

Improving success rates on the Entry to Employment programme

There has been much talk in the press, much of it unfortunately inaccurate, about changes to the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme.

There has been no significant policy change to the programme. E2E was designed to provide a route for young people who needed to acquire additional skills and knowledge to enable them to take up a place in employment – preferably as part of an Apprenticeship – or other training, or on a college course.

E2E has been successful in recruiting young people, but it is not enough just to recruit – there must be a positive outcome for the individual.

In 2003/04, only 34 per cent of those young people who completed their E2E programmes progressed to employment, an Apprenticeship or a further course. That is less than expected and clearly not good enough when our aim is to enable every young person to succeed.

The measures that have been introduced are designed to improve the number of young people progressing to a positive outcome. With 60,000 young people starting the programme and a budget of £240 million, it is important that providers concentrate on this aim to ensure the programme succeeds in providing for the needs of the individuals who are recruited.

These measures do not introduce a formal time limit to E2E. The length of time a young person spends on their programme

will depend on their individual need. It is expected that some will need to stay on the programme past the formal review, but others will require only a few weeks.

The measures introduced to improve completion rates include:

- Ensuring providers recruit those who have a reasonable chance of succeeding and reducing the initial assessment period from eight to six weeks
- Bringing forward the full review, previously at 12 months, to 22 weeks
- Increasing the frequency of formal reviews after the 22 weeks to once every four weeks
- Reference to a provider's positive progression rate in their three-year development plan

E2E is not appropriate for everyone and we need to ensure the right young people are on the right course. The measures that have been introduced have focused attention on provision for those young people who cannot reasonably expect to achieve a positive outcome from E2E, including those with significant personal problems.

Recruitment of these young people onto E2E is not in their best interests, nor that of the E2E programme. The LSC is committed to giving every 16-18 year old a

place in post-16 education and training and this guarantee means that provision suitable for their needs must exist in every LSC area.

Many areas already have, or are establishing, provision funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), the Department for Health or through Neighbourhood Support Funds.

The LSC is currently reviewing provision in local LSC areas to ensure that provision is available to meet the needs of these young people. This review will cover programmes funded by the LSC and other sources, including ESF funded programmes, and will inform planning for next year.

Stephen Gardner, the LSC's Director of Work Based Learning, who is responsible for the programme, says: 'In 2004/05 we would like to see E2E providers focus their attentions on helping existing learners to succeed.'

'The measures we have introduced are designed to ensure that those most in need of the programme, and in a position to benefit from it, are helped to achieve their potential by progressing to a job or further learning.'

'I urge all providers to work with their local LSC, local employers and providers who offer programmes onto which successful E2E learners can progress, to make E2E a truly successful programme.'

The E2E prospectus is available on the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk) under Documents/Policy and Development/Entry to Employment.

Forthcoming events

22 October

Conference: NIACE Further Education Learning Works, York

28 October

Conference: New Pathways: A vision of services for all 14-19 year olds (Young People Now Magazine) London



Sector Skills Agreements

Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs), one of the key announcements in the Skills Strategy, are designed to ensure that the supply of education and training meets the demand for skills by employers and the sectors in which they operate.

One year on from the launch of the Skills Strategy – in which the LSC is the lead delivery partner – four SSAs are being developed by the Skills for Business network of Sector Skills Councils, employer-led organisations that replace the former National Training Organisations and work to reduce skills gaps and increase productivity in key areas of the economy.

In developing the new agreements, the Sector Skills Councils will work in partnership with the DfES, the LSC, Jobcentre Plus, Regional Development

Agencies, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, higher education institutions and other partners to broker deals and identify how employers' needs can be met.

The process for developing the agreements involves five key stages:

- assessment of current and future skills needs
- assessment of the current provision
- analysis of the gaps and weakness in current workforce development activity
- an assessment of the scope for collaborative action by employers
- the development of a costed action plan with key delivery partners.

A report on the first year of the Skills Strategy has been published by the DfES.

The Skills Strategy Progress Report – One Year On, is available on the DfES website at www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy

The first four Sector Skills Councils to develop SSAs are Construction Skills, e-skills UK, SEMTA and Skillset. They are on track to complete their agreements by the end of this year.

SEMTA will be doing specific work with the marine, automotive, aerospace, electronics and bioscience sectors, in particular, developing the framework for over 25s and Apprenticeships for adults to address technician shortages. Skillset is focusing on three sub-sectors: film; television; and interactive media.

Construction Skills will be focusing on on-site training and assessments to achieve a fully qualified and competent workforce by 2010. Building blocks for the e-skills SSA are likely to include the use of the e-skills Passport to link training to employer need.

skillsandeducation network sharing evidence and good practice

Skills and Education Network

Have you seen the LSC Skills and Education Network? Find out more at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk> On the network website you will find a comprehensive compendium of news, facts, statistics, evidence and good practice, to give support to policy and planning in the learning and skills sector.

New this month

Every month, new content is added to the site, reflecting current issues affecting the sector. This month, in our hot topic, we look at how to engage hard-to-reach adult learners. This includes the latest on Government policy as well as tips on how to reach groups which are under-represented in learning, such as asylum seekers and refugees. Find out more at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/topics/topichardtoreach.cfm> Our Guides 2 will help you to find key information on this and other topics.

Latest features

Also explore the latest issues affecting providers in our monthly features. In our latest additions to the site you can:

Find out more about Positive Futures, a national social inclusion programme for marginalised young people, which uses sport to address their problems. More at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/features/september2004feature1.cfm>

Or learn about the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) Sign Up Now campaign, which takes place annually and ran from 4-10 September. More at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/features/september2004feature3.cfm>

Remember – You can also register to receive our free monthly newsletter. Subscribe via the website at <http://senet.lsc.gov.uk/join.cfm>

Next month's hot topic: Engaging young people. Please send in your ideas and suggestions. Email: senet@lsc.gov.uk

The Skills and Education Network is a web-based information and knowledge sharing service for providers, managed by the Learning and Skills Council. Information for this service is drawn from the Knowledge Centre at the Learning and Skills Council national office in Coventry.

Sustainable development in education and training

The LSC is soon to undertake widespread consultation with its key partners and stakeholders on its plans to produce an LSC Sustainable Development Strategy.

It aims to produce an LSC Sustainable Development Consultation Strategy document by this autumn and, following the consultation period, launch its finally agreed strategy in the New Year.

The LSC aims to integrate sustainable development into its everyday practices.

Sustainable development is about achieving economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time, without compromising the needs of future generations.

The LSC has a significant impact on the social and economic aspects of sustainable development through its core business of raising skill levels.

How resources and assets are managed in FE can make a significant contribution to sustainable development.

The LSC aims to integrate sustainable development into its policies and everyday practices. It expects the strategy to address issues such as:

- a shared understanding of sustainable development
- a vision of what the LSC is trying to achieve and the guiding principles and approaches needed to deliver the vision
- the compatibility of the sustainable development and the LSC's agendas
- a strong re-enforcement of the importance of education for sustainable development
- a set of thematic areas and a menu of associated activities
- examples and indicators of good practice
- an implementation and delivery plan, including the roles of partners in delivering the strategy.

The LSC has already responded to its responsibilities regarding sustainable

development by funding college-based and other education projects.

Secretary of State Charles Clarke launched a DfES sustainable development action plan in September 2003, which allocated specific tasks to the LSC, including education for sustainable development, the environmental impact of the DfES and its partners, the environmental impact of the education estate and local partnership activity.

An External Advisory Group advises the LSC on sustainable development. Chaired by Caroline Neville, the LSC's National Director of Learning, it meets every two months and has representatives from organisations involved in learning, skills and the environment.

Focus group discussions and other events have been held to engage with key partners and a paper produced to stimulate debate.

The LSC position paper *From Here to Sustainability* is available on the LSC website under Documents/Subject Listing/Corporate and Strategic/Strategic/Position Papers.

14-19 Gateway New system for publications

A dedicated DfES website, the 14-19 Gateway, provides a wealth of information for those engaged in transforming the 14-19 phase of education and training.

The website acts as a single reference point – a 'one stop shop' – for 14-19 issues. It sets out the 14-19 strategy and provides information about curriculum and qualifications issues, teaching and learning, support for young people, guidance and good practice. It also provides information about 14-19 pathfinders.

The 14-19 Gateway is accessed at www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19/

It is also available through the national LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Corporate/Links/Education/Furthereducationandworkbasedtraining/

A new system for categorising all the LSC's external publications is being introduced over the next few months.

The new system aims to respond to requests from our partners for clearer communications from the LSC – a message that came through loud and clear during the LSC's recent roadshow events in the nine regions. It is part of a wider review of the LSC's brand communications.

LSC publications sent out to partners and stakeholders are being reviewed and categorised by audience or by purpose to ensure they are easily recognisable, give prominent instructions for action and arrive through the same convenient and consistent channels of distribution.

The new system will cover all LSC documents, from policy and consultation papers to communication material such as newsletters. The LSC's Learning

Group will pilot the scheme. A number of college principals and private training providers were invited to our national office in September to hear more about the proposed scheme and advise on its development.

Selected Learning Group publications will pilot the categories and associated design in the autumn.

The new system aims to respond to requests for clearer LSC communications

The review also aims to reduce production and printing costs. It will examine how communications are sent out, what material could be produced more cost effectively or can be placed in an easily identifiable area of our website.

More details will appear in the next edition of LSC Update.

Principles for a credit framework

The LSC and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are working together to take forward plans to create a national credit framework for adults in England.

The two organisations have published *Principles for a credit framework for England*, setting out the key features of a credit framework.

Developing a common framework is a key element in reforming vocational qualifications and learning.

A unit-based system will underpin the framework, with each unit assigned credit value and level. A system of credits will provide clear progression routes into and across adult learning. A credit framework will ensure that achievement can be measured in smaller steps, with learners able to accumulate credits and transfer them, if appropriate.

The aim is a set of common minimum specifications for valuing, measuring, describing and comparing achievement.

The Government made a commitment to a national credit framework in its Skills Strategy, *21st Century Skills: Realising*

our Potential. The DfES subsequently asked QCA and the LSC to take forward further work.

The QCA was asked to develop credit principles which could be applied to the full range of unitised provision in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The LSC and the QCA are working closely to ensure coherence between their work. The LSC is reviewing the credit systems operating for *other provision* – learning and qualifications outside the NQF. The aim is to identify how the application of credit to *other provision* can improve quality and flexibility in FE and could be developed to provide progression into the NQF.

The work includes testing the application of credit to a wide range of learning achievements.

Plans for a credit framework are now being taken forward in the context of wider proposals by the QCA for a new and flexible 'framework for achievement' that recognises qualifications and achievement for adults, scheduled to be fully operational by 2010. The QCA has produced a booklet, *New thinking for reform*, on the

The five principles for the proposed credit framework are:

- the credit framework will be based on the assignment of credit value and level to units
- the credit framework will provide a valid and reliable measure of achievement based on a shared approach to credit
- the credit framework will align with other frameworks
- credit value and level will be assigned consistently and reliably to units across all NQF levels and key features will be applied consistently
- credit will be awarded consistently and reliably as the basis for the mutual recognition of achievement to support progression.

Principles for a credit framework for England is available on the QCA website: www.qca.org.uk

proposed new framework, available at www.qca.org.uk/adultlearning/workforce/7918/html

Apprenticeships Task Force



Apprenticeships

The Apprenticeships Task Force plays a central role in the drive to encourage more employers to engage in Apprenticeships.

Its members include senior executives of blue chip companies – small and large and from a wide range of sectors – and other key organisations with a keen interest in improving the skills of the UK workforce. Sir Roy Gardner, Chief Executive of Centrica plc, chairs the task force.

Task force members make an invaluable contribution to the promotion of

Apprenticeships, attending seminars, employer events and Apprenticeships awards to highlight the business benefits of recruiting Apprentices.

Local LSCs, providers and other organisations that would like to invite a task force member to their events can email to atf@centrica.co.uk or contact the task force secretariat on 020 8572 8258.

More information on the terms of reference of the task force, its membership, case studies and contact details are available on its website at www.employersforapprentices.gov.uk

The overall objectives of the Apprenticeships Task Force are to:

- increase opportunities for young people to participate in high quality Apprenticeships with a range of employers
- recommend effective and innovative ways of ensuring that Apprenticeships and the Entry to Employment programme respond to the changing needs of employers and young people.

Teamwork pays dividends as Apprenticeship numbers rise

Following a great deal of hard work across the learning and skills sector, year-end figures show the numbers of young people aged 16-21 starting Apprenticeships has met the LSC's interim target for the year of just over 152,000.

This represents an increase in starts of five per cent over the previous year – in other words 7,000 extra Apprenticeships.

The challenge is now to achieve the LSC's Public Sector Agreement target for 2004-05 of 28 per cent of 16-21 year olds starting an Apprenticeship for the first time.

To achieve this, the LSC needs to achieve a 15 per cent increase over this year's figures. With the employer recruitment campaign and recent publicity for Apprenticeships, the outlook is promising but will be challenging.

Further enquiries will be generated by the second wave of TV and press Apprenticeship advertising running for four weeks from 20 September.

The Apprenticeships website is at www.apprenticeships.org.uk

A regular newsletter bringing the latest news about Apprenticeships is available at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/KeyInitiatives/Apprenticeships

Contracts for information and advice services

New contracts have been awarded for information and advice services for adults in all 47 local LSC areas as part of a reform of the information and advice system.

Invitations to tender for the management and procurement of information and advice services were issued in March in response to the Skills Strategy, *21st Century Skills – Realising our Potential*, which set out objectives for the reform.

Forty seven contracts – one per local LSC area – were awarded following rigorous assessment. The new Local Information and Advice Contractors will ensure that, over the next year, 2.5 million information sessions and 350,000 face-to-face advice sessions are supplied to adults who are yet to achieve a Level 2 qualification.

The contracts are the first part of the reform of the system, which plays a crucial role in widening participation in education and training.

Over the next year, 2.5 million information sessions and 350,000 face-to-face advice sessions will be supplied to adults who are yet to achieve a Level 2 qualification.

Other plans include the integration of the national **learnirect** helpline with local information and advice services carried out face-to-face. This will give adults access to the services either online or by telephone or face-to-face, as appropriate.

The reform will include a new national brand for information and advice services to increase their visibility and increase access for adults most in need of support.

A national customer entitlement to information and advice services will be published to ensure the services are consistent and to improve local flexibility to respond to additional customer needs

A National Resource Service, managed by UFI Ltd on behalf of the LSC, went live on 1 August to promote consistent, high quality services and to achieve financial savings for the LSC by bulk buying resources. It will also consult widely and identify areas of best practice. Details of the contractors are at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/News/iagcontractors.htm

The National Resources Service website can be viewed at www.advice-resources.co.uk

'Re-brand' for DfES performance tables

The DfES School and College Performance Tables have been renamed the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Consequently, the DfES Performance Tables Team will be known as the Achievement and Attainment Tables Team.

This 're-branding' coincides with the start of significant changes to the information in the tables.

The tables already include value added measures reflecting the achievement of all pupils alongside the percentages of higher attaining pupils in the threshold

performance indicators (eg, 5+A*-C).

From this year, the secondary school tables will include the results of pupils in all qualifications approved for use pre-16, that is, entry-level qualifications, vocational qualifications and AS levels taken early will be counted alongside GCSEs as an equivalent basis.

Other important changes to be developed and introduced from 2005 onwards, include:

- pace and progression – ensuring that varying rates of progress are reflected in the tables
- post-16 value added measures –

ensuring systems are in place to report value added measures at post-16

- reporting a wider range of qualifications at post-16 – ensuring the full range of approved qualifications are reported in the tables using QCA's proposed new point scoring system
- contextual value added – ensuring that value added methodology takes into account factors other than prior attainment, for example contextual and background influences.

Further details on changes for 2004 are available from www.dfes.gov.uk/performance-tables

LSC's College Finance Directors' award

The winner of the College Finance Director of the Year award, launched by the LSC in the summer, will be announced at the AoC's Annual Conference, taking place between the 16-18 November.

The launch of the award was announced at the College Finance Directors' Annual Conference in Hinckley in June.

Philip Lloyd, National Director of Finance at the Learning and Skills Council and Accountancy Age's Finance Director of the Year, said: 'It is imperative for the public sector to recognise and celebrate its success.

'This is particularly important for the further education sector. Colleges have a vital and demanding agenda. They have a central role to play in the skills of the workforce and competitiveness of the UK economy.

'With this award, we want to highlight

the crucial work of Finance Directors and to recognise their contribution to the success of colleges in England.'

This award will bring recognition of the vital work done by Finance Directors in the further education sector

Nominations have been invited from Principals and Finance Directors who want to nominate a colleague, or peer in another college. They were asked to highlight a specific aspect of work. For example, entries could focus on the Finance Director's contribution to financial and operational improvement; a college's financial and operational recovery; a successful and/or innovative capital project; or, a successful/innovative re-organisation.

Martin Penny, Chair of the Colleges' Finance Directors' Group said: 'This award will bring recognition of the vital work done by Finance Directors in the Further Education sector.

'Finance Directors critically influence the overall strategy of a college and provide essential support to college Principals.

'Enterprise and innovation are key success factors for Finance Directors and this is what we will be looking for in the nominations'.

A panel chaired by Philip Lloyd will judge entries. A representative from the Association of Colleges, a college Principal and the Chair of the College Finance Directors' Group will join the judging panel.

Those considering making a nomination are reminded that entries must be received by 5pm on 18 October and be submitted by email to CollegeFinanceDirector2004@lsc.gov.uk

LSC Update: extra copies

LSC Update is produced in hard copy and can also be downloaded in PDF format from the national home page of the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk) under Documents/Series/LSCUpdate.

If you require additional hard copies, please contact the email address info@lsc.gov.uk, stating the issue and number of copies that you require and an address for distribution.

Additional copies can also be obtained by phoning the LSC Helpdesk on 0870 900 6800. Copies will be dispatched as quickly as possible.

There is also a facility on our website to alert you by email when a new issue of LSC Update – or other new documents – are posted on the website. Click on 'Update Service' on the home page and register your details. If you are already registered, there is a facility to add LSC Update or other documents to your existing subscriptions.



If you would like to know more about our publications, a Publication Scheme document is available on the website through our Documents Channel.

The Publications Scheme describes the classes of information we publish or intend to publish and how we publish such information.

Beacon status

Learning and Skills Beacon status was launched in March 2002 to recognise excellent institutions that deliver high quality teaching and learning, demonstrate excellent or good leadership and to share good practice with others.

The LSC has recently published a *Good Practice Guide to Beacon Dissemination Activity*, which is available on our website's Documents Channel under Subject Listing/Improving Quality/Guidance and Good Practice.

A full report on Beacon status will appear in the next issue of LSC Update. It will include details of the first national Excellence and Innovation Workshops, led by Learning and Skills Beacons and attended by learning providers from across England.

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