

SUCCESS FOR ALL

Reforming Further Education and Training

Discussion Document – June 2002

CONTENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Foreword by the Secretary of State | 2–3 |
| 2. Introduction | 4–7 |
| 3. Our strategy for reform | 8–24 |
| 4. Next steps | 25–28 |

FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

In the 21st century, knowledge and skills will be the key to our success. The Government's goal is a learning society in which everyone is well educated and able to learn throughout their lives. Our economic prosperity and social cohesion depend on achieving that goal. We have already begun to make great strides but there is still a lot more to do.

Further education and training plays a pivotal role in achieving the goal of a learning society. The key providers are further education and sixth form colleges, schools with sixth forms, local authority adult education institutions and private and voluntary sector providers – a diverse learning and skills sector providing a diverse range of opportunities for 6 million learners, thousands of businesses and every community in the country.

There is already excellent provision in the sector. We have some world class colleges and other providers which we should celebrate and build on. But there is also weak provision which needs to be improved and gaps in provision which must be filled.

The Government is committed to the reform of all our public services. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the Inspectorates and other key national partners have been working closely with the Department to develop a strategy to reform further education to build success for all our learners, our communities and the economy.

Through this strategy, we want to see investment targeted to ensure that all learners attain the highest standards. We want to see teaching and training which inspires, excites and enriches learners from all parts of society, provides the skills for a modern economy and contributes to the cohesion and regeneration of local communities. And we want to see all staff in the sector with a more attractive career structure, increased rewards for their efforts, and with support for continuing professional training and development.



2. INTRODUCTION

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING – THE CONTEXT

1. Further education and training delivers an incredibly broad range of learning to very large numbers of people through a diverse range of providers. It includes:
 - ▣ academic and vocational learning for 16-19 year olds;
 - ▣ vocational education and training for adults seeking employment;
 - ▣ workforce development for employers;
 - ▣ second chance general education for adults; and
 - ▣ learning for leisure and personal development.
2. In England there are some 6 million learners in these types of education and training funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), with public funding of around £7 billion. Many of these learners are disadvantaged. Colleges for example draw 27% of their students from the 15% most disadvantaged electoral wards.
3. This learning is delivered by a range of some 4000 providers that is rich in its diversity. It includes:
 - ▣ general further education colleges;
 - ▣ some higher education institutions providing further education;
 - ▣ sixth form colleges;
 - ▣ specialist colleges;
 - ▣ school sixth forms;
 - ▣ local authority adult education institutions; and
 - ▣ private and voluntary sector providers.

These providers also deliver in a range of settings including classroom-based provision; e-learning through **learnirect** centres; and training in the workplace.

4. Within this broader learning and skills sector there are around 400 further education (FE) sector colleges which form the largest element, attracting around 60% of LSC funding. In 1993 the then Government took these colleges out of local authority control and delegated substantial autonomy to colleges. It did not however establish a sufficiently clear framework for accountability or standards, but introduced a harsh national funding regime which forced colleges to expand while cutting unit costs. The other providers of learning and skills were subject to quite separate planning and funding arrangements, usually with little investment in building their capacity.
5. This approach inevitably led to a number of problems, many of which are still apparent today. These include:
 - ▣ a culture of decision-making within many colleges and other providers, which has – understandably – been reactive to funding opportunities rather than based on a clear analysis of the organisation’s distinctive mission and strengths;
 - ▣ widely varying quality, with a number of truly excellent providers, and excellent departments within colleges, co-existing with some poor and much mediocre provision. There has been insufficient emphasis on standards, success rates, and the development of excellence. Too much management time has been spent chasing and accounting for funding and not enough on raising standards and relevance of teaching and learning;
 - ▣ patterns of provision across local areas, based on a history of competition and opportunistic provider expansion. There has been little strategic planning for the coherent longer-term development of the supply side to provide the type and quality of provision local learners and employers want;
 - ▣ within the sector, a workforce whose skills and career development has often been neglected. There have been unhealthy levels of casualisation, and insufficient emphasis on improving professional skills, on updating subject or occupational knowledge, and on developing leadership skills for the future; and
 - ▣ a legacy of under-investment in the capital infrastructure, with too much learning taking place in unattractive and inefficient buildings. There has also been a lack of available capital to invest in updating vocational training facilities to match changing industry expectations and technological change.

6. But despite these problems there are important strengths inherent in the sector. These include:
 - ▣ the distinctive commitment amongst colleges and many other learning and skills sector providers and their staff to social inclusion, widening participation, and opening up access to learning to disadvantaged people;
 - ▣ the important role many institutions and providers play in their localities, with longstanding and strong relationships with partners and strong credibility with local people, often based on strong learner support and customer service arrangements, for example with local employers; and
 - ▣ the scale and richness of innovation and good practice in learning delivery, often involving inspirational creativity by front-line staff.
7. In the last Parliament some important steps were taken to address the problems identified. These include:
 - ▣ additional targeted investment in capital, standards and pay, particularly in colleges;
 - ▣ introducing a new national framework for raising standards with independent inspection against a Common Inspection Framework across all providers; and
 - ▣ bringing together responsibility for planning, funding and quality assurance for all publicly-funded learning and skills provision within the LSC.
8. A start has been made. But for this Parliament, the Government believes that it is essential to accelerate the pace of reform to raise standards in the learning and skills sector so that success is achievable for all learners, regardless of where they live or with which publicly-funded provider they are enrolled. This is because further education and training is absolutely central to the Government's education and skills priorities. In particular these are:
 - ▣ achieving excellence for young people through a new 14-19 phase;
 - ▣ increasing progression into higher education and widening access;
 - ▣ helping people improve their basic skills and widening participation for adults; and
 - ▣ helping employers develop their workforces to improve productivity.

9. It is now time to develop and implement a comprehensive reform strategy for further education and training. This must cover not only colleges but also the full range of providers in the learning and skills sector. It must recognise that diversity is a strength of the current arrangements, and not assume that one approach fits all circumstances. It must systematically tackle the legacy of problems identified above, while building on existing strengths.
10. We are ambitious in our aims for the reform agenda. We will know we have succeeded when:

- there is widespread public acclaim for further education and training, and the achievements of learners;
- the sector compares well when benchmarked against world class provision;
- national level 2 and level 3 targets, and basic skills targets are achieved;
- employers are confident that their local colleges and other providers meet their needs;
- the workforce is equipped with higher level skills and skill shortages are significantly reduced;
- parents are confident that their 14-19 year olds have access to a range of excellent academic and vocational courses;
- learners are highly satisfied with the teaching and learning they receive; and
- adults, including those who are disadvantaged, receive the educational help and support they need.

11. The next chapter sets out our proposals for a strategy for success for all. We want views from colleges, schools, work-based and community providers, employers and other partners on these proposals, before finalising the strategy. We will work closely with the LSC, the Inspectorates and our other key partners in making such a strategy work.

3. OUR STRATEGY FOR REFORM

12. Our strategy will raise standards and transform local provision so that providers are clear about and focus on their strengths and develop their education and training missions accordingly. It will build on excellence through developing new approaches to teaching and learning, supported by professional development of the workforce. We will recognise and reward top-performers and take rapid robust action where providers are failing their learners. In summary, our strategy will consist of the following key goals:



GOAL 1 – MEETING NEEDS, IMPROVING CHOICE

13. There is no single 'blueprint' for the organisation of learning and skills provision. Local decisions must be influenced by quality, geography, individual and employer demand and the pattern of provision. But we need to ensure that learning provided in an area must meet **national and local skill needs**. It must be responsive to local employers and communities. And it must provide young people and adults, whatever their background, with the opportunities they need for progression to further and higher education and for employment and personal development. This will require providers being clear about their strengths, and focusing on these. It will

also require improved local strategic planning and tough decisions about the organisation of provision. And it will mean investment to support improvements to achieve a high-quality infrastructure.

DEVELOPING CLEAR EDUCATION AND TRAINING MISSIONS

14. We want every college and provider **to be clear about its own educational and training mission and focus on its particular strengths**. This is not about imposing arbitrary or unnecessary restrictions on what is offered where that is of good quality and meets local needs. In the past there have been incentives to pursue every new initiative in order to increase income and expand, which has meant some providers trying to do too many things. In the future we want colleges and other providers to concentrate on what they do best. This will mean taking hard decisions about whether it is right to continue with everything that they do now, in discussion with the LSC, using inspection grades awarded by OFSTED and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) as an important guide. This may mean that some providers discontinue offering some provision where other providers can run it better elsewhere in their locality. It may also mean specialising in certain areas or focusing on particular client groups. It will also mean collaborating in new ways with other providers.
15. But we also recognise that whatever changes may take place, the LSC must ensure that there is **sufficient breadth of provision** to meet the needs of each and every one of their learners, including the needs of disadvantaged people. Furthermore, where there are gaps in high-quality provision needed to deliver local requirements, the LSC will seek new providers and provide support, as appropriate, to encourage providers from the voluntary and community sector and from smaller specialist organisations as well as colleges.
16. We will work with the LSC, the Inspectorates and other partners to develop guidance for colleges and other providers on developing their mission. We will look to college governing bodies to review their college missions as part of the strategic planning process for 2003/04 onwards, in discussion with the LSC, leading to much greater clarity about long-term direction. We will also look to other providers to carry out similar exercises, again in consultation with the LSC.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

17. Since April 2001, the LSC, with its 47 local arms, has been responsible for co-ordinating, promoting, funding and planning provision in the learning and skills sector. It provides the framework to review on a consistent basis how well the pattern of provision meets the local and regional needs of individuals, communities and employers. It also has the levers for raising the quality of provision and developing a responsive, flexible supply side which offers value for money. And it has powers to propose new institutions and reorganise local provision.
18. We want **the LSC to work with schools, colleges and other providers including higher education, to ensure that learning and skills provision is well planned.** In some areas, there has been good collaborative working, for example, through learning partnerships, but unhelpful competition and institutional self-interest still persists and there are some serious gaps in provision. In many areas, local LSCs are already working with partners to assess the effectiveness and breadth of education and training and have introduced changes to the pattern of provision and enhance standards. And we need this to happen in every area. The rationale for deciding what to fund must be clear. Each local LSC is responsible for getting the balance right in their area, ensuring that a wide range of excellent provision is available, covering different types of learning in an appropriate diversity of institutions and settings.
19. To support this process each local LSC will carry out an **area review** of all provision, building on the experience of follow-up to 16–19 area inspections where they have taken place. Area reviews will identify where provision needs improvement or new provision needs to be introduced. This will involve working with colleges, and providers and customers to produce a long-term vision for the development of the local network. To ensure a consistent and coherent approach across the country, the LSC at national level will develop a **new planning framework for area reviews**, building on existing good practice, and consult on this with all key partners later this year. Area reviews would in particular address the availability of a wide choice of 14–19 opportunities, the supply of provision to meet employer skill needs, basic skills needs and the challenge of improving progression to higher education.

MEETING SKILL NEEDS

20. A key part of this new planning framework must be planning for skills. The perceived mismatch between the publicly funded education and training available and the needs of employers and the workforce has provided a focus of concern for many years. Each local LSC has produced a medium-term skills strategy, reflecting local and regional needs, in consultation with local employers and Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Each **LSC has also produced a learning strategy showing how its analysis of skill needs will influence its plans to develop the education and training infrastructure**, including the provision of Modern Apprenticeships.
21. This planning framework will only be effective if colleges and other providers are delivering high-quality learning which is aligned to labour market needs. The new **Sector Skills Councils** will have a critical role, working with the LSC, in developing regional networks of providers which are committed to meeting the needs of their sectors and building longer-term relationships with these providers. They will also need to build employer demand for training and engage employers to work with these providers to improve the quality and delivery of learning. And we are already encouraging and rewarding the development of vocational specialism through the development and expansion of **Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)** – 16 pathfinder CoVEs in FE colleges started in September 2001 with a further 69 coming on stream this Spring and Summer. The first CoVEs outside the FE sector have also just been announced. The Government and the LSC have made available some £160m to enable half the colleges in this country to have a CoVE by 2004 and ensure that a range of work-based learning providers are also involved. Through their CoVEs, learning and skills providers must play to their strengths, provide specialist training of excellence, strengthen further their links with employers and help the sector respond more rapidly to employers' training needs.
22. But this good practice needs to be spread so that all providers deliver excellent learning across a wide range of vocational areas to meet the training needs of employers. This means identifying and establishing good practice, through building the capacity of providers, and working to improve employer engagement. The LSC will work with its key partners, including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Inspectorates, the Association of Colleges (AOC), the Association of Learning Providers (ALP), and Ufi/**learn**direct, to look at the current barriers (including funding) and disincentives to employer engagement and how these can be

overcome. We will also promote industrial secondments for teachers and trainers to enable them to find out at first hand how they can tailor learning programmes to meet the needs of business. And we will consider ways of encouraging more people from industry to take up part-time teaching and training.

23. We also recognise the importance of ensuring the funding and qualifications system meets employer needs. Employers' have expressed concerns that the current system is inflexible and fails to meet their needs. We have started to address these concerns by removing the former schedule 2 /non-schedule 2 divide to allow a more flexible and modular approach to funding learning. We are **reforming the qualification system** to ensure that existing qualifications are in line with current industry specifications. We will work with the LSC and the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) to review the barriers affecting the take-up of qualifications, **exploring the opportunities for opening up unit achievement, the feasibility of a credit based approach and the funding implications**. We will also need to develop assessment methodologies that are appropriate to the qualification and learning styles.

EXCELLENCE FOR 14–19 YEAR OLDS

24. Delivering improvements in learning and skills for 14–19 year olds is a particular priority to enable them to secure a solid foundation and progress through clear ladders of opportunity. **Area inspection results** are giving us, for the first time, a clear overview of the quality of provision for 16–19 year olds in the most deprived parts of the country and we will be extending these more widely to other areas of the country. There are also proposals in the Education Bill to extend these inspections to a 14–19 age range. In many areas, local partners have used their area inspection report as a springboard for launching a fundamental review of their provision for young people in order to widen choice and build excellence.
25. **Collaborative working** is helping to provide new vocational opportunities at Key Stage 4, support the Government's 14–19 agenda, improve the content and outcomes of the new generation of Modern Apprenticeships, support progression into higher education and extend the range of choice available to young people. **The LSC will review and bring forward proposals to change any aspects of the funding regime which deter collaboration.**

26. Some area inspections have **pointed up the need for structural changes in the way learning for 16–19 year olds is organised and the creation of distinct provision** (e.g. free-standing sixth form colleges, school sixth forms or sixth form centres in further education colleges). Examples of new arrangements for provision of 16–19 learning already under way include the development of sixth form centres in Greenwich, Knowsley, Islington and Newcastle, a new sixth form college, Brooke House in Hackney, which will open later this year and a further proposal for a new sixth form college in Sheffield. The Government is looking to local partners, the LSC and local education authorities to be rigorous in reviewing and assessing their 16–19 provision. Where fundamental change is required, they will be expected to bring forward radical proposals for the reorganisation of learning for 16–19 year olds to improve the standards of provision available.

IMPROVING BASIC SKILLS

27. The learning and skills sector also has **a vital role to play in delivering Basic Skills provision**. Through *Skills for Life* we have plans in place to improve adult literacy, language and numeracy skills in their areas, such that the Government can meet its manifesto commitment to improve the basic skills of 750,000 adults by 2004. Ensuring that there is sufficient high quality provision for basic skills in their local learning and skills provider networks is an essential objective within strategies for transforming local delivery, across provision for young people, adults and employers.

DEVELOPING CLOSER LINKS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

28. Over 10% of higher education is provided in **colleges which have an important role in making higher education accessible**, particularly to those who have not traditionally seen a university education as appropriate for them. And increasingly, colleges and higher education institutions are developing strong collaborative partnerships to support widened participation and increase progression. **Work-based learning providers, the voluntary and community sector and learndirect centres also have a key role to play in helping to widen participation and raise attainment levels** among young people, to encourage progression to higher education. There are also employers that provide excellent examples where their best apprentices progress to management positions through work-based higher education. *Excellence Challenge*, launched last September, has also been effective in helping schools, colleges and universities to work together to enable and encourage more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to go on to higher education.

29. We know however that there are areas of the country where few people progress into higher education, and areas where there is a lack of local higher education provision accessible to local people. The Government has asked for joint advice from the LSC and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on:
- ▣ how the two Councils might work together to achieve integrated policy development, planning and delivery to support progression and widen participation;
 - ▣ the barriers that exist to closer partnership working and mixed economy models; and
 - ▣ the lessons learnt from current structural and organisational models that bridge traditional further education/higher education boundaries.
30. The Government **will look to HEFCE and the LSC to develop a joint programme of work to improve progression of learners from the learning and skills sector into higher education** to support the Government's aim that 50% of those aged 18–30 benefit from higher education by 2010. This should also include work between learning and skills providers and higher education institutions to improve the supply of places and to tackle organisational and other barriers which may stand in the way of learners progressing to higher education.

IMPROVING LEARNING FACILITIES

31. The Government wants to ensure that learning takes place in up-to-date, well-equipped premises with good quality facilities and equipment. We recognise, however, that a significant number of colleges have accommodation that is in poor condition, costly to maintain, and in need of refurbishment and replacement. We also want to ensure that we make better use of the existing further education estate and assets. The LSC will work with colleges to maximise the potential of their assets to provide high-quality learning environments.
32. We have already started a major capital investment programme. Annual investment in the colleges infrastructure, for example, will increase from £140m to £227m (over 60%) over the period 2001–02 to 2003–04. College contributions, through realisation of assets or taking commercial loans, will more than double these investment figures. Over time, this investment will ensure that our colleges have first-rate buildings and world-class facilities. We have also made a start on rebuilding the capital stock for adult and community learning and are introducing capital grants for this sector for the first time.

33. The Government recognises the need for sustained improvement in vocational training facilities in the learning and skills sector, building on the improvements already being made through CoVEs. Local LSCs need to take a strategic perspective in planning the longer-term development of capital assets both in local areas and where appropriate on a regional basis. In some vocational areas, there will be a compelling case for supporting recognised national centres of excellence. The Government also recognises that the need to provide increased opportunities for 14–16 year olds outside of school environments will have capital implications for some colleges. These will need to be considered on a case by case basis as the 14–19 strategy develops in local areas.

Discussion issue 1: Do you agree with our proposals for meeting needs and improving choice?

- ❑ What further support is needed to enable colleges and other providers to review and develop their educational and training missions?
- ❑ What factors should colleges and other providers take into account in focussing on what they do best?
- ❑ Do you support the proposal that the LSC should develop a new planning framework for area reviews, and how can this best support the 14–19 agenda, basic skills provision and meeting skills needs?
- ❑ Do you agree with our proposals for improving the links between employers and providers. What further action should we take to ensure that employer and skill needs are met?

GOAL 2 – PUTTING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO

QUALITY OF TEACHING AND TRAINING

34. The right of every learner to expect and receive teaching of excellence lies at the heart of the rationale for our strategy. Experience in schools has shown us that many of the staff who implemented national strategies for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy, were able to improve their teaching significantly by identifying, sharing and implementing good practice. The learning and skills sector is diverse and particular pedagogic practices need to be developed for specific

learners, developing specific skills in specific settings. There is much good practice in teaching and training across the sector. **We must identify those teaching methods which have proved effective in the learning and skills sector, disseminate information about these, provide appropriate training for teachers and trainers, and encourage their use.** We will work with experts and practitioners to identify and disseminate excellence in the classroom, the workshop and the workplace.

35. We believe that the essential criteria for judging excellence in teaching and learning should be the same for all providers within the learning and skills sector. We have made a good start with the successful launch of the Common Inspection Framework, which is also at the heart of the self assessment regime for providers. We want **to review and develop new 'Teaching and Learning Frameworks'** for major curriculum areas. This work will include consideration of all aspects of teaching and learning including the delivery methods, the assessment methods, the syllabus content, and teaching techniques.
36. In developing these frameworks, we will seek to develop new approaches which set out what needs to be done if excellence in teaching and learning is to be achieved in all areas. We will engage employers in this process to ensure the curriculum meets their needs. We propose to begin by reviewing curriculum areas which are a significant part of the sector and where much provision has been judged as unsatisfactory by inspectors, such as science, maths, construction, hospitality/leisure and care and land-based provision. We will also want to look at the learning needs for emerging industries such as biotechnology and environmental management. But we have not yet decided precisely which curriculum areas we will tackle first and would welcome your views on this. We will also take account of best practice in the cross-curriculum areas, which underpin specific subjects or sectors.
37. To support the implementation of these new frameworks, we will devise and implement **a major programme of training and professional development for teachers and trainers, including workplace supervisors, and for support staff.** We will also aim to provide guidance and ongoing support for teachers and trainers and disseminate new **kite-marked learning materials** drawing on the best existing material as well as commissioning new material where that is required.

USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

38. ICT and e-learning have a vital role to play in developing new forms of learning which are stimulating and accessible for teachers and learners alike. We will maintain our drive to support the development of an accessible infrastructure that makes ICT universally available to learners and integral to learning processes. Building on the recommendations of the Department's e-learning Task Force and the report of the LSC's Distributed and E Learning Group, and working with the LSC, Ufi/**learndirect** and other key partners, we will **develop a coherent national e-learning strategy** that is focused on meeting the needs of learners and teachers. The substantial investments made in setting up Ufi and in developing the National Learning Network are beginning to pay off in terms of transforming the way individuals learn. Ufi/**learndirect** is providing significant numbers of learners and employers with more flexible and interactive learning opportunities. Within colleges, ICT has led to more creative learning with staff increasingly using e-learning to enhance the curriculum and to improve the quality of teaching. Colleges that have worked in active collaboration with partners to deliver **learndirect** have also achieved demonstrable success in engaging small and medium sized employers (SMEs) and large employers in learning. It is our intention that ICT will be available to all learners to enable them to develop new skills and access a wider range of learning opportunities. This will be achieved, in part, by helping staff to develop the competences, skills, and knowledge needed to use technology to manage, deliver and support learning.
39. Working together, and in consultation with other key partners, Ufi/**learndirect** and the LSC will take the lead in promoting and providing e-learning solutions across the learning and skills sector and for workforce development. We have seen tangible benefits in the use of ICT in colleges and we need now to consider how a coherent e-learning strategy can best be extended across all learning. We recognise the need to invest in good e-learning materials to enable teachers and trainers to facilitate e-learning and the need for learners to access more areas of the curriculum online. The e-learning strategy will help to stimulate the development and acceptance of new ways of learning, provide a coherent approach to the delivery of content online, embrace the role of ICT in delivering basic skills, and help make e-learning an option for all learners.

Discussion issue 2: Do you agree with our proposals for achieving excellence in teaching and learning?

- Do you agree that we should develop new teaching and learning frameworks for major curriculum areas? What should these include – eg teaching and assessment methods, syllabus content? How should we develop them?
- What should be the priority areas for these frameworks and what should be the criteria for choosing these?
- What more should we do to extend the use of e-learning and ICT to maximise the potential of e-learning and make it an option for all learners?

GOAL 3 – DEVELOPING THE TEACHERS AND LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

40. Excellent teachers and trainers provide the imagination, innovation and commitment that are essential requirements in our drive to raise standards. **A key goal of our strategy is therefore to develop the expertise, skills and rewards for effective teachers and trainers.** Our aim should be a fully qualified workforce with up-to-date knowledge and skills in a sector with world class leadership and management

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

41. Until recently, there has been an insufficient focus on the qualifications and skills of teachers and trainers in colleges and work-based learning providers. Of those full-time further education teachers for whom information is available, around 60% have a full or partial teaching qualification (the figure for part-time teachers is 43%). We do not have up-to-date information on the proportion of private and voluntary sector providers with relevant qualifications but it is likely to be no higher.
42. We have begun to address this. The Learning and Skills Standards Fund has already provided substantial new resources to enable colleges and other providers to invest in staff skills and qualifications. We have introduced a requirement for all new FE teachers to be professionally qualified, and have developed new professional

standards for work-based learning trainers which in due course will become a contractual requirement of the LSC on their providers. The Education Bill currently before Parliament contains new provisions which would allow the requirements for new teachers in further education to be qualified to be extended to all teachers in due course.

43. We will maintain the drive to raise the number of appropriately qualified teachers and trainers in the sector and ensure that staff have the opportunity to update their subject expertise. Priority will be given to the initial training and continuing professional development of staff. We will also continue to operate the FE Teacher Training Bursaries programme.
44. The Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) and Employment National Training Organisation (ENTO) have both played a major role in developing, on behalf of the sector the standards for teachers and trainers. The Government has challenged all employers to develop a more strategic and coherent approach to skill needs in their sector and to set up new Sector Skills Councils that will take forward and improve the work of the former National Training Organisations. Colleges and other providers, as employers within the learning and skills sector, need to respond to this challenge to develop a Sector Skills Council that will assess the priorities for the sector and develop innovative solutions.

LEADERSHIP

45. Good teachers and trainers flourish where there is strong and visionary leadership and they deserve sound and supportive management. **We need to support our existing leaders and also encourage future leaders to develop the skills to take on this critical task.** Working with a range of national partners, we are taking forward the important work of providing staff in the sector with the professional support they have asked for. Earlier this year, we consulted on proposals for **a new national leadership college** for the learning and skills and higher education sectors. We received overwhelming support. The national college will be opened in 2003.
46. The college will provide a centre of excellence for all managers and leaders across the learning and skills and higher education sectors. We will put in place a comprehensive induction programme for new FE college Principals. There will be a leadership programme for existing senior managers in FE colleges and Higher Education Institutions. Leadership programmes will also be developed for managers

in providers of work-based and adult and community learning. We are also looking further ahead, to consider how to identify and develop future leaders and managers early on in their careers. It is vital that colleges and providers carry out effective succession planning to identify their future leaders and senior managers, who must then be able to acquire the professional qualifications and continuing development they need. Such individuals would receive management training, possibly through a fast-track programme at the new leadership college.

47. Increasing the diversity of leaders and managers within the sector is also critical. For example, most colleges have no senior black staff. The Commission for Black Staff in Further Education will publish its final report in the summer and this will help the Department, the LSC, colleges and others to assess how best they can promote equal opportunities and reduce racial discrimination.

REWARDING STAFF

48. We are committed to ensuring better rewards for high-performing staff in FE colleges. The FE sector has already been able to make a start on **reforming and improving pay** arrangements. The Teaching Pay Initiative (TPI) allows colleges to recognise and reward high quality teaching with increased pay and more attractive career structures in FE. Over £300 million is already available in the three years to 2003–4 to support TPI, including an additional £10 million for general FE colleges in 2002–3 specifically to accelerate the modernising pay elements of TPI.
49. The sector has also identified significant recruitment and retention problems in some subject areas. Therefore, from September, additional financial support will be available via the Repayment of Teacher Loans and the Golden Hello initiatives to help colleges to recruit and retain teachers new to the profession in areas where there are recognised staff shortages, for example, in engineering, construction and ICT.

Discussion issue 3: Do you agree with our proposals for developing the teachers and leaders of the future?

- Q How should we develop a better qualified workforce in the sector?**
- Q What else needs to be done to ensure that teachers, trainers, support staff and the leaders and managers of the sector can be creative, professional and successful?**

GOAL 4 – DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY AND SUCCESS

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

50. The Government inherited a weak accountability framework for the learning and skills sector, with different patterns of inspection in different parts of the sector and few, if any, levers for bringing about change when improvement was needed. The result was variation in performance. Excellent colleges, with good governance and imaginative leadership, had the space to thrive. Too many colleges were allowed to coast and poor colleges were allowed to continue unchecked for too long. The contribution of school sixth forms was given less attention than other parts of schools and the role of private and voluntary sector providers was neglected.
51. We have now established a stronger and clearer accountability framework for the learning and skills sector based on the following responsibilities:
- ▣ The primary responsibility for improving the quality of provision rests with the provider. Providers are expected to establish and sustain a culture of continuous improvement, based on self-assessment and development planning;
 - ▣ The LSC's responsibility is to define its quality and success measures, to be relentless in demanding that all learners are in high-quality provision and that learners and employers are satisfied with the learning they receive and to intervene in inverse proportion to success; and
 - ▣ OFSTED and the ALI provide rigorous independent inspection against a Common Inspection Framework for all providers in the learning and skills sector.
52. Under this framework, good colleges and other providers will be able to grow and develop so that the excellence of what they offer can benefit more learners. But the Government is determined that poor quality and under-performance should be tackled promptly and decisively.

SUCCESS MEASURES AND TARGETS

53. Providers' self-assessment/development plans need to set out clearly their mission, their quality improvement targets, and how they will improve their responsiveness to local employers and skill needs, and the needs of their communities. The LSC will discuss and **agree improvement targets for success rates** with each college and other providers (based on learners' recruitment, retention and achievements).

In parallel, the LSC will establish 'floor targets' for success rates for all providers, which will clearly define the minimum levels of performance expected.

54. These success rates will need to support the LSC's local and national targets and be realistic, but challenging and take account of current local performance and national benchmarking data. Progress against targets will be reviewed as part of regular LSC performance reviews of providers. The LSC will strive to fund excellent learning and will cease to fund providers, or particular learning areas, where performance is unacceptably poor and where agreed minimum performance levels are not being met.
55. The Department and the LSC are currently discussing the use, definitions, and consistency of success measures with key partners. We will ensure that targets do not adversely distort behaviour, or sacrifice quality or access to learning. This is vital, for example, to the achievement of our widening participation targets, developing coherence in planning provision for 14-19 year olds and ensuring that high-quality provision is available for the hardest to help learners.
56. The LSC will also **develop a full range of performance indicators** to reflect the diverse range of learning and skills provision. The LSC will work with key partners to explore ways of **developing value-added measures**, including for provision where there are no qualification outcomes. In respect of new performance indicators, the LSC will develop benchmarking data and establish baseline performance data for all types of provision. The LSC is also developing performance indicators/targets around employer and learner satisfaction.

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION FOR UNDER-PERFORMING COLLEGES AND OTHER PROVIDERS

57. In collaboration with the LSC, the Government has published **clear procedures for targeted intervention** in the case of providers whose quality has been assessed as unsatisfactory by inspection or whose performance has been assessed by the LSC in their reviews as a cause for concern. The LSC and the Inspectorates now require such providers to take action to bring about demonstrable and rapid improvement in their performance. The LSC has also developed procedures to monitor and review key aspects of provider performance on a regular basis so that problems can be identified at an early stage and decisive action to rectify them can be taken. Prevention not intervention will be the aim. However we will be tough on failure and the LSC will cease to fund provision where necessary.

58. The LSC will, as appropriate, give **financial and practical support to providers** to enable providers to improve their performance. For example, the new Learning and Skills Standards Fund will be used as appropriate, to help colleges and other providers to implement their development plans successfully.

AUTONOMY AND RECOGNITION FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLEGES AND OTHER PROVIDERS

59. It is important to recognise and **celebrate learners' success and achievements, and recognise high-quality teaching and training and effective and well-managed institutions**. We must also learn from success, so that it helps all providers on their journey to excellence. We have introduced the **award of Learning and Skills Beacon status for excellent education and training. The first awards of Learning and Skills Beacon status** have now been made to colleges and will shortly be made to work-based providers. The standards are high and challenging to ensure Beacons represent the very best our sector has to offer. Their expertise, drawn from practical experience and proven success, will contribute to developing high-quality provision across the sector and also to supporting the development of effective leadership and management strategies. We will review the criteria for Beacon status after one year to ensure that it remains challenging but is truly attainable by all parts of the sector.
60. We expect the experience of Learning and Skills Beacons to benefit the sector. We must also consider the benefits that status brings to them. We are considering what rewards should be given to the top performing providers, for example, greater autonomy and flexibility to build on their considerable strengths. This underlines our policy commitment that intervention should be in inverse proportion to success. We would welcome your ideas on the benefits that should flow from becoming a Beacon status provider.

Discussion issue 4: Do you support our proposals for a framework for quality and success?

- **What are your views on the proposals for establishing institutional improvement targets (and floor targets)?**
- **Do you agree with our proposals for developing value-added measures? How might we develop these?**
- **Do you agree that greater autonomy and flexibility should be provided to top performing providers? What benefits should flow from becoming a top performer?**

4. NEXT STEPS

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

61. Ministers will provide leadership for this strategy and will work closely with the LSC, the Inspectorates and national partners on its implementation to ensure success. A ministerial committee involving key partners will oversee its implementation.
62. **A new Standards Unit** will be established within the Department to help drive the strategy and to focus specifically on teaching and learning and developing the workforce. We will also be seeking to appoint or second to this unit people from key roles across the learning and skills sector who have proven expertise in developing successful teaching and learning methods. A new Director of Teaching and Learning will take forward work on the development of curriculum frameworks and best teaching and training practice which is not currently being done elsewhere.
63. We will involve all learning and skills providers in the design and implementation of our policies. We will keep the sector well informed about implementation of the strategy and give providers sufficient time to prepare and plan for the changes. We will also seek to ensure that these changes will not lead to any unnecessary administrative burdens for providers.
64. These proposals represent the initial thinking of the Government and the LSC on the main areas where our learning and skills provision now needs to develop, to create the foundations for excellence. **We need your ideas and views to influence thinking and to take forward the debate.** The Department and the LSC will work closely together to ensure that you have every opportunity to become involved in the development and implementation of the strategy. **Local LSCs will arrange local consultation events over the summer**, involving all their partners, to take forward the discussion on the strategy. We will also consider what other arrangements are needed to ensure that our key partners in industry and in the learning and skills sector are kept informed about the implementation of the strategy.

65. We will announce our proposals for implementing the strategy after analysing your feedback. We will continue to involve you in the development of our strategy and proposals for its implementation. We envisage that implementation of our strategy will begin in the main in 2003.
66. We believe that the combination of action on all these fronts, with support and investment will transform the learning and skills sector. In return for this investment, we expect to see rapid improvements across the sector.

Timetable	by when
Strategy and consultation announced by the Secretary of State at the Learning and Skills Development Agency Post-16 Conference (London)	19 June
Local LSC Consultation events	July–September
Consultation ends	30 September
Set up new DfES Standards Unit	October
Publish final strategy (with milestones)	November
Begin implementation across all areas of the strategy	January 2003

67. Responses to this discussion document are invited by **30 September 2002**.

You may respond by writing to:

Steve Hunter, Raising Standards Division, Department for Education and Skills
Room N3, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ

Or by email to further.education@dfes.gsi.gov.uk or by fax on 0114 259 3544

68. If you have further questions about this consultation or want further copies, please contact **Steve Hunter, DfES Raising Standards Unit on 0114 259 4870**.

SUMMARY OF KEY QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

Discussion issue 1: Do you agree with our proposals for meeting needs and improving choice?

- What further support is needed to enable colleges and other providers to review and develop their educational and training missions?
 - What factors should colleges and other providers take into account in focussing on what they do best?
 - Do you support the proposal that the LSC should develop a new planning framework for area reviews, and how can this best support the 14-19 agenda, basic skills provision and meeting skills needs?
 - Do you agree with our proposals for improving the links between employers and providers. What further action should we take to ensure that employer and skill needs are met?
-

Discussion issue 2: Do you agree with our proposals for achieving excellence in teaching and learning?

- Do you agree that we should develop new teaching and learning frameworks for major curriculum areas? What should these include – eg teaching and assessment methods, syllabus content? How should we develop them?
 - What should be the priority areas for these frameworks and what should be the criteria for choosing these?
 - What more should we do to extend the use of e-learning and ICT to maximise the potential of e-learning and make it an option for all learners?
-

Discussion issue 3: Do you agree with our proposals for developing the teachers and leaders of the future?

- How should we develop a better qualified workforce in the sector?
- What else needs to be done to ensure that teachers, trainers, support staff and the leaders and managers of the sector can be creative, professional and successful?

Discussion issue 4: Do you support our proposals for a framework for quality and success?

- Q What are your views on the proposals for establishing institutional improvement targets (and floor targets)?
- Q Do you agree with our proposals for developing value-added measures? How might we develop these?
- Q Do you agree that greater autonomy and flexibility should be provided to top performing providers? What benefits show flow from becoming a top performer?

5. Other comments?

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