employer training pilot scheme run by LSC London East and Business Link in the Thames Gateway area, provided the ideal solution. All courses on the programme are funded and staff can receive either basic "Essential Skills" or Level 2 training, linked to a vocational qualification.

Managers at Ford's Dagenham plant are delighted with the impact the programme has had on staff, many of whom have eagerly engaged in the learning process. They are equally impressed by the skills being acquired by the workforce – so much so that vocational qualifications are being promoted and used throughout the company's Engine Plant and Diesel Centre. Every employee now has the opportunity to undertake training, ranging from

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at Level 2 or 3 to plant familiarisation and lean production techniques.

Human Resources Manager Jim Devine said: "We appreciate the support we receive from the LSC, which allows us to upskill our workforce, reap operational benefits and provide increased security of employment for our people in the UK."

This commitment to training was linked to – and boosted by – the announcement at the end of 2004 that Ford would be investing £169 million in its diesel engine manufacturing unit at Dagenham. As a result of this investment and the Profit from Learning programme, during 2007 production levels will start to rise and the workforce will need to increase by up to 460 people.

The LSC and the London Development Agency will continue to support Ford's training programme, the NVQ elements of which will be completed in 2008.

More than 1,000 London East employers have so far used the Profit from Learning Programme to train their staff. A national programme is currently being developed by the LSC.

Priority 2 Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high-quality, relevant learning opportunities

- Work with schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to improve retention, achievement and progression for young people aged 14-19, placing greater emphasis on generic skills for employability and to develop a London-wide learner entitlement.
- Align priorities and resources with the LDA and other key partners to ensure that maximum use is made of public funds.
- Promote a 14-19 pan-London learner offer, and publish a London LSC 14-19 Framework to present a "ladder of opportunity" for all young people, embracing all levels of achievement.
- Increase the number of apprentices and extend the range of Apprenticeships to underpin the future skills needs of more sectors and occupations, providing enhanced opportunities for those young people who choose to learn at work.
- Pilot the concept of a "September Guarantee" to ensure that all 16 year olds have an offer of education, work or training by the September after they leave school.
- In partnership with relevant organisations, undertake a regional review of provision for learners with special educational needs to improve the range of provision within London and reduce the need for learners to study away from home.
- Support SkillCity 2005, where over 120,000 visitors are expected to attend an interactive exhibition demonstrating a range of vocational training programmes and career paths.

Case study: Expansion project

High-quality provision is the driving force behind the ambitious £60 million expansion project at City and Islington College, with the LSC providing 25 percent of the funding.

The accommodation strategy will enable the College to offer the highest-quality teaching and learning opportunities for young people and adults in the local area. The five centres involved in the project are as follows.

- **City and Islington Sixth Form College** (opened September 2003) – a stunning, architect-designed building that City and Islington Principal, Frank McLoughlin, described as "a building that really does justice to the efforts of our students and to the work of our highly dedicated team of teachers"
- **Centre for Applied Sciences** (opened September 2004) – this refurbished and extended former school building brings together the College's well-established applied optics programme and increasingly popular courses in forensics, sports sciences and bio-medical sciences. It includes eight laboratories, with two more planned for this summer
- **Centre for Business, Arts and Technology** (opens September 2005) – according to Centre Director John

Spindler: "The Centre really will be a wonderful place to learn, equipped and designed with industry-standard resources and facilities. So whether the next step is a career or a degree, our students will get the best possible start"

- **Centre for Lifelong Learning** (opened January 2004) – Centre Director Mila Caley said: "Any trace of the stereotype of adult education housed in leaky, decaying old buildings has gone. This 'people's palace', linked to the adjoining public library, has created a new learning community, with dynamic spaces and cutting-edge technology in an innovative and spectacular environment"
- **Centre for Health, Social and Child Care** – Centre Director Anne Carvalho said: "The existing building that houses the Centre is currently undergoing major refurbishment, to bring it up to the same standard as the other four centres."

Whereas applications for science subjects are falling across the country, they were up by 100 percent for the Centre for Applied Sciences, before it had officially opened its doors. This increase in demand tallies with the February 2005 Ofsted inspection report, which identifies "high-quality accommodation and learning resources" as key strengths of the College.

Priority 3 Transform FE so that it attracts and stimulates more business investment in training and skills development

- Work regionally and nationally with FE colleges on the Agenda for Change, which includes skills, employers, quality, funding, efficiency and data.
- Re-energise the Centre of Vocational Excellence programme to develop higher-level specialist provision, ensuring that existing networks increase employer engagement. Establish virtual Centres of Vocational Excellence for London's key sectors.
- Through the three-year development planning process, engage with colleges to help them attract increased investment from individuals and employers.
- Work with FE colleges to maximise opportunities for adults requiring Level 2 qualifications and opportunities for progression.

Case study: London Employer Guide to Training Providers

A new website is giving businesses across the capital more help to access information on training – much of it publicly funded – for their staff, as well as responding to a commitment in the Government's Skills Strategy.

Launched in January 2005, the Employer Guide to Training Providers (www.egtp.co.uk) is a comprehensive online tool that helps employers identify and locate quality training in their local area. Its database can be searched by type or location of training, or by provider organisation.

Training guidance and information, ranging from needs analysis and training plans to evaluation, can be downloaded from the site, which also includes a section on work-based learning to advise and assist employers regarding Apprenticeships. Where appropriate, visitors are directed to other websites, such as Business Link, **learndirect** and Jobcentre Plus.

The Employer Guide project was managed by a regional steering group comprising experts from the five London LSCs' marketing and workforce development teams. Their collaborative efforts have resulted in the development of a consistent London directory of information.

The website is constantly being updated. Further links, such as the promotion of the Leadership and Management offer to SMEs and projects financed through the European Social Fund, will be added during 2005. For further education and work-based learning providers, it offers an ideal opportunity to promote what they can offer employers.

London's Employer Guide will have a crucial role to play in supporting the roll-out of the National Employer Training Pilot in 2006.

Priority 4 Strengthen our role in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help individuals into sustained employment

- Contribute to key regeneration projects including Thames Gateway, Heathrow's Terminal 5, Kings Cross, the NHS new hospitals programme and the potentially successful Olympics 2012 bid.
- Develop a model for addressing the worklessness agenda with the London Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Government Office for London and others. The model, which will be piloted during 2005-06, will ensure that regeneration programmes fully integrate skills programmes with employability and workforce development. It will also identify other funding opportunities for higher-level skills needs.
- Lead on tackling issues relating to the quantity, quality and nature of ESOL provision through the London Skills Commission to ensure that diverse communities are more effectively engaged in the economy and life of the city.
- Ensure that the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service infrastructure is built on the achievement of the Matrix Standard and is both responsive to individual need and linked to employer requirements.
- Implement the National Employment Panel recommendations for increased collaboration with Jobcentre Plus to maximise skills development for unemployed people leading to sustained employment. We will ensure that the system is flexible and responsive to rapidly changing needs.

Case study: Championing family learning

The family learning strategy for London West is helping to guide and shape collaborative, coherent development work between family learning practitioners in the many agencies working with children and parents.

Family learning encompasses all forms of support for families as learning units, ranging from formal training in literacy and numeracy to informal provision focused on parenting, citizenship, health and enterprise. The LSC provides funding to support family activities and educational programmes that are purposeful, planned, progressive and empowering.

The London West Learning Partnership Family Learning Action Group (FLAG) was formed in Autumn 2001 and comprises representatives from the six boroughs of London West. The family learning strategy for London West was formulated by FLAG following a strategy building day for family learning practitioners and managers from across the local area in March 2004.

Many London West boroughs have built on this work to create their own strategy. Sue Hasty, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, Brent Adult and Community

Education Service, said: "As a direct result of the strategy session, our borough formed networks with other providers. These networks have allowed us to take forward the planning of a local strategy for Brent, based on the London West strategy document."

FLAG has also proved effective in bringing together those involved in developing and delivering family learning, in order to drive up the quality of provision, as well as to share and evaluate new ideas.

Learners are also appreciative of the support provided, as can be seen from the following remark: "I like this family learning workshop because it's really for the family. Children and parents are in good hands and we all learn different things and talk about them at home." Having engaged in learning, the logical next step for many participants is to improve their employability skills in order gain a job.

FLAG members regularly share learning points within the LSC London Region and the group belongs to the Campaign for Learning National Family Learning Network.

- Take the lead, along with the Prison and Probation Service and other key partners, in developing an integrated learning offer for those identified as offenders in the

community or in prison and ensure high-quality learning opportunities with particular attention to Skills for Life and ESOL needs.

Priority 5 Strengthen our capacity to work effectively at a regional level

- Implement the principles of the protocol agreement between the LSC and the London Development Agency.
- Play a lead role in the London Skills Commission's Regional Skills Partnership.
- Ensure that we use our resources effectively in the delivery of the London Skills Commission's regional partnership priorities.
- Align plans, priorities and funding allocations with regional strategic partners to meet the needs of the London economy.
- Develop effective and efficient LSC infrastructure and expertise, both locally and regionally.

Case study: Team approach

London's learners are already starting to reap the benefits of a new regional approach to addressing LSC priorities.

Increased collaboration levels between the five local offices are providing new opportunities for those involved in improving the quality and effectiveness of provision to share knowledge and expertise.

In order to drive this approach forward, LSC representatives from across the region have been assigned responsibility for co-ordinating London's activities in the following:

- pan-London strategic partnerships
- regional co-ordination
- communications, PR and marketing
- council membership and governance
- strategic planning
- performance and funding
- skills and employer engagement
- 14-19 learning
- equality and diversity
- sustainable communities, regeneration and the Thames Gateway.

The results of this increased level of collaboration are already starting to show through at a regional level, as LSC London Region Director Jacqui Henderson explains: "We know that this new, regional team approach is working.

"The pan-London Employer Skills Offer contract provides a great example: Business Link for London and Reed in Partnership are delivering a £10 million, two-year contract which is proving highly effective in engaging small firms in skills and workforce development activities.

"Similarly, our pan-London approach enabled us to access an additional £30 million from the European Social Fund, which we subsequently match funded.

"We were then able to finance around 50 large-scale, two-year contracts that have seen providers establish new partnerships and work across local LSC boundaries in order to identify and address the needs of disadvantaged groups."

Priority 6 Improve the skills of the workers who are delivering public services

- Develop an Apprenticeship curriculum model for the public sector in London, in partnership with London Development Agency, Association of London Government, London Challenge, Trade Unions, Sector Skills Councils and others.
- Contribute to the NHS Skills Escalator Flagship programme.
- Develop a hub and spokes model for Centres of Vocational Excellence in healthcare, social care and childcare/early years.
- Contribute to the London Skills Commission's agenda for enhancing public sector skills development.
- Work with the TUC and Union Learning Representatives in the public sector.
- Work with FE colleges to enhance the skills and qualifications of their workforce.
- Contribute to the work of London Challenge in developing staff development activities within secondary education.

Case study: Maximising participation

More than 40 catering and domestic staff at Whipps Cross University Hospital are participating in a new Skills for Life training programme.

The programme, which includes training in literacy and numeracy, is the result of a partnership between LSC London North, Waltham Forest College, and Rentokil Initial Hospital Service (Initial).

Planning the training was a complex affair, with shift patterns to accommodate and a suitable onsite location to find, but these challenges were soon overcome. To maximise participation, key members of staff were involved in the planning stages, tutors ran classes in the evenings and at weekends, and Initial allowed the learners time to study during the working day.

Early feedback suggests that the programme is going down a storm with

learners. Mother-of-two and Domestic Assistant Angela Adjei signed up in order to improve her spoken English. She said: "The course is fantastic! Being able to speak well is making me more confident at work." Angela is now planning to apply for a supervisory role at the hospital.

Fellow Domestic Assistant Vince Kiyaga enrolled onto the numeracy element of the programme. He said: "I'm always applying things I've learned on the course in my daily life – for example, using mental arithmetic when I'm in the local shop." Vince is aiming to gain a qualification and hopes the programme will be extended to include IT training in the future.

Pleased with the success of the project, Initial is now considering rolling out the Skills for Life work-based programme to other hospitals in the London Region.

Monitoring actions

As an integral part of our Business Cycle we will monitor actions to ensure that we are making appropriate progress against all relevant performance measures. We will also scrutinise our actions to ensure that they have a positive impact on London's people as a whole. This will be the responsibility of the Regional Board, advised by the Regional Director and the London Management Group.

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