

LSC agenda for change

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has set out an agenda for change, outlining a major programme for the transformation of the further education sector.

The agenda focuses on five key themes that emerged from the LSC's regional roadshows held with college Principals during the summer to discuss urgent issues facing further education.

This new agenda is fundamental to the LSC's commitment to engage fully with the sector and work in partnership with colleges and training providers in a spirit of openness and transparency.

Each theme has a dedicated lead person appointed from the LSC's Management Group. They will set up task groups for each theme, involving many representatives from the further education sector, to agree a way forward to address these key issues.

LSC Chief Executive, Mark Haysom said: "We learned from the roadshows that there are significant strengths in the sector, but also major issues to tackle. We all have to prepare for the combined demands that the 14-19 strategy, the Skills Strategy and the *Success For All* strategy present for the future.

"The themes that collectively comprise the LSC agenda for change will allow the sector to respond to the transformation agenda we all need to pursue to meet the needs of local learners, employers, the economy and the communities we serve.

"I have reported on these themes to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and Ministers and there is agreement that the LSC should take the leadership role in driving them forward with urgency and with the full engagement of the further education sector."

The LSC will also work with Principals to raise awareness of the vital role of colleges in delivering education, training and skills for the 21st century.

In parallel with the LSC agenda for change, the Department for Education and Skills will shortly be announcing an independent review of further education, which will report to Charles Clarke, Secretary of State and Chris Banks, Chairman of the LSC.

The five themes and their LSC leads are:

- **Skills/employers** – how to help colleges best meet the needs of employers and the economy (David Way, National Director of Skills)
- **Quality** – how best to build a sector fully committed to quality and delivery to the highest standards throughout (Caroline Neville, National Director of Learning)
- **Funding** – a radical overhaul of the LSC's methodology, to ensure the most is made of available funds to support the sector's priorities with the minimum of complexity and bureaucracy. (David Hughes, Regional Director for the East Midlands)
- **Efficiency** – driving up the efficiency of the sector, individually and collectively, including investing in improvements (Henry Ball, Regional Director, South East)
- **Data** – radically revised and simplified systems, which deliver the data and management information the sector needs (David Russell, Director of Corporate Services)

Forthcoming events

15-21 November
Enterprise Week

16-18 November
Association of Colleges
Annual Conference



'Unsung heroes' scoop STAR Awards



Thirteen people who have made an outstanding contribution through their work in the learning and skills sector were honoured in the first STAR Awards.

STAR Awards were introduced by the DfES following a commitment made in *Success for All* to recognise teachers, lecturers, trainers, managers and support staff – 'unsung heroes' whose work makes a difference and enriches the lives of learners.

The winners, selected from more than 1,600 nominations, were presented with £1,000, a trophy and a certificate at the award ceremony in London. Their employers also received a certificate.

All winners are from LSC-funded institutions, such as further education and sixth form colleges, community-based providers, prisons, work based learning and employers, adult education services and online centres.

"We want to recognise the dedication of the STAR winners so that their success can inspire others."

Kim Howells, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher

Education, said: "The contribution that front-line staff in the learning and skills sector make every day to people's lives and aspirations is crucial to the Government's drive to improve standards. Our *Success for All* strategy depends on their professionalism.

"We want to recognise the dedication of the STAR winners so that their success can inspire others. The winners have all shown ways of helping students reach their potential through life-changing experiences in learning."

Next year's nominations open in January 2005. Visit www.dfes.gov.uk/starawards for more details or contact the STAR Awards helpline on 0800 652 0528.

Learning and Skills Beacon Awards

Twenty providers from across the learning and skills sector were presented with Learning and Skills Beacon status at an awards ceremony in London.

Beacon status was launched by the DfES in partnership with the LSC and is awarded to exceptional learning providers that have achieved high standards when inspected; awarded a Grade 1 or 2 for Leadership and Management, and having at least two thirds of learners in curriculum areas considered to be good or outstanding, with no pockets of poor practice.

The 20 latest awards take the total number of Beacons to 58, comprising seven general FE colleges; 10 tertiary colleges; 18 sixth form colleges; 18 work based learning providers; two adult and community learning providers; one agricultural and horticultural college and two specialist providers.

Beacons have also been categorised as 'excellent' by the LSC and have demonstrated their capability to make an impact by sharing good practice, supporting Government priorities for transforming the sector, including *Success for All*, the *Skills Strategy*, *Skills for Life*, progression into higher education and the 14-19 agenda.

Mark Haysom, LSC Chief Executive, said: "This is the largest group of Beacons to be

announced yet, and demonstrates that there is excellent provision across further education, adult learning and work based learning. The LSC promotes and supports the sharing of good practice and expertise across the sector, so that the high quality teaching and learning that Beacons provide can be adapted and adopted by other learning providers."

Sharing good practice was the theme of the first Excellence and Innovation Workshops, led by Learning and Skills Beacons, which saw learning providers gather in Hinckley, Leicestershire, during the summer.

The event enabled providers to find out more about regional and national good practice displayed by institutions with Beacon status.

The workshops covered recruitment and retention, leadership and management, self-assessment, employer engagement, the 14-19 agenda and the *Skills for Life* strategy. Feedback has been very positive.

Delegates were asked to make action plans as a result of the information they received and these will be followed up to track progress.

The LSC's *Good Practice Guide to Beacon Dissemination Activity* is available from the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk under Documents/Subject Listing/Improving Quality/Guidance and Good Practice.

For more about Beacon status, visit www.beaconstatus.org and www.dfes.gov.uk/learningandskillsbeacons/

The LSC hosts a good practice website at <http://goodpractice.lsc.gov.uk>

Learning and Skills Beacons Awarded October 2004

BMW Great Britain Limited, Bracknell
Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, Birmingham
Brockenhurst College, Hampshire
King Edward VI College, Stourbridge
Bury College, Manchester
Knowsley Community College, Merseyside
Cirencester College, Gloucestershire
Lewisham College, London
City of Bristol College
Luton Sixth Form College, Bedfordshire
Greenhead College, Huddersfield
Moulton College, Northampton
Northern College for Residential Adult Education, Barnsley
North Devon College, Barnstaple
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington
City Lit, London
South Cheshire College, Crewe
The Henley College, Henley on Thames
Warwickshire College
Treloar College, Alton, Hants

LSC welcomes 14-19 final report

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The Learning and Skills Council has welcomed the final report of the Tomlinson Working Group for the reform of 14-19 education.

The LSC says that putting learners' and employers' needs at the heart of the education system, with an increased emphasis on personalised learning and a richer choice of vocational and work-related opportunities, supports its key goal to increase rates of participation and achievement and improve skills.

Caroline Neville, the LSC's National Director of Learning, said: "We will take a leading role in making the Tomlinson proposals, and the whole of 14-19 reform, a reality and provide our young people with real and relevant learning choices that will meet their needs, employers needs, and the needs of the nation, taking forward a key element of the Skills Strategy."

She said: "The LSC has strongly supported the vision for reform. We have already made significant advances to improve the quality and scope of the 14-19 phase of education, by developing more flexible approaches to learning and improved guidance for young people in the 14-19 age range."

The Increased Flexibility Programme has diversified the curriculum and introduced vocational GCSEs and work-related learning, currently being taken by 95,000

young people aged 14-16 and involving 2,000 schools and 300 colleges.

Work-related learning also benefits from the new family of Apprenticeships, which has for the first time introduced Young Apprenticeships to provide a quality vocational route for 14-16 year olds. One thousand pupils and over 100 schools and providers are already involved early on in this initiative.

Right across the 14-19 phase, there is greatly increased and very welcome collaboration between schools, colleges and work based learning providers. There is also much more involvement by young people and, crucially, by employers, in deciding what courses are needed, and offered, to meet their needs.

The LSC's successful Centres of Vocational Excellence programme provides opportunities for young people in colleges and work based training providers to develop valuable skills in key employment sectors.

There has also been substantial investment by the LSC in new and improved buildings and equipment towards its vision for 'world-class teaching in world-class buildings'. Over two years the LSC will have invested in over 300 capital projects worth £1.7 billion.

The Working Group under the chairmanship of Mike Tomlinson was set up by the DfES in Spring 2003 to examine

how developments in vocational training, assessment and the qualifications framework can develop a more effective phase of 14-19 learning.

Caroline Neville said the challenge now was to move the reform agenda forward. "The LSC has offered support and advice to Mike Tomlinson throughout the life of the Working Group and we welcome the final report. We need a new qualification framework that reflects these new ways of learning, and that is what Mike Tomlinson is proposing, building on the best of what we have already."

Further information and copies of the report can be found at www.14-19reform.gov.uk

Enterprise Week

Schools, colleges and other learners are invited to take part in Enterprise Week, a national celebration of enterprise that runs from 15-21 November 2004.

The week launches a nationwide campaign, **Make Your Mark – start talking ideas**, the first event of its kind to promote a national debate about the importance of enterprise to society and the economy.

The campaign aims to inspire a more enterprising culture among young people aged 14-25 from all geographical, social and ethnic backgrounds.

Enterprise education is about developing enterprise capability – innovation, creativity, risk-management and risk-taking, a can-do attitude and the drive to make ideas happen – with

financial capability and economic and business understanding.

Enterprise capabilities are not restricted just to business and profit making. They can equally be harnessed in social enterprise, using business solutions for community and other local projects.

The LSC is among the organisations from business, education, government and charities supporting the campaign.

The LSC and its 47 local offices will take part in numerous national and local events and initiatives being held around the country during Enterprise Week to encourage debate and raise awareness of the importance of enterprise.

One of the big events of Enterprise Week is the final of this year's LionHeart Challenge, sponsored by the LSC, a

national schools' competition promoting enterprise skills to young people from all nine LSC regions. It aims to raise business awareness and provides a high quality, inclusive enterprise experience for young people from all backgrounds.

The final, following nine regional heats, is on 16 November at the Palace of Westminster. The judging panel includes Ian Ferguson, a member of the LSC National Council and Chairman of the LSC's Young People's Learning Committee.

Make Your Mark – start talking ideas (www.starttalkingideas.org) is coordinated by Enterprise Insight, a coalition founded by four leading UK business organisations – the British Chambers of Commerce, the CBI, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Institute of Directors.

The skills we need

The critically important role of colleges and training providers in delivering world-class learning and skills in England will be highlighted in *The Skills We Need* – the Annual Statement of LSC Priorities for 2005-06.

Due for launch in December, it will say that while the LSC is determined to fulfil its leadership role to bring the necessary drive and ambition to the reform of learning and skills, this cannot be achieved on its own. It is essential for colleges, training providers and other partners to work with the LSC locally, regionally and nationally on a shared approach to planning and funding.

The annual statement will paint a clear picture of where we are today – including a stark reminder that while employers spend about £23 billion on training and skills development, further education colleges only attract a very small proportion of this business.

The challenge for colleges will be to become more responsive and flexible, providing learning when and where it is needed. Employers will need to be clear

about their future needs and willing to invest in long-term relationships with colleges and providers.

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One of the LSC's priorities is based on listening to colleges and training providers about the changes needed to ensure that the reform of further education stimulates more business investment in skills. This is the LSC agenda for change (see page 1).

The Skills We Need will outline the key actions for 2005-06, building on what has already been achieved – GCSE and A Level results keep improving; record numbers of Apprentices; a reduction in the number of adults with reading and writing difficulties and new ways of working with employers. Most importantly it highlights what must be done to produce the world-class learning and skills that our economy needs.

Queen's Anniversary Prizes

Colleges and universities are invited to enter the 2004 round of The Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education.

The prizes, held biennially since 1994, recognise and reward the special contribution that UK colleges and universities make to the intellectual, economic, cultural and social life of the nation.

The competition, held by the Royal Anniversary Trust, seeks entries reflecting the wide range of activities and projects taking place within FE and HE. There are no separate categories or classes of entry; assessment takes account of the specific and different missions of the various types of institution. The closing date for entries is 23 March 2005.

The prizes comprise a Prize Medal, a Prize Certificate and the right to use the Prizes' logo for four years. Prize winners will be announced in November 2005, followed by a banquet at the Guildhall in London and a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in early 2006 when the Prize Medal and Prize Certificate will be presented by The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.

Alan Lawson, Administrative Director of the Queen's Prizes Office, is available to advise institutions about the scheme on 0870 242 7160. For further details contact: Royal Anniversary Trust, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DR. Tel: 0207 904 0753. Email: info@royalanniversarytrust.org.uk www.royalanniversarytrust.org.uk

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AoC Annual Conference

The Association of Colleges Annual Conference – a key date in the calendar of the DfES, the LSC and a wide range of stakeholders in FE – is being held at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham, from 16-18 November. The LSC is again sponsoring the event.

This year's conference is on the theme *Building on success: Creating a better future for learners*. It will feature a fascinating list of speakers, over 40 seminars and promises to be an invaluable forum to discuss post-14 education activity and policy.

Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, will deliver the keynote address on the first day, with LSC Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, delivering the keynote speech on the last day. Chris Banks, the LSC's Chairman, is also scheduled to speak.

Prince Charles is due to make a video address to the conference, which will also feature Mike Tomlinson, Chair of the 14-19 Reform Working Group, Digby Jones, Director General of the CBI and Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's former Director of Strategy and Communications.

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Seminars include World Class Buildings, The Role of the Governor, the Future of Inspections and E-learning. The LSC is sponsoring a seminar on day two, with Caroline Neville, the LSC's National Director of Learning and David Way, LSC National Director of Skills, along with provider and employer representatives, debating how to reconcile the needs of the learner with the needs of the employer.

Visit www.aoc.co.uk for further details of the conference programme.



Learning+Skills Council