

Consultation on the *National Equality and Diversity Strategy*
2004 to 2007

Responses required by 30 March 2004

Equality and Diversity



Learning+Skills Council

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'For the LSC to meet its objectives and targets we must encourage more people into education and training and respond to the needs of individuals. So must our partners. We must all be committed to working together to make ours an increasingly fair and effective society'.

Mark Haysom, Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Council

*Moving Forward*¹
27 November 2003

¹*Report on Equality and Diversity Arrangements to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills 2002–2003*

Section 1

Background

1 The *Learning and Skills Act 2000* (the Act) created the Learning and Skills Council (the LSC). Section 14 of the Act requires the LSC to promote equality of opportunity and instructs us to report annually on our progress in this field to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. The first national equality and diversity strategy was prepared in March 2002 and covered the period 2001 to 2004.

2 This document is a consultation paper. Your comments on this document will feed into the development of the *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007*, which will be published in spring/summer 2004.

- **Section 2** provides background information on the consultation exercise
- **Section 3** describes the main issues that the strategy seeks to address
- **Section 4** outlines the LSC's principal aims and commitments in relation to equality and diversity under the terms of the new national strategy
- **Section 5** confirms the timescale for progressing this review

3 A series of questions is included at the end of section three and four. These questions are designed to help you think about the material in each section and provide us with structured feedback. A response form is provided in the Annex for you to fill in your answers.

Section 2

Background to the consultation exercise

4 In September 2003, the Learning and Skills Council started a consultation exercise as the driving force behind the development of its *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007*. This consultation exercise is designed to gather the views of a wide range of organisations, practitioners and other individuals working within the field of equality and diversity. Two elements of the consultation process have already taken place:

- Interviews with 20 stakeholders to explore the key issues within the field, and to gather their thoughts on the effectiveness of the first national strategy.
- A detailed 'ideas gathering' exercise over the course of a two-day residential event attended by over 50 people, including partners, representatives from the provider sector and key organisations working in the field of equality and diversity. Some important outcomes of the process were as follows:

There was a great deal of agreement on the underlying principles and purpose of the national strategy among the participants, whose contributions went beyond the horizons of their specific organisations and areas of interest.

Participants were keen to support the LSC in maintaining its focus on equality and diversity, both within the organisation and beyond it. Going forward, there is a clear need to explain to others how the LSC's commitment to equality and diversity is critical to its ability to deliver within the strategic framework that includes *Success for All*, the Skills Strategy White Paper, *21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential*, *Skills for Life*, the *14-19 Opportunity and Excellence White Paper*, *Inclusive Learning Report of the Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Committee*, Published in 1996, (Tomlinson Report)

Learning Works: Widening Adult Participation in Further Education (Kennedy report) published in 1997.

Participants championed the need for the LSC to continue to exert an influence at a national, regional and a local level. Importantly, the LSC is unique among organisations, as the legislation from which it emerged, the Act, specifically charges it with a duty to promote equality of opportunity (under Section 14).

There was a strong feeling of common purpose, and a positive sense that the LSC would commit to building on its achievements, listening to its stakeholders and continuing to develop itself accordingly. Overall, participants were seeking strong leadership from the LSC.

5 Many of the comments we have received are reflected in this consultation paper. A full list of individuals who took part in the first and second stage consultation will be given in the *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007*.

6 The *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007* focuses on issues relating to ensuring good equality and diversity practice in the learning environment, and among the partners and providers with which the LSC works. The LSC has an *Equality and Diversity Action Plan* in place which was updated in November 2003. This action plan looks at internal issues relating to equality and diversity within the LSC's workforce.

7 This consultation paper refers to a number of other Government policies such as *Success for All*, *Skills for Life* and the Skills Strategy, and LSC strategies such as *Inclusive Learning* and the *Widening Adult Participation Strategy* within which equality and diversity plays a central role. For more information on these documents, please visit the Documents area of the LSC website www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/default.htm and that of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) website www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/key.shtml

Section 3

Introduction: the significance of the National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007

8 The LSC's vision is that, by 2010, '*young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.*' This vision can only be achieved through a pro-active and sustained commitment to equality and diversity. We will only improve the breadth and quality of the skills pool in England if we engage people who are not currently involved in learning and help them to reach their potential. We must create a diversity within learning providers that reflects the diversity of the communities that they serve. Furthermore, in order to raise achievement, we must ensure that the experience of learning is as positive as possible for all types of learners. In these ways, it is clear that equality and diversity is central to our mission and a core part of our business.

9 The LSC recognises that there are currently six sets of issues that need to be addressed if this vision is to be achieved:

- ***Making more positive use of strategic levers***

The LSC has the potential to bring about improvement within the post-16 sector by using its key strategic 'levers' of planning, funding and quality assurance. However, from the point of view of promoting equality and diversity in line with its duty under the Act, there is a feeling that the LSC could use these levers more positively. In addition, the LSC has an important responsibility to provide leadership on matters relating to the links between key strategies, where a commitment to equality and diversity is central to success, such as *Inclusive Learning, Widening Participation, Success for All, Skills for Life*, the 14-19 White Paper and the Skills Strategy.

- ***Widening participation***

There are many groups of people who could benefit from learning who are unaware of the

range of opportunities available to them. In addition, there are many groups who are excluded from learning, not because they are unaware of what's available, but as a result of practical, historical or cultural reasons, or simply because they feel that 'it is not for them'. Action is required to address properly the needs of these groups and understand the conditions under which they could be engaged in learning. This is already being considered as a key part of the LSC's *Widening Adult Participation Strategy*.

- ***Highlighting new responsibilities in line with changing legislation***

The legislative framework in this country and across Europe as a whole is constantly evolving to provide clear directives to organisations, including those delivering learning, on what they must do to promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion. However, with the legal framework shifting in this way, many learning providers may be unaware of their changing statutory duties. As a result, opportunities for improving provision to marginalised groups may be being missed.

- ***Responding better to the needs of individual learners***

In far too many cases, there is still a sense in which learners have to 'adapt' to the provision that is offered, rather than have the provision suited to their needs. Some learning providers are not focusing on the needs of individual learners and are inflexible in the way that they are organised and their courses structured. *Inclusive Learning* represents a compelling approach to organising and funding provision in a more 'learner-centred' way, and is something that forms an important part of this document (see Section 4, Strand 4).

- ***Meeting the needs of employers***

Significant efforts are being made to ensure that the learning experience is effective and rewarding to learners when they are in post-16 learning. Work must continue to understand better the needs of employers so that routes out of post-16 learning and into meaningful employment can be established.

- **Monitoring progress without increasing bureaucracy**

Monitoring impacts and outcomes and linking them both to equality standards and legislative requirements is a critical part of the LSC's activity and an important part of the responsibility we share with partners and providers. This kind of data collection is the means by which we seek to understand our market, organise funding and allocate resources, and assess our progress in responding to Government priorities. Whilst everyone understands the importance of effective data collection, it is currently viewed by many as being 'unnecessarily burdensome'. Action is needed to ensure that this vital activity is 'fit for purpose', in line with the Government and the LSC's present commitment to reducing bureaucracy.

10 The LSC's *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007* is designed to tackle these six issues in the following ways:

- By providing vision and strong leadership within the sector. This involves recognising that equality and diversity is central to the fulfilment of its goals within existing key Government strategic initiatives, such as *Success for All*, *Skills for Life*, the Skills Strategy and the 14-19 White Paper.
- By improving the way it reaches out to and communicates with groups of learners who are currently marginalised.
- By using the strength of our remit and our commitment to partnership working to ensure, as much as possible, that partners and providers comply with the existing and developing legal framework and have a clearer understanding of their statutory duties. The terms of this compliance should be clearly stated in our contractual arrangements with partners. In addition, we have to meet many other legal requirements within a framework of equalities and related legislation. We need to be sufficiently flexible and well-equipped as an organisation to respond effectively to the introduction of new legislation. Crucially, we recognise that

there is an inherent tension between the need for legal compliance by learning providers and the ongoing effort to reduce bureaucracy in systems and procedures. As an organisation we are committed to both, and will seek to align these two important positions in delivery of the *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007*.

- By committing to a 'strong' sense of equality of opportunity, we are recognising that we must do more than simply challenge discrimination and the physical barriers to learning. We acknowledge the need to target investment in proportion to the disadvantage experienced by learners. We are committed to the principles and practices of Inclusive Learning as a means of delivering learning in a way that is appropriate to the needs, motivations, aspirations and learning preferences of existing and potential learners.
- By working more closely with employers to understand their needs and ensure that learners leave their learning programmes appropriately skilled and motivated to take their place in the world of work. Particular attention needs to be paid to black and minority ethnic (BME) employers, and large, small and medium-sized businesses to help them to offer equality of access to women, BME and employees with disabilities.
- By measuring impacts and outcomes, linking this to equality standards and relevant legislation, and sharing this information effectively with partners and other agencies.

11 Since April 2001, we have made a number of significant advances. For details of our progress in the last year, please see *Moving Forward the Learning and Skills Council Annual Equality and Diversity Report to the Secretary of State for the Department for Education and Skills 2002 to 2003*. This can be found on the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk).

Most notably, we have:

- developed and demonstrated a commitment to widening participation, inclusive learning, and strengthening community and voluntary sector partnerships;
- spoken and acted on our desire to 'mainstream equality and diversity';
- been closely involved in the development and delivery of the Race Equality Scheme, and worked with the Disability Rights Commission and other partners to help learning providers comply with the terms of the *Disability Discrimination Act*, particularly part 4;
- rolled out the Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant across the whole of England;
- embedded the concepts of local difference and local flexibility in our approach;
- rolled out Equality and Diversity Impact Measures in the 47 local LSCs;
- established robust mechanisms for data collection and set ourselves challenging targets;
- published a national delivery plan to tackle the literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners, (www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/FundingLearning/AdultandCommunityLearning/ACL_Guidance-2003-04.htm);
- published a national strategy for widening adult participation;
- made significant progress internally in terms of human resources. For example, we have put in place workforce development targets to which all local LSCs have pledged their support;
- continued the development of the Learning and Skills Council as a model equality and diversity employer/organisation, by putting in place good

practice equality and diversity interventions which address organisational needs and priorities; and

- introduced ways of reducing bureaucracy within a number of LSC systems and processes.

12 Looking forward, this strategy is about understanding how to build on our achievements and continue to drive improvement in the future. This strategy purposely does not present an 'end state vision'. The measures we describe here are significant steps on a **journey of transformation** that must leave no part of the organisation untouched.

Questions on Section 3:

Question One: This strategy has been built as a response to six issues that have emerged in the consultation. Do you believe these are the right issues to focus on?

Question Two: Do you have any further comments on the content of Section 3?

Section 4

The LSC *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007*

13 The Council's *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007* is based on six linked strands of activity. These are presented below. For each strand, we provide a brief description of our overarching aspiration, followed by a series of proposed commitments. At the end of each strand, there are a number of questions, which give you the opportunity to provide structured feedback on these commitments.

14 The strategy balances the requirement to do things that address challenges faced by whole groups of learners, with the need to do things that respond to the specific needs of learners as individuals.

Strand 1: Leadership

15 The post-16 sector is extremely diverse. In order to drive forward our equality and diversity agenda within the sector, we need to lead the way as an organisation: as an employer with our employees, through our activities with LSC Council members and in our partnerships with learning providers. This means setting a clear direction for activities at national, regional and local levels, and ensuring that the behaviour of our staff is consistent with our aims in this field. We also recognise the need to keep abreast of developments within the field of equality and diversity, and will work closely with key equalities organisations through a rationalised network of panels, committees and advisory groups to achieve this aim.

As leaders we commit to the following:

- a. We will gather, publish and promote good practice in the field of equality and diversity, and share this throughout the LSC, the post-16 sector and among other relevant partners.
- b. We will work to ensure that all LSC strategies, policies and plans are explicit about how they support equality and diversity activity.

- c. In line with our legal duties, we will equip ourselves and our learning providers with information, advice and guidance on equality and diversity. This material will be available in an accessible format. We will be pro-active in our approach to establishing partnerships. That is, we will work to identify, target and engage potential partners on a local, regional and national level. We will be explicit about the responsibilities that lie on either side of any partnership with the LSC, and the benefits of that partnership.
- d. We will listen to the advice of our partners and stakeholders, including organisations such as the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission. We will demonstrate that we have listened by acting on their suggestions where appropriate; giving them appropriate and timely feedback and, where appropriate, explaining clearly the reasons for our related decisions. We will adopt the same listening approach when the new single equality commission is established.
- e. We will influence key strategic partners to give greater priority to equality and diversity in the design and implementation of relevant policies and programmes, such as *Success for All*. We will influence them to address the equality and diversity agenda in an explicit way within all relevant policy literature.
- f. We will aim to optimise additional funding sources, for example, the European Social Fund and the Regional Development Agencies. We will aim to influence funders to boost spending on activities that make progress towards our objectives for equality and diversity in the post-16 sector.

- g. We will aim to explain our funding, policy and operational decisions and our constraints in a clear and straightforward way.
- h. We will continue to develop the Learning and Skills Council as a model equality and diversity employer.
- i. The working behaviour of our staff members and our partners within and outside the post-16 sector must portray a visible and active commitment to equality and diversity. We will challenge poor or inadequate leadership and management in this field of work.
- j. We will regularly monitor the performance of all of our staff in the field of equality and diversity.

Questions on strand 1: Leadership

Question Three: Do you believe that the commitments set out in this section illustrate the kind of leadership you would expect from the LSC?

Question Four: It is possible that the leadership commitments made in this document by the LSC will have an effect on other organisations. Do you believe this to be the case for your organisation?

Question Five: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Strand 2: Reaching learners who are disengaged

16 Many potential learners feel excluded from participating in learning for practical, historical or cultural reasons, or simply because they feel that learning is 'not for them'. We have to reach out to these individuals and communicate the benefits learning can have for them in a way that is sensitive to who they are, what they need and who they want to be. One of the Council's main priorities will be to help identify and reach out to new groups of young people and adult learners. To do this, we want to enable a more effective

and pro-active approach to reach and communicate with learners, building on the activities already established as part of the LSC's *Widening Adult Participation Strategy* and the *14-19 White Paper*, for example:

In reaching learners who are disengaged, we commit to the following:

- a. We will work to devise programmes of communication that recognise the shared needs and points of commonality between groups.
- b. We will continue to identify priorities, targets and impact measures for equality and diversity in consultation with local partners and learning providers, and ensure that this process is made clear to those involved.
- c. We will encourage and promote inter-community working and building partnerships with the voluntary and community sector, particularly for the purposes of communicating with learners and planning provision appropriately.

Questions on strand 2: Reaching learners who are disengaged

Question Six: Do you believe it is appropriate to set targets and priorities to reach certain groups?

Question Seven: Do you believe that continuing with our policy of designing and implementing Equality and Diversity Impact Measures at a local level is the right approach?

Question Eight: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Strand 3: Supporting compliance

17 No two learners are the same: they start from different places and learn at different speeds and in different ways. But learners do share some common elements of their learning needs and cultural characteristics. We need to take these into account to ensure that every learner and

potential learner has access to learning provision in a way that is appropriate to them. In order to do this, we need to address the issue on two fronts. Current legislation gives us unprecedented opportunities for ensuring that learning provision offered to students is accessible and appropriate. We need to ensure that we progress our work with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and all other organisations committed to promoting equality of opportunity, and use performance reviews to monitor learning providers' responses to meeting the requirements of legislation. In addition, we need to move beyond the letter of the law to address issues such as individual learning styles and cultural sensitivities. We will gather and share best practice on these important areas.

In fully supporting legal compliance, we commit to the following:

- a. We will use the full power of our role in funding learning providers to ensure that the equality and diversity agenda is taken as seriously as other areas of standards and performance. Equality and diversity must be reflected in learning providers' development plans. We will encourage providers to set and monitor their own targets and engage in critical self-assessment. Failure by learning providers to meet the commitments that they have set themselves – as outlined in their development plan agreed with the LSC – should mean that they cannot achieve an 'excellent' grade in their performance review. This will mean that they are not eligible for 'premium' funding.
- b. We will work in partnership with learning providers to promote understanding of their responsibilities under current law.
- c. We will work in partnership with other equality organisations and campaigning bodies and draw on their expertise to progress equality of opportunity.

- d. We will review – initially through the Strategic Area Review process and also the OfSTED/Adult Learning Inspectorate Common Inspection Framework – providers' policies and provision to ensure that they meet the needs of specific groups in their area.
- e. We will meet our legal responsibilities as laid out in the *Learning and Skills Act 2000*, the Remit Letter and the Grant Letter, and we will use the full extent of our organisational powers to advance the equality and diversity agenda.
- f. We will explore the implications of the establishment of a single equality commission and will seek to develop a positive and dynamic relationship between the LSC and the new organisation.
- g. We will also work to optimise the impact of the relevant statutory legislation, such as the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*, and carry out our new duties on sexual orientation, religion and belief, and age.

Questions on strand 3: Supporting compliance

Question Nine: Do you believe the LSC is working effectively with the major commissions and other equality partners?

Question Ten: Do you feel that the LSC uses communication effectively to promote equality of opportunity?

Question Eleven: Do you agree that a failure on the part of providers to meet agreed standards for equality and diversity should have consequences for their eligibility for 'premium funding'?

Question Twelve: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Strand 4: Inclusive Learning – A commitment to treat learners as individuals

18 There comes a point at which it is no longer helpful to think about learners as part of a 'group'; in fact, to do so might even put in place additional barriers to them achieving their potential. We are committed to the principles of Inclusive Learning, which treats learners as individuals and creates a learning environment – supported by rigorous initial and ongoing assessment – in which they can learn in a way that best suits their learning style, motivations and aspirations. The value of this approach is well understood by the post-16 teaching workforce, but action is necessary to give them the tools and support they need to be genuinely effective practitioners of Inclusive Learning.

In taking forward Inclusive Learning we commit to the following:

- a. We will develop information, advice and guidance for practitioners, advising them on approaches to teaching and supporting learners according to their needs.
- b. We will support learning providers in developing the knowledge and the tools they need to deliver Inclusive Learning; that they know what is expected of them and how to deliver it.
- c. We will undertake research to test how key barriers to individuals learning might be removed in a systematic and holistic fashion.
- d. The learner must be the 'litmus test' of all learning performance. We will monitor the results of learner surveys, and use them as a way to gauge how well the sector is serving its learners.

Questions on strand 4: Inclusive Learning – A commitment to treating learners as individuals

Question Thirteen: Do you agree that the LSC should continue to develop Inclusive Learning across the sector?

Question Fourteen: Do you believe that other measures need to be put in place to reinforce a learner-centred approach?

Question Fifteen: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Strand 5: Working with employers

19 Equality and diversity issues reach far beyond the post-16 sector into the world of work. We must work to help employers understand the benefits of employing people from different cultural backgrounds, and with different levels of ability to enhance their skills base and their competitiveness. We recognise the importance of bringing our thinking on equality and diversity into line with the objectives of *Success for All*, *Skills for Life*, and the *Skills Strategy*, which outline the need for partnership with employers in order to address the UK skills gap. We also need to look critically at existing work based learning programmes to ensure that they take equality and diversity issues into account.

In working with employers, we commit to the following:

- a. We will work with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and other equality focused organisations to remove the barriers faced by young people to accessing work based learning including Modern Apprenticeships.
- b. We will ensure that an awareness of equality and diversity issues is one of the main drivers for ongoing development of programmes such as Entry to Employment and Modern Apprenticeships.

- c. We will continue our use of workforce diversity advocates and maintain our commitment to Employer Training Pilots to raise awareness of the value of employing people from different backgrounds.

Questions on strand 5: Working with employers

Question Sixteen: Do you agree that one of the key strands of the National Equality and Diversity Strategy ought to focus on working with employers?

Question Seventeen: Do you believe that the LSC should put resources into guiding employers progress towards compliance with equality and diversity legislation?

Question Eighteen: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Strand 6: Measuring outcomes

20 Whilst many providers understand the importance of data collection and statistical analysis, there is also a feeling by some that this will create a bureaucratic burden. Monitoring of impacts and outcomes is critical for a range of reasons. It allows us to determine the degree to which we are making progress against our aims and objectives. We need to understand when and how we have been most effective so that we can plan and fund activities accordingly.

We commit to measure the following:

- a. We will work hard to start to gather evidence of the social and economic benefits of equality and diversity. We will use our communication with the Government to present the outcomes of work in this field and use our influence to argue the case for equality and diversity issues to have a greater impact within our budget allocation processes.

- b. We will rationalise local level targets and review Equality and Diversity Impact Measures in accordance with national priorities and local need.
- c. We will maintain this evidence base as a means of informing ongoing efforts to communicate with new groups of learners under Strand 1, and enable us to monitor progress towards and beyond compliance under Strand 2 referred to above.
- d. We will work with local partners to understand the existing barriers to the collection of accurate data, devising targeted measures to overcome these barriers.
- e. We will report our annual progress to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in a way that better emphasises outcomes and impact rather than processes. At the same time, we should build up our ability to challenge process and decision-making within our role as a key strategic partner of the DfES.
- f. We will influence learning providers to take all reasonable steps to gather information on their progress towards meeting equality legislation, particularly with regard to diversity data on staff, students and school and college governors; and to report it to us, as well as use it to inform their own management. We will use the power of contractual agreements and performance reviews – to which performance-related funding is attached – to ensure that this is given a high priority.
- g. We will ensure, in conjunction with the inspectorates, that equality and diversity standards are given as high a priority as those in existing priority areas within the inspection regime.
- i. We will undertake monitoring at the level of the individual learner to analyse the degree to which our system of allocating and auditing funding is achieving the intended outcomes for the individual learner.

Questions on strand 6: Measuring outcomes

Question Nineteen: This strategy assumes that measuring outcomes is a powerful way of driving good practice. Do you agree with this approach?

Question Twenty: Do you agree with the need for the LSC to play a role in building a strong economic case for equality and diversity?

Question Twenty-One: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Questions on the strategy overall:

Question Twenty-Two: Do you agree that the six strands represent a sound approach to the strategy?

Question Twenty-Three: Do you think that any of the commitments outlined represent a challenging burden of bureaucracy?

Question Twenty-Four: Do you feel that the level of ambition this strategy sets out is appropriate?

Question Twenty-Five: Do you have any additional comments on the following:

- The structure of this strategy?
- The suitability of this strategy for the following audiences: learners, teaching and non-teaching staff at providers, LSC staff at all levels?
- The degree to which this strategy can be applied to the regional and local context?
- The breadth and depth of this strategy?

Section 5

Details of the consultation process going forward

Launch Date: **15 December 2003**

Deadline for responses: **30 March 2004**

Where is the document available?

This document is available in Microsoft Word on the LSC website at: www.lsc.gov.uk

Who is being consulted?

21 This consultation document is being distributed widely to organisations and individuals in England. The types of organisations with which we are consulting include, but are not limited to:

- Those working in the areas of race and ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion and belief.
- Those involved in broader issues relating to adult and community learning, work based learning and other post-16 provision.
- Those committed to social justice and community cohesion.
- Academics and educationalists.

What kind of feedback is needed?

We are anticipating three types of feedback on the document:

- comments on where we have omitted something;
- comments on where we have got something wrong; and
- comments on where the accessibility of the document could be improved.

How should feedback be provided?

A number of questions are outlined at the end of Sections 3 and 4 of the document. A response form is enclosed containing all the questions in one place to enable you to provide structured feedback as simply as possible. Space is also

provided for you to give us general comments with leading questions where appropriate.

What will happen to the feedback that is provided?

We expect a considerable response from a range of individuals and organisations. In terms of acting on the comments we receive, we plan to respond in one of two ways:

- where we receive comments that we agree with and can do something about, we will incorporate them into the strategy; and
- where we receive comments that we cannot do anything about, even if we agree in principle with the responses and/or they reflect a majority view, they will not be incorporated into the strategy.

Reasons why we may not be able to incorporate feedback we receive could include:

- suggestions are not in line with current Government or LSC policy;
- suggestions do not reflect our understanding of what constitutes best practice in a particular area of activity; or
- suggestions are not appropriate from the point of view of a national strategy, and might be better addressed as part of a separate LSC initiative, or by a partner, or at a regional or local level.

However, we will provide written responses to all of the major themes that emerge in the feedback we receive.

Where should feedback be sent to?

Responses and enquiries should be marked '**Equality and Diversity Strategy review**' and sent to:

Kit Roberts
Director, Equality and Inclusive Learning
Learning and Skills Council
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

Email: KitRobertsEDStrategy@lsc.gov.uk

If you wish to send us your comments via email, attachments should be in Microsoft Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) only please.

Please indicate if you are replying as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group of people. Your response may be made public. If you would prefer it to remain private, please make this clear when replying.

What is the deadline for providing feedback?

Your comments are requested by 30 March 2004.

When will the final version of the National Equality and Diversity Strategy be available?

The final version of the Learning and Skills Council's *National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2004 to 2007* will be published in spring/summer 2004.

Annex: Consultation Paper Response Form

The Learning and Skills Council *National Strategy for Equality and Diversity 2004 to 2007*

Name <i>(please print)</i>
Organisation
Address
Email
Telephone

Questions on Section 3 (Paragraph 8)

Question One: This strategy has been built as a response to six issues that have emerged in the consultation (paragraph 9). Do you believe these are the right issues to focus on?

Yes No Unsure

Comments

Question Two: Do you have any further comments on the content of Section 3?

Yes No

Comments

Questions on Strand 1: Leadership (Paragraph 15)

Question Three: Do you believe that the commitments set out in this section illustrate the kind of leadership you would expect from the LSC?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments Are there any other kinds of leadership you would expect to see from the LSC?

Question Four: It is possible that the leadership commitments made in this document by the LSC will have an effect on other organisations. Do you believe this to be the case for your organisation?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Five: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Yes

No

Comments

Questions on Strand 2: Reaching Learners who are Disengaged (Paragraph 16)

Question Six: Do you believe it is appropriate to set targets and priorities to reach certain groups?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments If yes, what specific targets would be of value?

Question Seven: Do you believe that continuing with our policy of designing and implementing Equality and Diversity Impact Measures at a local level is the right approach?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Eight: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Yes

No

Comments

Questions on Strand 3: Supporting Compliance (Paragraph 17)

Question Nine: Do you believe that the LSC is working effectively with the major commissions and other equality and diversity partners?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Ten: Do you feel that the LSC uses communication effectively to promote equality and diversity?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Eleven: Do you agree that a failure on the part of providers to meet agreed standards for equality and diversity should have consequences for their eligibility for 'premium funding'?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Twelve: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Yes

No

Comments

Questions on Strand 4: Inclusive Learning – A Commitment to treat Learners as Individuals (Paragraph 18)

Question Thirteen: Do you agree that the LSC should continue to develop Inclusive Learning across the sector?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments Are there any additional issues the LSC should consider here?

Question Fourteen: Do you believe that other measures need to be put in place to reinforce a learner-centred approach?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Fifteen: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Yes

No

Comments

Questions on Strand 5: Working with Employers (Paragraph 19)

Question Sixteen: Do you agree that one of the key strands of the National Equality and Diversity Strategy ought to focus on work with employers?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments If yes, what should be our priority in working with employers?

Question Seventeen: Do you believe that the LSC should work to guide employers' progress towards compliance with equality and diversity legislation?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Eighteen: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Yes

No

Comments

Questions on Strand 6: Measuring Outcomes (Paragraph 20)

Question Nineteen: This strategy assumes that measuring outcomes is a powerful way of driving good practice. Do you agree with this approach?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments Are there any additional means of measuring that we ought to consider?

Question Twenty: Do you agree with the need to build a strong economic case for equality and diversity?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Twenty One: Do you have any further comments about this strand?

Yes

No

Comments

Questions on the Strategy Overall:

Question Twenty Two: Do you agree that the six strands represent a sound approach to the strategy?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Twenty Three: Do you think that any of the commitments outlined represent a challenging burden of bureaucracy?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comments

Question Twenty Four: Do you feel that the level of ambition this document sets out is appropriate?

Yes

No

Comments

Question Twenty Five: Do you have any additional comments on the following:

a) The structure of this document?

Yes

No

Comments

b) The suitability of this document for the following audiences: learners, teaching and non-teaching staff at providers and LSC staff at all levels?

Yes

No

Comments

c) The degree to which this document can be applied to a regional/local context?

Yes

No

Comments

d) The breadth and depth of this document?

Yes

No

Comments

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