

# 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](mailto:successforallnewsletter@lsc.gov.uk)

## Working Together

This edition focuses on how vital it is for all players in the sector to work together to make *Success for All* a reality. Over 1,000 of you attended the regional consultations on *Success for All* – and in particular on developing a framework for quality and success – in March and April. Hundreds made comments and raised questions. The LSC wants to continue to work with everyone in the sector to ensure that plans really will make improvements in choice and quality for learners, employers and local communities. In particular, the LSC wants to continue work on developing wider measures of success and on plans for recognition of excellent provision.

In addition to the consultation events, the LSC received over 300 written responses to circulars 03/01 and 03/02 from colleges, providers and other organisations. This is an excellent level of

interest and the LSC appreciates the thoughtful views and suggestions from the sector. Early analysis shows strong support for *Success for All* principles and many of the LSC's proposals. Results of the consultation, and the draft circular, will be considered in mid-May by the three advisory groups:

- further education, chaired by Lynne Sedgemore, principal of Guildford College
- work based learning, chaired by Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Learning Providers (ALP)
- adult learning, chaired by Donald Rae, Assistant Chief Education Officer (Lifelong Learning) at Derbyshire County Council.

The analysis of the consultation and the circular will be published at the end of May, and will be featured in the next *Success for All* newsletter.

### *Success for All* has four key themes:

**Theme 1** Meeting needs and improving choice

**Theme 2** Putting teaching, training and learning at the heart of what we do

**Theme 3** Developing the leaders, teachers, lecturers, trainers and support staff of the future

**Theme 4** Developing a framework for quality and success

## Focus on...

A monthly feature on *Success for All's* key players and good practice. This month: **Area review in Birmingham and Solihull**

## Focus on...

### Making a success of Strategic Area Reviews

**'This isn't about the Learning and Skills Council doing things to people. It is about working in partnership and taking a joint and collective approach to make things better.'** So says David Cragg of the Strategic Area Review process which is transforming education and training in Birmingham and Solihull, where he is the LSC's Executive Director.

In the space of just two years, this collective approach has resulted in significant progress being made in adapting and changing the face of academic and vocational provision to meet the needs of learners, employers and the local economy.

Collaboration between the LSC and stakeholders including the two Local Education Authorities, schools, colleges, training providers, employers and representative organisations, was given a kick start in 2001 when an area-wide approach to the planning of provision became 'an imperative' to prepare for an impending 16-19 area-wide inspection by Ofsted and ALI.

'This was very helpful, almost ideal, because it meant there was an immediate collective interest across the whole network,' said David. 'We really needed to get our act together to prepare and this was backed fully by the schools, colleges, providers and LEAs.'

With the launch of the LSC in March 2001, it was decided to produce a local development plan for Birmingham and Solihull, for consultation with all partners, to highlight the critical issues the sub-region faced.

An independent stock take of provision and facilities was conducted and the resulting plan signalled the complex and fragmented nature of 16-19 provision. From this, it was agreed to concentrate initially on 16-19 provision while piloting vocational reviews of business sectors most in need of support.

'We had inherited 16-19 provision which was clearly fragmented and where a highly competitive system was in operation. Changes had to be made and we had to make them together. It was nice to note that the Ofsted/ALI report strongly endorsed our collaborative approach.'

The way forward has been to identify eight areas where schools and colleges are developing networks to plan and deliver coherent provision. Later this year, a formal collegiate structure will be piloted along with common timetabling and partners are now looking at the possibility of shared and jointly managed facilities for 14 to 19 year olds.

While 16-19 was identified as a priority, skills training has been treated as no less significant and initiatives resulting from the reviews of industrial sectors – construction, engineering, health and social care and professional and business services – have resulted in a closer alignment of FE

provision with the needs of employers, with lead colleges identified as Centres of Vocational Excellence to support each of the sectors.

Progress being made in the construction sector is perhaps the most dramatic local example of how the LSC, colleges, employers and representative bodies such as the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) have taken rapid strides to fill skills gaps and improve the quality and relevance of training on offer.

'In Birmingham alone, there are £2 billion of building development projects in the pipeline in the next decade,' said David Cragg. 'Training is in a mess with substantial skills gaps, inadequate training provision and inadequate facilities.'

'We have set up a sector skills taskforce, the Construction Employment Alliance, to act as a sounding board and our construction review has received powerful support from employers and the CITB.'

'The upshot is an agreement to create a new £20 million Centre of Vocational Excellence to cover the whole area. This will be a completely new building, scheduled to open in 2004, which will provide the right environment, facilities and quality of training as well as a business base for the industry.'

While work continues to support the three key sectors, plans are now in the pipeline for three more reviews covering ICT, including niche markets, retail and hotel and catering.

### A sense of ownership

Peter Little, who runs Birmingham Rathbone, one of the area's largest work based learning providers, says the initial sense of scepticism in the sector to the Area Review work described above quickly evaporated when representatives realised they would be fundamental to the process of change.

'There was a lot of cynicism about in the early days – a feeling of 'new clothes but nothing will really change'. That disappeared when it became clear that we were not just going to be kept in the background but would be actively involved in decision making.'

'There has been a genuine effort to involve partners which has resulted in people recognising that this is a real opportunity to take things forward and a sense that the LSC will inject major money into the system to make tangible improvements.'

'For the first time, people at a really high level – head teachers, principals and chief executives – are sitting around the same table, getting to know each other and looking at strategic issues. Everyone is signed up to developing better partnerships and making them work.'

## Implementation Update

### Stakeholder Groups

The LSC is working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders representing sectoral, local, regional and national interests. A number of groups involving stakeholders have been established by the LSC and DfES to support *Success for All* by actively engaging practitioners from the learning and skills sector in policy development and implementation.

The Partner Stakeholder Group has a particular focus on national policy for Theme 1 (Meeting Needs, Improving Choice), offering advice and guidance to the LSC *Success for All* implementation team and the Theme 1 Programme Board.

Nick Lewis, Principal of Broxtowe College, Nottingham chairs the Group, which consists of a wide range of representatives including sixth form schools, work based learning, adult and community learning and higher education. The Group has met twice so far – in January and March 2003 – to mainly discuss the LSC's arrangements and guidance for StARs. The Group will meet next on 14 May 2003 to discuss provider mission review and the evaluation of StARs.

'The Group's purpose is currently focused on implementation of StARs,' says Nick Lewis. 'We've identified the challenges in seeing through this complex area of work. We are working with the LSC on the way forward, keeping advice practical, calling in good practice and learning from ongoing review work.'

For more information about the Partners Stakeholders Group, such as its full terms of reference and membership, please contact the *Success for All* implementation team (e-mail: [SFA.implementationteam@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:SFA.implementationteam@lsc.gov.uk)). By the end of May there will be stakeholder groups in place in every locality to advise on how the StAR process should be carried out in local areas throughout England over the next two years. These local groups will ensure all views are taken into account in the best interests of local learners, employees and communities.

### Future measures of success

The LSC and DfES are working with Ofsted and ALL on developing new measures of success for learners in post-16 to have in place for 2005/06, in time for the next inspection cycle. Two events were held in April to explore – with the sector – the range of measures needed. At a Focus on Policy seminar organised by LSDA, Professor Tom Schuller based at Birkbeck University of London and co-director of the Centre for Research set out the wider benefits of learning, and Avril Willis, Director of Quality and Standards at the LSC set out the joint thinking so far of the LSC, DfES and the inspectorates on a suite of new measures.

### Hairdressers, horses and hospitality

And the link is? Upper Cut Training of Weston-super-Mare, Summerhouse Education and Equitation Centre of Gloucester and Barnfield College of Luton are three of the latest Learning and Skills Beacons.

They were among the six colleges and six work based learning providers whose excellence was publicly recognised and celebrated at a special ceremony in Westminster on 29 April. They received their awards of Learning and Skills Beacon status from education minister Margaret Hodge and Toni Fazaeli of the LSC's national office. Mrs Hodge praised their top class inspection results, overall performances, and commitment to meeting the needs of learners and local employers. Many of the Beacons had brought learners with them to share the limelight.

Beacon status is awarded to a provider in recognition of its top class inspection results and outstanding performance in their LSC assessment.

In this latest round of awards, a number of 'firsts' were achieved. These included Barnfield College of Luton, the first general FE college to achieve Beacon status, S & B Training of Bristol, the first non-employer training provider, and Luton Borough Council, the first local authority.

Learning and Skills Beacon status was also awarded to Carmel College of St Helens, John Leggott College of Scunthorpe, King George V College of Southport, Woodhouse College of Finchley and Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College of Leicester, Lex Harvey Ltd of Bedworth in Warwickshire, MG Rover Group of Longbridge, Summerhouse Education and Equitation Centre of Hardwicke in Gloucestershire and Upper Cut Training of Weston-super-Mare.

The ongoing role of Beacons new and old is to share good practice and help to develop innovative approaches to education and training.

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[www.successforall.gov.uk](http://www.successforall.gov.uk)

## The 'Hot-seat' that got too hot

The 'Ask Jane' (Williams) online hot-seat session took place on 31 March, and despite the building being evacuated following a fire alarm, Jane Williams answered 30 questions. The questions varied from the general, 'Why was the unit set up?', to quite detailed questions covering issues regarding the Leadership College, Advanced Skills Tutors, Childcare Provision and Monitoring and Assessment.

Jane Williams was asked why the Standards Unit had chosen to focus initially on construction, entry to employment, business studies and science. She said the selection had been made on the basis of a whole range of factors including the number of learners, inspection

findings, wide range of levels and qualifications, wide variety of providers and the importance of these areas to the nation's economic needs and social inclusion agenda. You can access the transcript at [www.dfes.gov.uk/askjane](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/askjane)

Following the successes of the 'Ask' online discussions, Margaret Hodge is next in the hot-seat on 19 May. You will need to log on to [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) between 13:00 and 14:30, to post a question. If you are not able to log on live, you can e-mail your question in advance to [further.education@dfes.gov.uk](mailto:further.education@dfes.gov.uk) – you can then log on after the event and see what Margaret Hodge had to say. This is an excellent opportunity to put your questions about *Success for All* directly to the Minister.

## Calendar

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

2003	Developments	Communications/consultation
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 <a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk">www.dfes.gov.uk</a>
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
30 June		Focus on policy seminar on three-year development plans
July	LSC assessments for capital programme	
31 July	Providers and LSC agree development plans	
31 July	Floor and improvement targets in place	