

# **LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL**

## **QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

**2003-06**

**Consultation Document**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Paragraphs</b>
General Introduction	1-7
Introduction to the Quality Improvement Strategy	8-14
○ Strategic objectives	15
○ Measuring improvement	16-23
○ Strategic levers	24-29
Delivering the Strategy:	30
○ Building capacity in providers	31-46
○ Improving patterns of provision	47-52
○ Monitoring and measuring success	53-58
○ Building capacity in the LSC	59-61
Managing the Process	62
Review and Evaluation	63-65
Consultation	66-69
Annex 1: Definitions and technical information	
Annex 2: Participation in expert seminars	
Annex 3: Feedback form	

## **General Introduction**

1 The Quality Improvement Strategy is intended to enable the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to achieve its key objectives and targets for 2004, which are set out below.

### **Mission**

2 Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training which puts learners first.

### **Vision**

3 Our vision is that by 2010 young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

### **Corporate objectives**

4 Our corporate objectives to 2004 are to:

- extend participation in education, learning and training
- increase engagement of employers in workforce development
- raise achievement of young people and adults; and
- raise quality of education and training and user satisfaction.

5 High-quality provision gives learners the best chance of gaining world-class knowledge and skills enabling them to meet their ambitions. To achieve high quality learning, we will ensure that learning:

- meets learners', employers' and community needs
- encourages high success rates
- is delivered by competent and qualified staff
- offers equality of opportunity, and success for all
- takes place in a safe and supportive environment
- is well-managed and well-led.

6 Our Quality Improvement Strategy has been developed to help colleges and other providers to deliver high quality provision.

### **Principles**

7 We have adopted the following principles for the Quality Improvement Strategy. We will:

- put the experience, aspirations and success of learners at the heart of what we do
- require colleges and other providers to take primary responsibility for quality
- intervene in direct proportion to the seriousness of a college's or other providers' weaknesses
- work with our partners to develop, implement and evaluate the strategy

- strike a balance between change and stability
- recognise the different starting points of providers
- promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion
- set targets which will drive improvement at national, local and provider level, which are both challenging and achievable
- carry out research so that our practice is informed by the best nationally and in the world
- work with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to ensure that our strategy complements and supports the department's *Success for All* programme
- take account of the recommendations of the bureaucracy task force chaired by Sir George Sweeney.

## Introduction to the Quality Improvement Strategy

8 The LSC inherited provision of uneven quality, ranging from excellent, world-class provision, through to that of unacceptably poor quality. We are determined to tackle the tail of poor performance, and to increase the proportion of provision that is of good or better quality.

9 In the first year we put in place a coherent approach to quality across post-16 learning in partnership with the Government and the inspectorates. In the Strategy for 2003/06, we combine recognition and support for excellence with high challenge where provision or providers fail to offer good learning experiences and results for learners.

10 The central feature of our strategy is to give support to colleges and other providers to help them to deliver their responsibilities for continuous improvement and for the quality of their provision, with a strong focus on provision that falls below acceptable standards. We will support and intervene to help colleges and other providers to achieve world-class standards.

11 In the design of the strategy and in its implementation, we want to develop relationships based on trust, transparency and a minimum of bureaucratic requirements. We will take full account of the forthcoming recommendations of the bureaucracy task force led by Sir George Sweeney.

12 The Quality Improvement Strategy will be implemented within a rapidly changing policy context which requires close collaboration and working in partnership with a wide range of key stakeholders. Success depends on the co-ordinated and coherent approach which we will develop with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to support the *Success for All* programme, the Leadership College and the introduction of new funding arrangements. In the slightly longer term we will support the proposed Sector Skills Council and the work of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and DfES in considering unitised qualification frameworks. We will also support the implementation of policy in respect of the registration of qualified teachers in the learning and skills sector.

13 The targets we have set for improvements in learner success and completion rates will contribute to the LSC's corporate targets. The Treasury has announced new Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets covering education and training for (in most cases) 2006, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). These targets cover improvements in the quality of provision and value for money in delivery. The Government expects these targets to be reflected in the LSC's corporate targets, which we expect to publish in the New Year. Reference is therefore made in this strategy to other targets, including floor targets for minimum performance and value for money.

14 The Quality Improvement Strategy applies to all provision funded by the LSC. Responsibility for quality improvement in school sixth forms, however, lies with schools, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and the DfES. We will work closely with LEAs to monitor performance in school sixth forms and develop and extend collaborative improvement initiatives, within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding being agreed with the Local Government Association. Particular aspects of the strategy which we will develop with LEAs include those relating to the

dissemination of good practice, the improvement of patterns of provision and the monitoring of performance.

## **Strategic objectives**

15 The key strategic objectives for the Quality Improvement Strategy are to:

- improve rapidly the quality of the weakest provision and cease to fund provision of unacceptable quality which cannot be improved
- improve the provision that is in the middle band of performance
- recognise and reward the most effective colleges and other providers and help them share their good practice.

## **Measuring improvement**

16 The Quality Improvement Strategy for 2002/03 identified five measures of the success of the strategy. The key measure which will allow us to know whether we have succeeded in raising standards, is learner success rates. Baseline positions have been determined and ambitious but realistic targets for improvement up to 2005/06 are proposed. These targets are intended to strike the optimal balance between challenge and achievability. We will also develop floor targets for learner success rates in order to ensure that colleges and other providers attain a minimum acceptable level.

17 Target improvements in learner success rates have been proposed for colleges and providers of accredited adult and community learning, and target completion rates have been proposed for work-based learning providers. The targets will require us to work closely with providers to help them to achieve a sharp increase in learner achievement and retention.

18 The targets are necessarily high level, aggregate figures. Policy priorities are set out where appropriate in order to:

- emphasise particular aspects of the targets
- avoid 'perverse incentives'.

19 We recognise the inadequacies in the different ways that we currently measure success. We are working with the DfES and the inspectorates to develop better measures for the future. These targets are proposed in the light of available baseline and trend information and the planned impact of the strategy. We recognise the different starting points in different parts of the learning and skills sector. We have, therefore, adopted different targets for colleges, work based learning and for accredited provision by adult and community learning providers. Over time we expect the targets to converge.

20 Updated baseline figures will be provided annually from Summer 2003. Targets will be kept under review in the light of progress and subsequent changes to the corporate targets beyond 2004. Baselines and targets will also change if the definitions of measures change. The definitions of learner success rates and completion rates are set out in Annex 1.

21 Measures for ACL provision, which is not accredited, for school sixth forms and for learndirect, are being developed, in partnership with DfES and the inspectorates.

22 Baselines and targets for improvements in learner success rates are set out in the following tables:

### Colleges

<b>Year</b>	<b>Success Rate (%)</b>
2000/01	59%
2001/02	60%*
Projected 2002/03	61%
Proposed Target 2003/04	62%
Proposed Target 2004/05	63%
Proposed Target 2005/06	65%

\* to be confirmed

Policy steer: the LSC will expect that most of the increase will be achieved in long qualifications.

### Assumptions

- Learner success rates in colleges in 2000/01 *exclude key skills* because of unresolved concerns in respect of the quality of some of the data. Projected and proposed targets for subsequent years also *exclude key skills*
- The baselines and targets will be recalculated to include key skills qualifications, when reliable data becomes available
- Improvements in achievement rates through improved data capture have already been harvested
- There will be no further significant move towards unitised qualifications before 2006/07 or later
- The measures of retention and achievement do not change
- The main impact of improvements to teaching and learning as part of the *Success for All* programme are likely to occur after 2004/05
- The Quality Improvement Strategy 2003/06 will have the effect of raising learner success rates by 1 percentage point on the preceding year in the first and second years of the strategy, and 2 percentage points on the preceding year in the third year.

23 To help achieve the national target, colleges and other providers, will agree improvement targets with the LSC linked to their self assessment and development plans. Floor targets will be developed for different types of college to ensure that all colleges reach an agreed minimum level by 2006.

### **Work-based Learning**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Increase in completion rates* (%)</b>
2001/02	Baseline to be confirmed
Projected 2002/03	1%
Proposed Target 2003/04	4%
Proposed Target 2004/05	4%
Proposed Target 2005/06	4%

\* to be confirmed

Policy steer: framework completions should increase as a proportion of all completions.

### **Assumptions**

- For a variety of historic reasons, there is considerable scope to improve learner completion rates in WBL
- The implementation of the recommendation of the Cassels report will not have a destabilising effect on learner completion rates in Modern Apprenticeships
- We recognise that many learners who do not complete a framework or an NVQ are nevertheless successful in securing settled employment
- The Quality Improvement Strategy 2003/06 will have the effect of raising learner completion rates by 4 percentage points on the preceding year in each of the three years of the strategy.



## Accredited Provision made by Adult and Community Learning Providers

Year	Success Rate (%)
1999/00	49%
2000/01	51%*
2001/02	52%*
Projected 2002/03	53%
Proposed Target 2003/04	55%
Proposed Target 2004/05	57%
Proposed Target 2005/06	59%

\*to be confirmed

### Assumptions

- Improvements in achievement rates through improved data capture have already been harvested
- Improvements in learner success rates through a move towards shorter qualifications have already been harvested
- There will be no significant move towards unitised qualifications before 2006/07 or later
- There is no reason in principle why learner success rates in accredited provision made by ACL providers should be significantly different from those of part-time adult learners in colleges
- The measures of retention and achievement do not change
- The Quality Improvement Strategy 2003/06 will have the effect of raising learner success rates by 2 percentage points on the preceding year in each of the three years of the strategy.

### Strategic Levers

24 The five strategic levers to improve quality and raise standards in the learning and skills sector are:

- the review and development of the policy framework including *Success for All*
- building capacity in providers
- improving patterns of provision
- measuring and monitoring progress
- building capacity in the LSC.

25 The policy framework is in place and was set out in the Council's Quality Improvement Strategy 2002/03. During 2003/06 we will deliver our targets through the following actions:

- 26 We will build capacity in providers through:
- the promotion of excellent and strong provision
  - interventions in inverse proportion to the success of a provider
  - rapid improvements in the quality of the weakest provision
  - improving provision in the middle band of performance
  - the establishment of a consultancy, training and interim management resource which will support the Quality Improvement Strategy
  - the development of providers' capacity for self-assessment and development planning
  - support to providers following inspections
  - the dissemination of good practice
  - action research and dissemination projects
  - a major programme of training and professional development for teachers, trainers, workplace supervisors and support staff, in association with the DfES
  - the adult learning planning process
  - Partnerships for Progression.
- 27 We will improve patterns of provision through:
- the implementation of post-area inspection action plans
  - the introduction of Area Reviews
  - the development of information, advice and guidance provided to learners
  - changes to the patterns of supply.
- 28 We will measure and monitor progress through:
- performance review
  - learner and employer surveys
  - the development of measures of success which allow better comparisons to help colleges and other providers to benchmark and improve success rates
  - inspections.
- 29 We will build capacity in the LSC through:
- the development of the role of the LSC
  - research and evaluation to improve policy and practice
  - improvements to LSC communications.

## **Delivering the Strategy**

30 To achieve our strategic objectives and targets and contribute to the vision and mission of the LSC, we will develop a comprehensive delivery programme in consultation with the DfES, providers, provider representatives, stakeholders and other partners. The broad outlines of the delivery programme are set out below.

### **Building capacity in providers**

#### **Excellent and strong provision**

31 We recognise that we have excellent colleges and other providers in the learning and skills sectors. We want to acknowledge this strength through our funding allocations, through a lighter touch in monitoring progress and through support to excellent providers to share and disseminate their excellent practice. To achieve this, we will:

- ensure that 50% of all FE colleges have a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) by 2004, and establish up to 50 additional CoVEs in other providers
- work with the DfES to identify new Learning and Skills Beacons and ensure that high quality provision across the sector is recognised
- introduce longer funding and planning timescales for effective providers
- consider rewards for excellent colleges and other providers.

#### **Interventions**

32 Our intervention strategy provides that we will intervene in inverse proportion to the success of a provider. We will use all the powers available to the LSC to intervene, including, in the case of the weakest provision: the appointment of Governors to college corporations, restructuring provision and ceasing to fund inadequate provision.

#### **Improvements in the quality of the weakest provision**

33 We are determined to tackle the tail of poor performance. To improve the quality of the weakest provision, we will:

- cease funding unacceptable provision
- establish floor targets for learner success rates for colleges and other providers
- take all necessary steps to intervene in inverse proportion to the success of colleges and other providers
- support providers to develop and implement improvement plans which have clear timescales for measurable improvement
- provide standards funding, where it is appropriate, to help providers make speedy improvements
- monitor rigorously the implementation of improvement plans
- enable providers to learn from the good practice of strong and excellent providers
- allow providers to grow only provision which is acceptable or better (other than in the most exceptional circumstances).

## **Improvement in the middle band of performance**

34 Performance is variable not only between but within colleges and other providers. We want to ensure that learners can expect uniformly high standards and we believe that much of the target increases in learner success and completion rates will be achieved by improving the quality of provision that is in the middle band of performance. To this end we will:

- help colleges and other providers to identify their areas for improvement accurately
- support providers to review, validate and use their management information effectively, to improve the quality of their provision
- work with providers to develop robust development plans
- ensure that providers set challenging but achievable improvement targets, underpinned by robust development plans
- enable providers in the middle band of performance to learn from the good practice of the best
- enable providers to review and develop their arrangements for support for learners, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies
- monitor rigorously the implementation of development plans.

## **Consultants, trainers and interim managers**

35 We will work with partners to establish a resource for consultancy, training and interim management to support the improvement efforts of providers. We will do this by establishing standards for consultants and trainers working in quality improvement in the learning and skills sector, and explore the potential for recruiting and training consultants, trainers and interim managers.

## **Self-assessment and development plans**

36 Self-assessment and development plans containing targets for improvement should be at the heart of providers' efforts to make improvements.

37 To improve arrangements for self-assessment, development planning and target-setting, we will provide up-dated guidance on the arrangements for self-assessment and development plans. We recognise that some providers are less experienced in self-assessment and development planning and we will support them to develop expertise.

38 Provider improvement targets for learner success rates, linked to development plans, will be agreed by the LSC. We will also disseminate examples of good practice in self-assessment and development planning. Feedback from learners is critical. We expect providers to use feedback from their learners to inform self-assessment and development plans. Research will be undertaken to ascertain the contribution of self-assessment and development planning to improvements in quality.

## **Follow up to inspection**

39 Inspections play an invaluable role in helping providers identify their strengths and weaknesses. To help colleges and other providers to address weaknesses identified in inspections, we will:

- ensure that providers receive appropriate support to develop their post-inspection action plans
- monitor rigorously the implementation of post-inspection action plans
- work closely with the inspectorates to help providers to prepare for re-inspection and to disseminate good practice in action planning
- work closely with ALI's Provider Development Unit to help work-based learning providers in scope for re-inspection
- provide training workshops and conferences to share good practice in developing and implementing post-inspection action plans.

## **Dissemination of good practice**

40 Education improvement programmes have demonstrated the importance of identifying and disseminating good practice. There is already a wealth of effective and excellent practice in the learning and skills sector. In order to make best use of this resource, we will:

- identify effective and excellent practice
- strengthen local, regional and national networks to share this practice
- support Learning and Skills Beacons to disseminate and transfer their excellent practice to colleges and other providers
- help CoVEs to disseminate their practice in order to strengthen other vocational provision
- develop a range of dissemination activities to support awareness raising, understanding, adaptation and implementation
- provide funding to enable colleges and other providers to share their effective practice.

## **Action research and demonstration projects**

41 Improvement initiatives in the schools sector and elsewhere have demonstrated the importance of action research and demonstration projects for improving quality. We will introduce a major programme of action research and demonstration projects in order to deliver improvements, develop providers' capacity for continuous improvement and generate case studies of effective practice.

42 The programme will include action research projects at practitioner and institutional level and collaborative projects linking a number of institutions.

## **Training and professional development**

43 Improvements in teaching and training practice are a key component of the *Success for All* programme. We will work closely with the DfES and other partners to develop the skills and expertise of the teachers, trainers and leaders of the future. We will ensure that colleges and other providers prioritise the training and development of teachers and trainers in their development and strategic plans. A survey to establish the qualification base of teachers and trainers in colleges and

other providers will be established. We will work with providers to ensure that teachers, trainers and support staff are suitably qualified.

44 In particular, to secure improvements in the teaching and management of literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), we will work closely with the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit. We will create appropriate programmes of training for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL and development programmes for managers of this provision.

### **Adult Learning Planning Process**

45 We will work closely with local authorities and other partners to improve the quality of the adult learning planning processes by:

- identifying and disseminating effective practice in planning adult learning, with particular reference to improving the planning process
- establishing, by 2006, best practice standards for planning adult learning
- ensuring that those standards cohere with other planning frameworks, minimise bureaucracy and ensure that planning for adult learning is undertaken in a holistic manner.

### **Partnerships for Progression**

46 The Government has set a target that 50% of 18-30 year olds participate in higher education by 2010. To contribute to this target, we will work with the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) to implement the Partnerships for Progression (P4P) initiative and in 2004/05 and 2005/06 target P4P funding to improve learner success rates at Level 3, in areas where there has been historically low participation in higher education.

### **Improving patterns of provision**

#### **Post-area inspection action plans**

47 For many years, colleges and other providers have been operating in a framework that has encouraged competition, rather than collaboration, in the interests of learners. Area inspections have revealed a need for strategic collaboration, for greater collaboration between providers, and for the restructuring of provision, to offer the best possible choice for learners.

48 We will work closely with LEAs and other partners following area-wide inspections to:

- undertake fundamental reviews of provision
- develop and implement action plans, providing rapid access to Standards Fund support, as appropriate
- develop the capacity for area-wide strategic planning
- encourage collaboration between providers to improve the choices available to learners
- change patterns of provision.

## **Area reviews**

49 Area Reviews will be first and foremost a review of provision, not providers, identifying where provision needs improvement, or where new provision needs to be introduced, driven by the needs of learners. They will focus on supporting improvement and collaboration before considering rationalisation or mergers. We will work with DfES and partners to develop a framework for Area Reviews and implement this framework. The LSC will become responsible for funding Learning Partnerships from April 2003. We will consider their role within the framework for Area Reviews.

## **Information, advice and guidance**

50 Appropriate, adequate and impartial information, advice and guidance are vital to empower learners to make the best possible choice of learning programme. They also contribute to learner success and completion rates.

51 We will improve information, advice and guidance by working with the Connexions Service, Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships, providers and other stakeholders to secure the provision of impartial information, advice and guidance for learners and prospective learners. This collaborative approach will help us to address any gaps in provision and promote the adoption of robust quality standards and quality assurance arrangements.

## **Patterns of supply**

52 We will change patterns of supply in order to eliminate provision which cannot meet the standards learners have a right to expect. We will cease to fund provision which has no reasonable prospect of meeting floor targets. We will also expand the provision made by strong and excellent colleges and other providers to meet local needs. Where appropriate, we will support mergers and strategic alliances to create strong providers. New providers, which have the capacity to meet the standards we expect for our learners, will be encouraged.

## **Monitoring and measuring success**

### **Performance review**

53 Performance review is the LSC's key mechanism for monitoring and reporting provider progress, stimulating providers' improvement efforts and guiding our interventions. We will implement the refined performance review process and ensure that it is more robust and rigorous. More Council-funded providers will be brought within the scope of the performance review process. We will continue to develop the capacity of LSC staff so that they have the knowledge and skills required to make judgements about the range of LSC-funded providers.

54 As a contribution towards improving learner success rates we intend to work with our partners to reduce the proportion of learners in colleges and work-based learning providers in serious concerns and increase the proportion categorised as excellent. As other providers are brought within the scope of performance review we will set appropriate targets for each of them. Our targets for performance review for 2003/04 are proposed below:

## Proportion of learners in colleges and WBL providers in category excellent

Year	Colleges	WBL Providers
April 2002	3%	Baseline to be confirmed
Proposed Target December 2004	5%	3% increase *

\* to be confirmed

Policy steer: there should also be an increase in the proportion of learners in the category 'strong performance'.

## Proportion of learners in colleges and WBL providers in category serious concerns

Year	Colleges	Provisional for WBL Providers
April 2002	8%	Baseline to be confirmed
Proposed Target December 2004	5%	3% decrease *

\* to be confirmed

## Learner and employer surveys

55 The views of learners and employers are central to our Quality Improvement Strategy. To ensure that policy and practice are informed by the views of learners and employers, we will publish the annual learner satisfaction survey and use it to guide national policy and strategic developments to improve quality. We will also develop and implement an employer satisfaction survey.

56 The targets for an improvement in learner satisfaction rates in 2003/04 and thereafter will be developed after taking advice from the Learner Satisfaction External Advisory Group.

## Measures of success

57 To recognise the value of learner achievements and enable better comparisons to be made within and between different types of provider, we will:

- work with the DfES, the inspectorates and other key partners to develop more robust measures of learner success
- develop and implement floor targets which specify minimum acceptable levels of provider performance in terms of learner success and completion rates
- work with the DfES to explore ways of measuring value for money across different types of provider and provision and work with key partners to explore ways of comparing distance travelled in different types of provision
- develop ways of recognising and recording learners' achievements in non-accredited adult and community learning and learndirect.



## Inspections

58 The work to build capacity in providers and improve pattern of provision should result in an improvement in inspection grades. We propose the following targets for such improvements for 2003/04.

### Ofsted Inspection Grades (Colleges)

Year	Grades 1 & 2 as a percentage of curriculum grades	Grades 1 & 2 as a percentage of leadership & management grades
2001/02	49%	48%
Proposed Target 2003/04	51%	50%

  

Year	Grades 4 & 5 as a percentage of curriculum grades	Grades 4 & 5 as a percentage of leadership and management
2001/02	11%	20%
Proposed Target 2003/04	9%	18%

### ALI Inspection Grades (WBL)

Year	Grades 1 & 2 as a percentage of curriculum grades	Grades 1 & 2 as a percentage of leadership & management grades
2001/02	19%	13%
Proposed Target 2003/04	23%	17%

  

Year	Grades 4 & 5 as a percentage of curriculum grades	Grades 4 & 5 as a percentage of leadership and management
Actual 2001/02	43%	53%
Proposed Target 2003/04	39%	49%

### ***Assumptions in relation to all inspection grade targets:***

- The sample of providers which have been inspected is representative
- There is no change of inspection policy or methodology within the current inspection round
- The main impact of the Leadership College on inspection grades for leadership and management is likely to occur after 2003/04.

## **Building capacity in the LSC**

### **Developing the role of the LSC**

59 We will work with providers, stakeholders and other partners to specify in detail the quality improvement functions of the LSC. A training and development programme for staff to deliver the LSC's improvement responsibilities will be developed and implemented. We will publish a broader set of information for the purposes of benchmarking and develop new measures of success which will allow better comparisons to be made across different types of provider.

### **Research and evaluation**

60 To ensure that our strategy is based on robust evidence, we will:

- research effective practice both here and abroad
- undertake reviews of existing research evidence, focusing clearly on the implications of this research for policy and practice
- evaluate the effectiveness of our strategic levers
- undertake strategic research to inform the future development of the Quality Improvement Strategy
- undertake longer-term studies.

### **Communications**

61 We will develop more effective communication channels for the dissemination of benchmarking information and effective practice, in consultation with providers, the DfES and other stakeholders.

## **Managing the Process**

62 The successful delivery of the Quality Improvement Strategy is based on a number of general assumptions:

- measures of learner success do not change
- the main impact of improvements to teaching and learning as part of the *Success for All* programme are likely to occur after 2004/05
- the main impact of the Leadership College on inspection grades for leadership and management is likely to occur after 2003/04
- the sample of providers which have been inspected is representative
- there is no change of inspection policy or methodology within the current inspection round.

If these assumptions prove not to be correct, we will need to review and revise the strategy. We need to ensure that adequate resources to deliver the strategy are available.

## Review and evaluation

63 We will review and evaluate the implementation of our strategy through research studies, seminars involving providers, the inspectorates, the DfES and other stakeholders and partners and external evaluation of the effectiveness of our strategic levers.

64 We will monitor progress towards our improvement targets:

- at provider level through performance review and the monitoring of performance against provider floor and improvement targets
- at local level through performance review and post-area inspection action plans
- at national level through the Individual Learner Record (ILR), the learner satisfaction survey, performance reviews and inspection grades.

65 We will update the strategy annually, in the light of progress towards targets and feedback from our research studies, seminars and external evaluations.

## Consultation

66 We are indebted to providers, inspectors, the DfES, and other stakeholders and partners who participated in 8 expert seminars during September/October 2002, and who will be contributing to a further 8 seminars to plan implementation of the Quality Improvement Strategy in November/December 2002.

67A list of the organisations that have contributed to the expert seminars is set out at annex 2.

68 The Quality Improvement Strategy is being circulated for comment in draft form. A feedback form is attached for comments (Annex 3). Completed forms from local colleges and other providers, or local organisations, should be returned to the Executive Director of the local LSC (details available at [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)) before Monday 2 December. 69 Feedback forms completed by other providers or organisations should be returned to Paul Martinez, Policy and Strategy Development Manager, Quality and Standards Directorate, The Learning and Skills Council, 101 Lockhurst Lane, Coventry CV6 5SF (email to: [paul.martinez@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.martinez@lsc.gov.uk); fax: 024 76 703334) on or before Monday 2 December.

## Annex 1

### Definitions and Technical Information

- 1 Definitions of learner success and completion rates are familiar to colleges and other providers, the inspectorates, local LSCs and the DfES and are those for which we already have the data.
- 2 For colleges and accredited ACL provision, learner success rates are the qualifications gained by the expected end date divided by the qualifications commenced (but excluding learners who drop out before the first census date, and excluding internal transfers). For FE colleges, the contribution retention and achievement rates make towards the success rate is shown in the benchmarking data published by the LSC.
- 3 Accredited ACL provision is the accredited provision made by ACL providers (former 'external institutions' of the FEFC). It does not include FE provision delivered by higher education institutions.
- 4 There is a strong policy steer that most of the increase in learner success rates in colleges and accredited ACL provision is to occur in long qualifications. Long qualifications are those of 24 or more weeks' duration. Short qualifications are those of less than 24 weeks duration. Most short qualifications are less than 12 weeks duration.
- 5 Key skills qualifications are excluded from the calculation of learner success rates because of concerns about the quality of data. When valid data becomes available, baselines and targets will be recalculated to include key skills.
- 6 The measure of learner success for WBL providers will be a single measure: completion rates. Completion rates for WBL are the number of learners who achieve a framework or a NVQ divided by the number of learners who leave their programme of learning in a given period.
- 7 There is a strong policy steer that the framework completions should increase as a proportion of completions.
- 8 Floor targets are being developed within the framework of the DfES *Success for All* programme. They will set minimum performance targets for different types of provider.
- 9 Guidance will be developed to define the 'weakest provision' and providers in the 'middle band of performance'. The definitions are likely to refer to a combination of the relative performance of a provider in terms of learner success or completion rates, inspection grades and performance review category.
- 10 Measures for ACL provision, that is not accredited, for school sixth forms and for learndirect are being developed, but will not be available for 2003-04.
- 11 We recognise that some learners in colleges, work based learning and other providers achieve their employment goals without achieving their qualification aim. This issue is being addressed in the work being undertaken by the LSC with

the DfES, inspectorates and other stakeholders to develop more robust measures of learner success.

## **Annex 2**

### **Participation in Expert Seminars**

The following organisations and individuals contributed to the expert seminars to analyse needs and develop the Quality Improvement Strategy for 2003-06:

Association for College Managers  
Adult Learning Inspectorate  
Association of Learning Providers  
Association of Colleges  
Catholic Education Service  
Church of England  
Croydon Continuing Education and Training Services  
Community Service Volunteers  
University of Derby  
Department for Education and Skills  
Essex County Council Adult Education Service  
Geoff Petty (consultant)  
The Guidance Council  
HOLEX  
Inclusion  
Jackie Sadler (consultant)  
JT Ltd  
Kent Adult Education Service  
Learning and Skills Development Agency  
Luton Sixth Form College  
National Association of Managers of Student Services  
NATFHE  
NIACE  
Secondary Heads' Association  
Solihull Sixth Form College



# FEEDBACK FORM

Learning+Skills Council

## Quality Improvement Strategy 2003-06

Quality and Standards Directorate  
101 Lockhurst Lane  
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Completed forms from local colleges and other providers, or local organisations, need to be returned to the Executive Director of your local LSC (see [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk) for details) *before* 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2002.

Completed forms from other providers or organisations should be returned to Paul Martinez, either at the above address, or by email ([paul.martinez@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.martinez@lsc.gov.uk)) or fax (024 76 703334) *on or before* 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2002.

Name *(please print)*

Role title

Organisation

Address

Email

Is your response confidential?

Yes

Please tick **ONE** of the following boxes that best describes you as a respondent

FE College

Other Public Sector Provider

Sixth form college

Employer

Specialist college	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ufi hub	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private Training Provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	NTO/Sector Skills Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voluntary Sector Provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Education Authority – Adult and Community Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Q.1 Targets for Improvements in learner success and completion rates (pages 7-9)**

Do you think that the targets are not challenging enough, appropriately challenging or too challenging?  
(Please tick the option with which you agree)

Not challenging enough  Appropriately challenging  Too challenging

**Comments:**

**Q. 2 There are five main strategic levers to improve quality and raise standards in the learning and skills sector (page 9)**

- The review and development of the policy framework including *Success for All*
- Building capacity in providers
- Improving patterns of provision
- Measuring and monitoring progress
- Building capacity in the LSC

**Do you agree that these are the 5 main strategic levers?**

(Please tick the option with which you agree)

Yes  No

**Comments:**



**Q. 3 Building capacity in providers (page 11)**

We have identified twelve delivery mechanisms to build capacity in providers:

- Promotion of excellent and strong provision
- Interventions in direct proportion to a provider's weakness
- Rapid improvements in the quality of the weakest provision
- Improvements in the middle band of performance
- Creation of a consultancy, training and interim management resource
- Self-assessment and development plans
- Follow up to inspection
- Dissemination of good practice
- Action research and demonstration projects
- Training and professional development
- Development of the adult learning planning process
- Partnership for Progression

Do you agree that these are the most effective delivery mechanisms to build capacity in providers?  
(Please tick the option with which you agree)

Yes  No

**Comments:**

**Q. 4 Changing patterns of provision (page 14)**

We have identified four ways to improve patterns of provision.

- Post-Area Inspection action plans
- The introduction of Area Reviews
- Improvements in information, advice and guidance
- Changes to patterns of supply

Do you agree that these are the main ways to improve patterns of provision?  
(Please tick the option with which you agree)

Yes  No

**Comments:**

**Q. 5 Monitoring and measuring success (page 15)**

We have identified four main ways of monitoring and measuring success:

- Performance review
- Learner and employer surveys
- New measures of success
- Inspections

Do you agree that these are the most effective ways of monitoring and measuring success? (Please tick the option with which you agree)

Yes  No

**Comments:**

**Q.6 Building capacity in the LSC (page 18)**

We have identified three delivery mechanisms to build capacity in the LSC:

- Development of the role of the LSC
- Research and evaluation
- LSC Communications

Do you agree that these are the most effective delivery mechanisms to build capacity in the LSC? (Please tick the option with which you agree)

Yes  No

**Comments:**