

Skills for Life Strategy

The actions which Skills for Life providers in London West should undertake to widen participation and improve the quality of Skills for Life provision in the London West LSC area (including the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow).

2005 - 2010

For colleges, work-based learning providers, local authorities, voluntary sector organisations and private providers involved in Skills for Life provision

🎯 For action

All providers delivering Skills for Life in London West.

This strategy has been put together as a result of a facilitated workshop with Skills for Life managers and practitioners in London West, representatives from local London West partnerships and regional experts on Skills for Life.

London West LSC will use the strategy as the basis for planning and developing the learning infrastructure, which will support high quality Skills for Life provision.

London West providers are asked to use this strategy as the framework/basis for their whole organisational plans to ensure that learners have access to quality provision which addresses their literacy, numeracy or language needs.

This publication may also be of interest to key stakeholders

Aim

This strategy paper has been developed to demonstrate our commitment to enabling all individuals to have the opportunity to acquire the skills which will encourage them to participate and progress in society and to fulfil their potential.

The strategy is a long-term one which will enable London West LSC (and its providers) to work towards achieving, and possibly exceeding, its contribution to the Learning and Skills Council's Skills for Life (SfL) target of 2.25 million adults achieving a Skills for Life qualification by 2010.

This paper will provide a framework for action for all London West Skills for Life providers.

Introduction

In Skills for Life, the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills, the Government has made a commitment to increasing the demand for and improving the supply of help for adult learners to develop their literacy, language and numeracy skills.

To meet this commitment, it is vital to sustain and develop the quality of teaching and learning. This means raising the quality of teaching, through clear national standards and core curricula. It means promoting and embedding high-quality materials and new teacher training qualifications. To assure quality, robust inspection arrangements must be in place and effective models of leading and managing literacy and numeracy provision must be promoted.

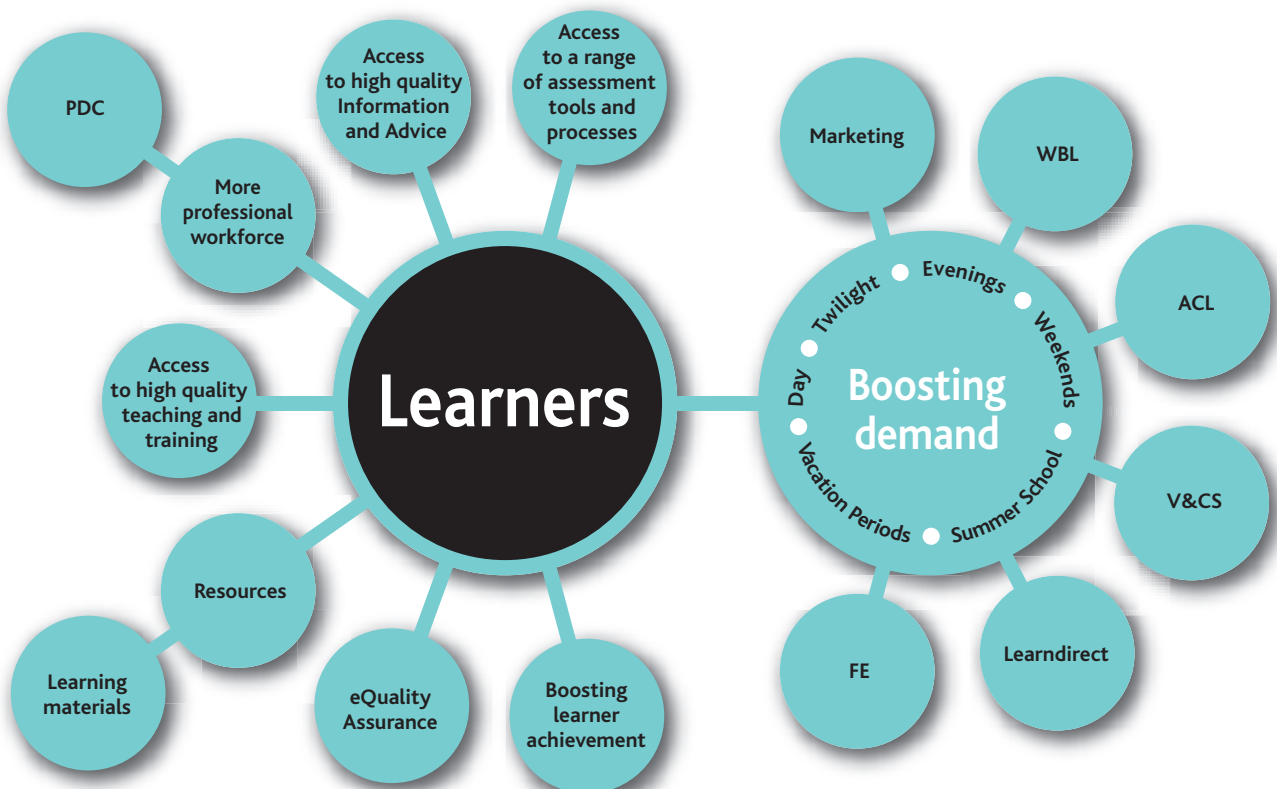
London West LSC recognises that literacy, language and numeracy skills are fundamental to learning, participation and progression. With this recognition comes an obligation. London West is therefore actively committed to the Skills for Life national strategy. Our vision is that provision of literacy, language and numeracy in London West is of the highest quality, delivered by a skilled workforce, which will enable adults to gain the skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society.

This strategy should play an active part in influencing and lobbying key agencies such as the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, the London Development Agency and the other stakeholders in assisting us with the development and delivery of our Skills for Life provision.

As well as complementing other national and regional strategies, this strategy will support London West LSC and London West providers in achieving local targets for improving participation, retention and achievement in language, literacy and numeracy provision.

The key considerations for our strategy are encompassed in our comprehensive Skills for Life Quality Framework, which is illustrated below.

This framework embeds all of the elements of the Skills for Life learning infrastructure, with additional elements, which London West Learning Providers identified in the context of our sub-region.



Fulfilling the national strategic priority to improve the standards of teaching and learning

Improving standards

In order to fulfil this national strategic priority, we recommend that London West providers:

- 1.1 set challenging targets to achieve a fully qualified Skills for Life teaching workforce. All teaching staff to be qualified in both subject specifications and teaching qualifications at level 4. Those with legacy qualifications to complete FENTO (Further Education National Training Organisation) recognised top-up units.
- 1.2 set challenging targets to ensure that Skills for Life support staff achieve qualifications in subject specifications at level 3.
- 1.3 ensure that vocational/academic teachers supporting learners on courses at level 2 or below have access to professional development for supporting Skills for Life and are supported to achieve relevant subject specifications at level 3.
- 1.4 provide access to both internal and external continuous professional development for all Skills for Life teachers and give staff adequate encouragement and support to attend.
- 1.5 design and implement an internal lesson observation process and code of practice which aims to develop teachers' skills and is based on the criteria in the Common Inspection Framework (CIF).
- 1.6 train both observers and observees in interpreting the CIF in respect of Skills for Life, implementing the lesson observation process and observing a code of practice.
- 1.7 ensure that all teachers are observed regularly in line with their development needs and that they are given feedback to help them improve and support to make the improvements required.
- 1.8 set up systems to monitor the skills needs of teachers identified in lesson observations and to provide training and guidance to support these needs.
- 1.9 share good practice by one or a number of means, such as providing 'peer observation of good role model' opportunities for all teachers; setting up a mentor scheme using experienced teachers to provide support to new teachers entering the profession and appointing advanced practitioners to train and support other teachers and model good practice.
- 1.10 design and implement, as part of organisations' appraisal processes, the measurement of teaching performance through a transparent grading system and set objectives for improvement.
- 1.11 ensure that all new staff are observed during their probationary employment and that minimum standards such as a satisfactory grade are achieved.
- 1.12 ensure all new staff entering the profession have appropriate literacy and numeracy skills for this work.
- 1.13 set a minimum pre-employment qualification requirement.
- 1.14 prioritise Skills for Life staff development and support in their professional development plan/strategy.
- 1.15 collaborate in sharing best practice and action research.

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In order to fulfil this national strategic priority, we recommend that London West providers ensure that all learners:

- 2.1** are screened and have an initial assessment at point of entry to ensure appropriate course placement at all centres.
- 2.2** have diagnostic and regular formative assessment to identify strengths and areas for development.
- 2.3** on courses at level 2 or below are supported by vocational/academic teachers who have access to professional development for supporting Skills for Life and are supported to achieve relevant subject specifications at level 3.
- 2.4** have appropriately planned and targeted literacy, language and numeracy skills development.
- 2.5** have access to a range of provision to suit different needs.
- 2.6** experience stability in course delivery, timing and location.
- 2.7** have the opportunity to achieve a national qualification.
- 2.8** have real progression opportunities.
- 2.9** have the opportunity to review their own progress and evaluate the effectiveness of their learning experience.

Raising achievement

Fulfilling the national strategic priority to raise learner achievement

Fulfilling the national strategic priority to boost demand for learning

Boosting demand

In order to fulfil this national strategic priority, we recommend that London West providers prioritise existing Adult/Skills for Life budget in order to:

- 3.1** engage in targeted and effective marketing of Skills for Life (discrete and embedded provision).
- 3.2** work with a range of agencies and community groups to attract new learners.
- 3.3** work with employment agencies and employers to improve the language, literacy and numeracy of the workforce and improve their job/promotion prospects.
- 3.4** address local issues that come to light through market research and intelligence.
- 3.5** contribute to, and work in collaboration with, other partners to meet London West LSC targets for a balanced demographic spread in the sub-region regarding learning opportunities and expansion of centres and venues for learning.

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Fulfilling the national strategic priority to ensure the capacity of provision

Ensuring capacity

In order to fulfil this national strategic priority, we recommend that London West providers:

- 4.1 devise and implement strategies for achieving the local target for number of learners.
- 4.2 carry out audits to ensure provision cost-effectiveness, giving due regard to timetabling and conversion from part-time to fractional/full-time staff.
- 4.3 continue to raise the profile of the Skills for Life area internally and ensure its prominence in strategic and development plans.
- 4.4 review the structure of Skills for Life area and management responsibilities in line with growth in provision.
- 4.5 seek to attract new sources of funding and resources for capacity building.
- 4.6 optimise the use of local and national resources, materials and training centres via Professional Development Centres (PDCs).
- 4.7 collaborate in partnership development and support by sharing new and innovative ideas.

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In order to fulfil this national strategic target, we recommend that London West providers:

- 5.1** conduct a skills audit of staff and produce a timed action plan for staff to achieve the new qualifications.
- 5.2** ensure that relevant expertise exists in the teaching and observation teams and that they report explicitly on teaching and learning in language ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), literacy and numeracy.
- 5.3** are aware of and internally promote the range of teacher training available for language, literacy and numeracy staff and vocational trainers.
- 5.4** make a commitment to raising the language, literacy and numeracy levels of teaching staff to level 4, support and vocational staff to level 3, frontline staff and volunteers to level 2.
- 5.5** have robust quality systems in place to ensure that everyone is working to the same standards.
- 5.6** make a commitment to support teachers who engage in acquiring the Skills for Life qualifications.
- 5.7** monitor the number of teaching staff trained to the appropriate Skills for Life levels against organisational targets.
- 5.8** collaborate in sharing best practice, information and guidance.

Becoming professional

Fulfilling the national strategic targets for the professionalisation of the Skills for Life workforce

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In order to fulfil this national strategic priority, we recommend that London West providers:

- 6.1** have a clear and explicit vision which aims to develop and embed Skills for Life within the organisation, ensuring that strategic and operational objectives clearly link together to impact on Skills for Life learners' experiences.
- 6.2** ensure a high priority for addressing the language, literacy and numeracy needs of learners in strategic, operational and business planning.
- 6.3** develop a cross-organisation forum for shaping Skills for Life development (a mix of strategic and operational managers).
- 6.4** audit current provision to identify where Skills for Life needs are being met and improvements need to be made.
- 6.5** identify, utilise and support individuals within the organisation (and the community) who have a role to play in the achievement of the vision for developing and embedding Skills for Life provision.
- 6.6** develop and implement an embedded learning strategy for Skills for Life, which enables collaboration between curriculum area tutors and Skills for Life tutors to develop a curriculum that combines vocational training with literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL) teaching.
- 6.7** develop a mentoring peer observation programme for Skills for Life staff.
- 6.8** develop robust quality assurance systems which identify when learners do not receive a high quality of learning experience to enable them to achieve their own potential, from entry to exit.
- 6.9** provide a clear and explicit structure within the organisation which identifies a senior management lead for Skills for Life and brings together other key roles and responsibilities: (eg ALS - Additional Learning Support, key skills).
- 6.10** continually review and monitor implementation of their organisations' Skills for Life strategy.

Implementing the approach

Fulfilling the national strategic priority to promote a 'whole organisation' approach

Glossary

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
ALS	Additional Learning Support
CIF	Common Inspection Framework
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation (now known as Lifelong Learning UK - LLUK)
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
LWLP	London West Learning Partnership
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
PDC	Professional Development Centre
SfL	Skills for Life
WBL	Work-based learning
V&CS	Voluntary and Community Sector

Relevant websites

Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit
www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus

Adult Learning Inspectorate
www.ali.org.uk

Basic Skills Agency
www.basic-skills.co.uk

Department for Education & Skills
www.dfes.gov.uk

Get On campaign
www.DfES.gov.uk/get-on

Lifelong Learning UK
www.lifelonglearninguk.org

Move On
www.move-on.org.uk

Learning and Skills Council
www.lsc.gov.uk

Learning and Skills Council (SfLQI)
www.lsc.gov.uk/sflqi

Learning and Skills Development Agency
www.llda.org.uk

London West Learning Partnership
www.lwlp.org.uk

London West Skills for Life PDC
www.talentwest.ac.uk

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
www.niace.org.uk

TALENT London
www.talent.ac.uk

Ufi - Learndirect
www.ufi.com

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