



Learning+Skills Council

AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

LEARNING PROGRAMMES

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Sources

- The White Paper - Learning to Succeed (June 1999)
www.lsc.gov.uk
- The Learning and Skills Council Prospectus (December 1999)
www.lsc.gov.uk
- Post-16 Funding and Allocations: First Technical Consultation Paper (January 2000)
www.dfes.gov.uk
- Post-16 Funding: Second Technical Consultation Paper (May 2000)
www.dfes.gov.uk
- Funding Flows and Business Processes (May 2000)
www.dfes.gov.uk
- DfES letter to LEAs on planning guidance (28 July 2000)
- DfES letter to LEAs on planning guidance (update October 2000)
- LSC's remit letter – (9 November 2000)
www.lsc.gov.uk
- Learning and Skills Council Operations Guide, section 8 (April 2001)

THE WHITE PAPER - LEARNING TO SUCCEED

Purpose

Following the publication of the Green Paper, *The Learning Age*, which set out the Government's vision for lifelong learning, the then secretary of state, David Blunkett, announced a wide-ranging consultation on the structures for education and training for people over the age of 16, excluding higher education. The White Paper, *Learning to Succeed*, was subsequently published. This was the first consultation on the Government's proposals.

Extracts

3.14 The Adult Learning Committee will have direct responsibility for advising the Learning and Skills Council on achieving the National Learning Targets for adults and for organisations (specifically the Targets for Investors in People). This will include advising on raising and widening participation and attainment for adults.

4.27 The new arrangements will bring new opportunities for a wide variety of organisations currently involved in the planning and delivery of post-16 education and training, not least the voluntary sector. They are both the providers of specialist education and training and have a particular understanding of the needs of the disadvantaged and excluded people. The creation of a single Learning and Skills Council will simplify, and bring greater coherence to, arrangements for funding different types of education and qualifications, removing unnecessary bureaucracy and enabling the system to be more responsive to the needs of the individual. The voluntary sector's place in the new arrangements is an important one and will be funded under the same arrangements as colleges and other providers so long as they meet the essential quality and accountability thresholds that the Government is laying down. Voluntary organisations are particularly well placed to contribute their expertise in key areas such as tackling social exclusion and in the education and training of those with special or basic skill needs.

7.1 All adults need the opportunity to continue to learn throughout their working life, to bring their qualifications up to date and, where necessary, to train for a different job.

7.2 Much needs to be done to achieve our vision. Seven million adults have no formal qualifications at all and the number of jobs requiring low level skills is declining. 55% of the adult population does not have a level 3 qualification.

7.14 The new Learning and Skills Council will work closely with the Ufi to improve the overall coherence and responsiveness of education and training provision for adults and help embed lifelong learning in people's daily lives.

7.30 Adult and community based learning form a vital part of the Government's drive to widen participation in learning, to build communities' self-confidence and capacity, and to promote good citizenship and regeneration. They can embrace a wide variety of learning environments – pubs, clubs, community and leisure centres, health centres, as well as opportunities provided or arranged by local authorities in adult education institutions or schools or by voluntary organisations.

7.33 As well as improving the range and quality of provision we must find new ways of re-motivating and re-engaging those who have few, if any, qualifications.

THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL PROSPECTUS

Purpose

Following the consultation arising from the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed*, the Prospectus was published. It set out the Government's conclusions on the consultation. In particular, it described how the LSC would work at national and local level in conjunction with key partners such as the Regional Development Agencies and the University for Industry.

Extracts

4.27 We therefore want the LSC and its partners to maintain and strengthen the commitment of existing learners and to draw into learning adults of all ages, particularly those who do not currently believe they have anything to gain from learning.

4.28 The national Adult Learning Committee and the LSC locally will be responsible for ensuring mechanisms are in place for identifying adult learning needs and for developing strategies and plans to address them.

4.29 Adult and community learning is a vital part of the Government's plan to drive up achievement, widen participation in learning and to strengthen community confidence capacity. The new arrangements must offer an inclusive approach to learning, providing a range of attractive local opportunities for those who already value learning and which engage those who are excluded from learning because of poor attainment at school or economic circumstances, or race, age, gender or disability, or indeed a combination of these factors.

4.30 Local learning opportunities, where people learn together in locally-based, familiar environments, provide a key link to learning for individuals of all ages. They are important, as we enter the 21st Century, for ensuring that the growing proportion of older people have the opportunities to learn for personal interest and to support engagement in families and communities. They are also crucial for those who are socially disadvantaged or those who find it hard to access institutional learning to gain in confidence and acquire new skills for work or personal interest.

4.31 Our aim is to bring about a step change in the range and scale of such opportunities available locally. The Adult and Community Learning Fund – which has supported 218 learning projects benefiting disadvantaged people in its first year of operation – has shown the way. The Fund has emphasised engaging disadvantaged people in learning on their own terms, delivering learning in ways that are truly accessible and building community capacity. As recommended in *Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal*, the report by the Policy Action Team on

Skills, these themes must lie at the heart of the way in which the LSC at both national and local level works.

4.32 A wide range of organisations have a role to play here: from community arts and sports organisations, community and voluntary organisations, to further and higher education institutions.

4.34 Effective links will be needed with the work of other key partner organisations including the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), NTOs, the voluntary sector, Campaign for Learning, the British Broadcasting Corporation and other broadcasters and the wider media at national, regional and local level.

POST-16 FUNDING AND ALLOCATIONS: FIRST TECHNICAL CONSULTATION PAPER

Purpose

This document, published in January 2000, set out the initial thinking on the type of funding arrangements the LSC and ES would need. This was followed by more detailed consultation in May 2000.

Extracts

3.12 There is currently a large variation in Local Education Authority-supported Adult and Community Learning provision – for example, Local Education Authority expenditure ranges from 50p to £24.50 per head. The LSC's funding system must deal fairly and consistently with all learners. It should also take account of the fact that society has the responsibility to provide education and training opportunities to those adult learners who are least able to help themselves, who need to be encouraged to participate more fully in their communities or whose participation in learning will benefit the nation's productivity. However, it also needs to reflect that many individuals and employers may benefit from adult learning and that the cost of learning should therefore in many cases be fairly shared.

3.13 The new arrangements will give local authorities a strategic influence over all post-16 education and training. They will have a key role to play in ensuring coherence between compulsory education and post-16 learning and their broader social and economic responsibilities. Provided LEAs produce and effectively implement their strategic plans, and they maintain their current spend on adult education, we guarantee that each LEA will receive funding, in the first two years of the LSC's operation, at a level comparable with their net current spend on adult education in their education budgets. Where LEAs have increased expenditure since 1998-99, particularly where the focus is on individuals who benefit least from adult learning, our aim is to have this recognised in any further resources which may be available to local LSCs for Adult and Community Learning.

3.14 Voluntary bodies will be able to be funded by local LSCs on the same basis as other providers such as colleges who will also make an important contribution in this area. We will expect local LSCs to use and build on the current infrastructure where it is strong, and help education and training bodies to develop where it is not.

POST 16 FUNDING: SECOND TECHNICAL CONSULTATION PAPER

Purpose

Published in May 2000, this consultation paper built on the initial thinking set out in the first technical consultation paper, taking account of the responses to that consultation. The second technical consultation paper provided a description of how formula funding would work, whilst seeking further views on specific areas.

Extracts

4.14 Funding must not artificially encourage or discourage providers from offering provision leading to qualifications. The Rates Advisory Group will need to ensure that the rates set for programmes involving external assessment take account of the costs compared to other programmes. The LSC and local LSCs will also need to make regular judgements about the balance of provision between programmes that lead to qualifications and those that do not.

4.30 The creation of the LSC provides a major opportunity to break down the artificial boundaries which have operated in the area of funding learning for adults, to enable a fresh and strategic approach to using funding to help lever up participation and achievement, and to use public funding to foster a learning society by making suitable learning opportunities available to adults of any age.

4.34 The local LSC will in effect be buying a plan from the LEA, in return for its funding. This will build on the existing arrangement whereby the DfES funds LEAs through the Schools Standards Fund for the production of a lifelong learning plan.

4.35 We believe that the clear intention should be that the majority of adult and community learning supported by LSC funding should be funded via the national funding formula as soon as is practicable. But, to do this the LSC will need a programme of work in its early days to establish a national knowledge base about the costs and range of ACL provision. We are setting up a working group to start working through the detail of this and other funding issues in adult and community learning.

4.37 While looking to move the majority of LSC-funded adult and community learning on a formula basis, we also think that there will always be some of this work that is not easily susceptible to this. Some of the most innovative adult learning involves agencies for some of whom learning is not a prime activity; other organisations work with extremely disadvantaged and marginalized client groups; in others there is a curriculum in which learning activity forms only one part of a community development agenda.

FUNDING FLOWS AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

Purpose

This document was published alongside the second technical consultation paper, in May 2000. It followed up the LSC Prospectus and focused on its funding and business relationships with providers and the secretary of state.

Extracts

5.12 The bulk of the LSC's funding will be allocated following the standard cycle. The money for these allocations will be based on the formula funding which will be set nationally. Around 10-15% of a local LSC's budget will be more flexible, and can be used at the local LSC's discretion for uses such as 'pump-priming', information, advice and guidance for adults, and community based provision for the most disadvantaged. Not all of this will be allocated on the same cycle – local LSCs need to keep some funds back to give them flexibility for responding to change through the year.

5.15 We shall be looking for a minimum amount of disaggregation here. The LSC may need to stipulate that numbers of 16-18 year olds should be split by type of provision, eg those taking A levels and vocational A levels, as against numbers of apprentices; and adult learners may need to be split between, for example, those taking basic skills courses and others. But we do not wish to aim for a system in which proposals need to specify volumes down to the last engineering place.

5.50 LEA maintained Adult and Community Learning. In this case, local LSC decisions on funding will be made in the light of commitments in *Learning to Succeed* that local authorities can expect to receive a substantial part of the LSC resource for adult and community learning.

5.51 During the first two years (2001-02 and 2002-03), the LSC will guarantee local authorities a minimum level of funding for adult and community learning, subject to the agreement of a satisfactory plan and provided they have not reduced spending in 2000-01.

5.52 Thereafter, local education authorities will continue to have a central role to play helping the LSC to deliver its objectives, particularly for those groups who are most excluded from learning. The LSC will, for example, be required to consult LEAs in preparing plans and LEAs will have a clear role to play in establishing clear links between local authority community plans and education and training provision funded by the LSC. From 2003-04, the LSC will therefore continue to contract with LEAs and, where appropriate, with other providers for the delivery of adult and community learning.

DFES LETTER TO LEAS ON PLANNING GUIDANCE

28 July 2000

This letter was sent to all Local Education Authorities inviting them to apply for funding from the Learning and Skills Council to support the work they do to secure adult and community learning in their area.

The guidance was issued to enable the LEAs to make a start on the planning process – on the understanding that contact is regularly made as decisions on LSC funding and planning arrangements, including budgets, are made.

**DFES LETTER TO LEAS ON PLANNING GUIDANCE
2000**

update October

This update:

- gives additional guidance on the completion of funding applications for adult and community learning (ACL) LEA Adult Learning Plans (ALPs);
- clarifies a number of points that have been raised by authorities about the ALP guidance the Department issued on 28 July
- invites authorities to nominate two operational contacts to whom future communications about the ALPs can be addressed.

LSC REMIT LETTER

Purpose

The secretary of state wrote to the chairman of the LSC on 9 November 2000, setting out his vision for the LSC, its statutory framework and the priorities for its first corporate plan.

Extracts

10. You will want to ensure that local Learning and Skills Councils have effective mechanisms for consulting and working with partners at the regional and sub-regional level. This will be important for joining up learning and skills with other services and with other government policies so as to maximise their impact. The new Local Strategic Partnerships will also have a role to play in developing shared community strategies, particularly around addressing the needs of deprived areas.

15. Schools, colleges and private training providers are responsible for the future learning of millions of young people and adults, and I expect the Council to work closely with them to improve participation, attainment, and standards.

26. Encouraging adults back into learning and helping the more disadvantaged through relevant provision will also be important. Such first rung provision should, wherever practicable, act as a stepping stone into further learning leading to qualifications or units of qualifications, but many adults, including large numbers of older and retired learners will want to pursue high quality and rigorous study for its own sake, and I expect provision to be made available to meet their needs.

34. The Council will wish to draw on the particular strengths of its two statutory committees, making full use of the expertise available. The Young People's Learning Committee will advise the Council on all aspects of its responsibilities for young people's learning, including the potential of family learning, and the need to foster the skills required for a successful transition into work and active participation in society. Similarly, the Adult Learning Committee will advise the Council on its responsibilities for adult learning, including increasing demand for learning and skills – including basic skills – from individuals and employers. It will also advise on the learning provision needed for effective participation in the labour market and economic success, for individual fulfilment, and for social inclusion and community development.

46. I look to the Council to increase the demand for learning by adults, and to increase the supply of flexible, high-quality opportunities to meet their needs. This is central to our goal of a learning society – a society in which everyone can

share in the benefits of learning, enabling people to discover new talents, stretching their creativity and widening their opportunities.

47. The Council must spearhead the drive to widen adult participation in Further Education, increasing the number drawn from those whose background or circumstances have disadvantaged them. The Council also needs to develop ways to draw into learning those people who have not engaged in any structured learning in the previous three years, building on the existing practice of educational broadcasters, Ufl, Adult Learners Week, and other initiatives, and working with local authorities in the context of their continuing role in adult and community learning.

49. Successfully increasing the demand for learning will also depend on a continuing drive to improve the flexibility and attractiveness of learning opportunities, including ensuring a very wide availability of 'first step' opportunities to attract into learning those who previously saw it as something as not for them. This will increase demand innovation in approach and in delivery, including through the innovative use of information technology, and the promotion of Individual Learning Accounts. The Council will need to work closely with the Ufl at national and local level, and with Capita – the organisation contracted to run the framework of Individual Learning Accounts. It will also need to look at how it can use its responsibilities in adult and community learning, and in further education, to ensure that there is accessible provision available in local communities, which support and help build their confidence and capacity.

51. The Council faces a particular challenge to help the millions of adults who lack the basic levels of literacy and numeracy needed to operate effectively in today's economy and society. A new strategy Unit has been set up within my department to help ensure the success of our adult literacy and numeracy strategy, and I will expect the Council to put detailed arrangements in place which will facilitate close working with the Unit, and to support effective delivery of the strategy. This will demand an innovative and flexible approach to provision which builds on existing family learning initiatives, adult and community learning, neighbourhood learning centres and work with employers. At local level, the Council will need to secure the type and quantity of imaginative and attractive learning opportunities that will draw in people unused to learning, or who see learning in institutions as not for them.

52. Family literacy and numeracy is one example that has shown real potential in helping to improve parents' and children's learning. I want to see more support for family learning, as part of the overall approach to increasing participation, and to strengthen the capacity of communities to help themselves. I look to the Council to consider how to build on the lessons of these projects. The Council should also look to develop the potential of on-line learning as a means of encouraging and supporting the development of basic skills, whether in a centre, the home or in the workplace.

53. Literacy and numeracy support needs to be embedded in a very wide range of learning, including that of learners recruited to other studies, who do not explicitly seek it. Literacy and numeracy provision also needs to be delivered in the broadest possible range of settings such as neighbourhood learning centres.

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL OPERATIONS GUIDE, SECTION 8 April 2001

This document explains the funding arrangements for adult and community learning (ACL) in 2001-02; gives guidance on what action local LSCs should take in relation to ACL; and gives details of contacts to whom queries should be directed.