

successforall

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The Success for All newsletter is produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council to keep you up to date with the change programme designed to transform the quality and responsiveness of the learning and skills sector. **Send us your feedback on the newsletter or views on Success for All to successforallnewsletter@lsc.gov.uk**

Skills Talk

On 26 March Charles Clarke presented a Progress Report on the National Skills Strategy for England. The Strategy, launched in late June, will be a key part of the agenda of change in FE and training. It will work alongside – and inter-dependently with – the reform of 14-19 and the HE White Paper, and all are underpinned by Success for All's commitment to drive up standards and accessibility across the sector.

Success for All will radically reform the quality of training supply to meet employers and learners needs by ensuring:

- Strategic Area Reviews (see page 3), are in place in every locality, backed up by new capital investment.
- A target for employer engagement for every provider of FE, with performance against target influencing future funding rates.
- Investment in pay and qualifications of teaching staff and in embedding good practice in teaching and learning, prioritising vocational learning and e-learning.

The Skills Strategy aims to build on this by further improving the abilities of colleges and providers to respond and of employers to articulate demand and invest in training.

The LSC will consult with employers on the developing Skills Strategy. It is teaming up with the British Chambers of Commerce in the Great Skills Debate: local LSCs and local and regional chambers will host events to meet with employers and discuss their skills needs.

The LSC has also published the Funding of Adult Learning: Technical Document. This sets out the current thinking and progress made on the Review of Funding Adult Learning. Consultation events between local LSCs and providers of adult learning will be held locally in April and May. Key issues considered include targeting public funding towards low skilled adults and skills shortages and what can be done to encourage adults to engage in learning to raise their level of skills.

Focus on...

A monthly feature on Success for All's key players and best practice.
This month: **Jane Williams, Head of the Standards Unit**



Focus on...

Jane Williams, Head of the Standards Unit

As a former college principal, Jane Williams can appreciate the mixture of excitement and trepidation she detects within the learning and skills sector to the changes taking place through Success for All.

The head of the DfES Standards Unit believes it is only natural that some will be daunted by the enormity and speed of the programme to transform the quality and responsiveness of the sector to meet the needs of learners and employers.

"positive signals"

What encourages her as she travels around the country talking to college principals, managers of training companies and representatives of sector organisations, is that the majority of those she meets display 'nervous anticipation' and an appreciation of the need for change. 'I am getting some very positive signals that the people who have to make this work are determined that it will,' she says.

Jane talks to a lot of people these days. As head of the new unit, a post she took up in January after leaving City of Wolverhampton College where she was principal and chief executive, she sees it as a vital part of her role to get out and about and listen to those at the sharp end. She is particularly keen to get to know more people from work based and community learning providers. On the rare occasions when she is not on the road she 'rolls up her sleeves' to work with her team of 50.

The unit, which by September will have a presence in all English regions, is responsible for themes two and three – putting teaching and learning at the heart of what we do and developing the sector's workforce. These themes involve a range of initiatives from model teaching and learning frameworks, including the expansion of e-learning and the development of the Leadership College.

Jane believes that the increased funding for FE announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review has left the sector in good shape to move forward. 'A far greater proportion of college funding is now embedded into core funding, which allows colleges to plan and invest in staff on a much more long-term basis,' she says.

"an underpinning strategy"

'There are many elements of Success for All that I hope and expect all providers to respond to positively – particularly such things as the development of local partnerships and an emphasis on being responsive to the needs of

employers. I am aware that the link between success rates of students and financial returns to colleges will pose a challenge to some but I think that Success for All as a whole strategy has got the balance right in terms of sticks and carrots. What we must also recognise is that it is actually an underpinning strategy for at least four others – 14 to 19; Higher Education; Skills for Life and the forthcoming national skills strategy. It is a big agenda and we need to see how Success for All will help deliver on it.'

While much of Success for All can only be measured over three years and beyond, she is confident that some indications of its effectiveness will be visible in the much shorter term, possibly as soon as this Autumn

'We will only know whether the whole strategy has been embraced and is working when we see the progress we have made on increased participation, engagement with employers and better outcomes for learners.

'There will be steps along the way though and, by the Autumn, we should see some early responses to trials on teaching and learning programmes and the take up of places in the new Leadership College, which I believe will be a highly valued service.'

Exciting times

Sue Cousin joined the DfES last year from Huddersfield New College, where she is a teacher and manager. She is one of many sector secondees now working exclusively on Success for All, in her case as a teaching and learning programme leader in Sheffield with responsibility for developing new frameworks.

An academic researcher and current member of the Secondary Heads Association FE Committee, she is in a team that includes former chief inspectors from ALI and Ofsted, consultants and civil servants.

'It is very hard work, very exciting and there is a real buzz about the place,' she says of the Standards Unit. 'People are extremely committed to putting teaching and learning back at the centre of things where they belong. My focus is not just on what we practice but on how we support people in the sector to change behaviour and improve.'

'The feedback I am getting is extremely positive. Everyone wants to be involved with what we are doing and we are getting huge numbers of offers from people wanting to take part in trials, focus groups and consultations.'

'My feeling is that there is a huge amount of support for what we are trying to do. If there is scepticism about whether the rhetoric and philosophy can be put into practice, people are giving us the benefit of the doubt because we are consulting so widely in order to get things right.'

Implementation Update

The start of StARs

The Strategic Areas Review process has now begun and the guidance Circular 03/06 Strategic Area Reviews is out.

The LSC has chosen to use the acronym of StARs for strategic area reviews so there is no confusion with the SAR acronym for self-assessment report.

During the StAR process, the LSC will be committed to:

- Ensuring buy-in from key partners and stakeholders and developing strong relationships with them.
- Facilitating a transparent, open and fair process.
- Maintaining effective communication.
- Ensuring sufficient resources are made available.
- Securing robust, reliable data and a strong evidence base for supporting strategic options.
- Setting clear and reasonable roles for all involved and managing expectations.
- Identifying key priorities to maximise impact.
- Ensuring that necessary training and staff development is made available where appropriate.
- Nurturing the shared ownership of the process.

Pioneers in planning

The StAR process will be the first time that the pattern of provision of all post-16 learning (other than HE) will be reviewed with a common approach across England. The LSC has identified pioneers for each region to pave the way in planning post-16 education and training for the rest of the country.

There will be one pioneering local LSC for eight of the English regions. For the London region, all the five London LSCs will be a collective pioneer to reflect the pan-London approach. The pioneers are: East Midlands, Nottinghamshire; East of England, Bedfordshire & Luton; North East, Northumberland; North West, Cheshire & Warrington; South East, Berkshire; South West, Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole; West Midlands, Birmingham & Solihull; Yorkshire & Humberside, North Yorkshire; London, London West, London South, London North, London East and London Central.

Your views on record

The first eight Success for All consultations attracted more than 450 participants and 700 are registered for the remaining 10 events. Key questions and issues raised so far cover funding, performance review process, development plans, bureaucracy and data.

All feedback will inform the guidance the LSC will issue at the end of May for the sector. We still want your views and comments. The consultation period ends on 25 April and guidance is published at the end of May.

Early consultation feedback from the AoC

The LSC welcomes the initial response by the Association of Colleges to Circular 03/01, *A new framework for quality and success*. Avril Willis, Director of Quality and Standards for the LSC, is meeting the AoC in April to discuss the suggestions and concerns raised in their initial comments.

The LSC is proposing the following headline targets for a general FE college for 2005/06:

- Learner numbers in FTEs – 1) 16-8 and 2) 19+
- Employer engagement – one key target
- Success rates – 1) long qualifications and 2) short qualifications
- Teacher qualifications – 1) full-time teachers and 2) part time teachers.

For sixth form colleges, there will be one target for success rates for all qualifications.

The LSC acknowledges the tight timescales set in Success for All and is working hard with colleges to meet the deadlines.

Three year plans

The LSC has employed Brian Styles, former principal and chief executive of City of Bristol College, as an independent consultant to advise on a possible framework for the three year development/delivery plans. Early thinking will be considered by the FE and Work Based Learning advisory groups and by LEAFEA (the NIACE forum for local education authorities' educators of adults) in mid April. The advisory groups then meet in the second week of May to advise the LSC on guidance for the sector on the three year plans and headline targets.

News in brief

Standards Unit Teaching & Learning Project Managers

The Standards Unit has seconded expert practitioners to lead on the priority curriculum area identified for 2003. Michael Kalvis from West Thames College and Wilf Hudson, from Ofsted are leading on Science. Mike Fisher from the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), is leading on Construction, Craig Harris from NACRO is leading on E2E and Dave Collier from ALI and Sue Gay from Leicester College are leading on Business Studies.

Managing Data

The Managing Information Across Partners group of representatives from 26 organisations, is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations of Mapping Post-16 Education and Learning Management Information Arrangements published on 20 November.

Beacon policy

In February, the DfES and LSC held a Learning and Skills Beacon policy workshop to review existing arrangements for the award of Beacon status and to discuss future design and implementation. These proposals will be developed over the coming months, with announcement of the new arrangements by summer 2003.

Success for All contacts:

Theme 1 Dean Williams 024 7682 3342

Theme 2 Ian Pegg 0114 259 3428

Theme 3 Jane Cunliffe 0114 259 1020

Theme 4 Steve Sawbridge 024 7682 3243

www.successforall.gov.uk (from end April 2003)

Red tape attack

The LSC is committed to implementing the recommendations from Sir George Sweeney's Bureaucracy Task Force. A major step forward was the announcement of the first 20 colleges to enjoy a new relationship based on trust, transparency and openness. From academic year 2002-3 these colleges will only be subject to a 'light-touch' audit. LSC Chief Executive John Harwood promised 'to build a new strategic relationship with colleges based on trust and openness. These first 20 colleges are the trailblazers for our drive.'

The pilot colleges include Lambeth College in London, Bury College in Manchester and Strode College in Somerset. David Gibson of the Association of Colleges commented 'Such new relationships will enable colleges to concentrate on their main mission of providing the highest standards and quality of work for their students.'

The criteria for selection was based on colleges regarded as having robust and reliable management information systems that resulted in their annual funding audits identifying few, if any, significant funding eligibility issues. The have met the two audit based threshold criteria for being included. These two levels of criteria – threshold and informative – were published by the LSC as part of its Success for All commitment to develop a new frameworks for quality and success in the sector.

The National Audit Office will monitor the success of the new system. The Trust in FE pilots are listed at www.lsc.gov.uk. By the summer the LSC will have extended the arrangement to up to 100 more colleges – the Pathfinder phase.

Calendar

The Success for All calendar for colleges and providers is updated in each issue of the newsletter.

*Seminars are by invitation. The calendar as at the beginning of April is:

2003	Developments	Communications/consultation
April	LSC issues guidance on strategic area reviews and reviews begin	
25 April		Consultation on the framework for quality and success closes
28 April		Focus on policy seminar: Measuring Success – including floor and improvement targets*
30 April	2003/04 funding confirmed for colleges and providers	
April-May		Great Skills Debate regional workshops
May	Trials of first teaching and learning best practice materials begin	
19 May		'Ask Margaret' – Margaret Hodge, minister for lifelong learning, answers your questions online at www.dfes.gov.uk
May-June	LSC performance reviews used to identify colleges and providers eligible for three-year funding	
29 May		Focus on policy seminar on StARs
31 May	LSC circular reporting on the quality and success consultation and confirming arrangements for three-year funding and development plans	
May-July	Colleges and providers continue discussion with LLSCs on development plans and headline improvement targets	
June	National Skills Strategy and outcomes of Review of Funding of Adult Learning published	LSC launch event for National Skills Strategy
July	LSC assessments for capital programme	
31 July	Providers and LSC agree development plans	
31 July	Floor and improvement targets in place	