

Strengthening support

London West LSC is one of seven LSCs across the country to take part in a pilot project aimed at helping schools support staff to develop their skills.

Historically, little importance has been placed on the role of support staff, their education and training. However, that's all about to change, because support staff are a key element of the Government's plans to develop the school workforce.

The pilot project, which started towards the end of last year, will focus on three categories of school support staff: premises managers, administrative assistants and school meals supervisors. They will receive training in basic skills, including

communication, and will be encouraged to achieve an NVQ in a subject related to their work. The local Information, Advice and Guidance Partnerships – funded by the LSC – will be involved at the start and end of the project to help ensure that participants engage in lifelong learning.

London West LSC will be conducting the pilot in Hammersmith & Fulham and in Hillingdon. Two models will be put to the test: in the former, the Education department will deliver the basic skills programme directly from their business unit; whereas in the latter the Education department will use private providers to deliver the training.

The pilot will continue until March 2004.

Learning begins at home

As part of a pilot project funded by London West LSC, local housing landlords are encouraging tenants to improve their skills and job prospects by taking advantage of learning opportunities close to home.

London West LSC is currently working with housing management organisation, Hounslow Homes, to identify people whose lack of basic skills is preventing them from making the most of local employment opportunities. The research is being directed by Housing Potential UK, the national skills agency for housing, and the project carries the support of both the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Executive Director Peter Pledger said: 'We see this as an additional way of reaching people who are in need of skills training. By contacting them in their own homes, we can explore the potential for providing learning opportunities for them on their doorsteps, in local community centres and similar locations.'

Capitalising on quality

Angela Smyth, an Associate Adviser who works as part of London West LSC's Workforce Development team, has won Capital Quality's coveted Best Adviser Feedback Award.

Capital Quality is the Investors in People Quality Centre for London. It is one of the largest Regional Quality Centres in the UK and promotes business excellence through assessment and recognition of the Investors in People Standard.

Angela won the award based on the positive feedback received by Capital Quality from the clients she has worked with. She said: 'I was thrilled to receive this prestigious award. It's very rewarding to learn that the people I support consider that I've been doing a good job!'

Three other members of the LSC's Workforce Development team were also nominated for awards: Tony Bellia for Co-ordinator of the Year; Roy Sowersby for Adviser of the Year; and Bill Crabtree for Assessor of the Year.

Skills revolution

According to a new report by the national LSC, in 2002 nearly a quarter of English companies reported a skill gap, up 7% on 2001.

The Skills in England 2002 report shows that skill gaps are occurring because of: the introduction of new technology; organisational change; lack of training and human resources development; and changes in products or services. The report also shows how skill deficiencies are limiting existing business effectiveness and threatening the long-term competitiveness of this country.

Bryan Sanderson, Chairman of the LSC, warned: 'Skill gaps are not just a problem now; they are a problem that's building for the future. If businesses, both large and small, are to succeed in this increasingly competitive environment, employers need to play a greater role and look to the development of their existing workforce, rather than to the external labour market.'

'The report also highlights the need for education and training providers to become more innovative and flexible in meeting the demands of business. Aligning training provision to employers' needs is fundamental to the LSC's role and our aim is for the whole skills area to become much more demand-led. One size simply cannot fit all if we are to close the skill gaps, truly enter a skills revolution and increase the country's productivity and international competitiveness.'

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the area

Your newsletter from London West Learning and Skills Council

Plans in the pipeline

London West LSC's Annual Plan for 2003 to 2004 was signed off by the Council on 25 February and is scheduled to be approved by the National Council on 27 March. It sets out plans for implementing a local response: to the LSC's mission 'to raise participation and attainment through high quality education and training which puts learners first'; and to its vision that 'by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.'

A realistic and achievable working document, the Annual Plan is informed and shaped by a number of key policies and strategies contained in the following:

- LSC Grant Letter for 2003 to 2004
- LSC Corporate Plan to 2005

- London West LSC Strategic Plan 2002 to 2005
- London West LSC Needs Assessment 2002
- London's Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action
- Success for All strategy for reforming education and training
- 14-19 Opportunity and Excellence white paper
- Other Government and LSC policies and strategies.

There are three main elements within the Annual Plan. Firstly, a review of progress to date, including London West LSC's investment of more than £275m to provide nearly 230,000 local learners with the opportunity to improve their skills and, in many cases, to achieve nationally recognised qualifications. Also included in this initial section is London West LSC's investment during 2002

of more than £50m of funding to help in excess of 12,000 local school sixth form students to learn, achieve and progress. The second element provides strategy updates to the Local Strategic Plan published in March 2002. And the third element lists the detailed business activity plans for 2003 to 2004.

Executive Director Peter Pledger said: 'London West LSC is committed to responding to the challenging agenda for 2003 to 2004 and we believe that implementing our Annual Plan gives us excellent opportunities to work with our strategic and delivery partners to make this happen.'

Creating a buzz

The first London Jobs and Training exhibition, which took place at the start of February, proved to be a very popular event, with more than 9,000 visitors flocking to the Commonwealth Centre in Kensington.

A pan-London event designed to promote training and offer careers advice, the interactive two-day exhibition was sponsored by the five London LSCs and was extremely well received by both target audiences: young people and their parents; and adults looking to

build or change their career.

More than 90 training providers and employers took part in the exhibition. With interactive demonstrations from colleges and training providers, employer presentations, seminars, workshops and individual careers advice from Connexions and IAG London, there was something for everyone.

The first London Jobs and Training exhibition was a roaring success

Please note that our web address has changed to www.londonwest.org

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CORPORATE

Here we go!

London West LSC has given its backing to Brent Council's ambitious Vision for a New Wembley. It is an active partner in Brent's strategy to maximise the training and employment opportunities for local people arising from the construction of a brand new £445m national stadium and the re-development of its surrounding areas.

By working with employers and training providers to address the critical skills shortages in the construction industry, the LSC aims to expand work-based learning at Wembley and to put in place high quality vocational provision, including Modern Apprenticeships. This will, in turn, impact positively on other local development sites, such as White City.

An update from Peter

Welcome to the fourth edition of *the area*, the newsletter of London West Learning and Skills Council.

This edition sees the publication of our Annual Plan for 2003 to 2004, which will help keep us

focused on delivering our targets, one of which is working to ensure that we implement the challenges outlined in *Success for All – Reforming Further Education and Training*.

This strategy aims to raise standards, improve outcomes and increase participation in learning, providing a framework to improve learning for all and to ensure that our provision meets local needs.

It puts work-based learning on an equal footing with other forms of education and training. The strategy aims to make our ambition of parity of esteem a practical reality by focusing action on the key strategic and quality issues which stand in the way. It does so by putting young people and employers' needs at its heart.

Comprehensive consultation documents on how to ensure that the objectives of this strategy are met have been sent to colleges and providers of work-based learning and I look forward to working in partnership to achieve our end goal, the highest quality education that meets the needs of learners and employers.

Peter Pledger – Executive Director

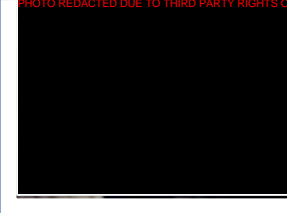
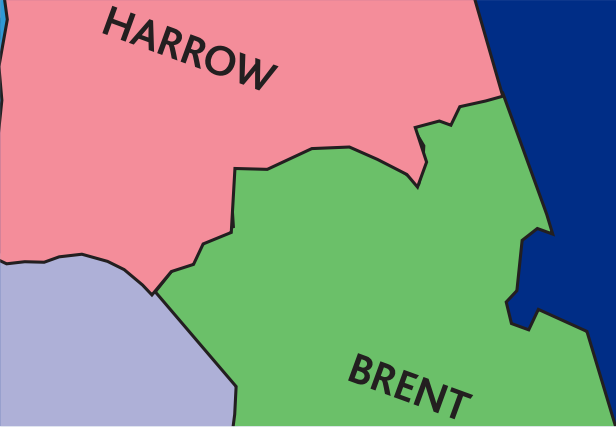
Vocational excellence

London West LSC is supporting a proposal by West Thames College in Hounslow to become a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in e-skills.

Having crossed the first hurdle in its quest for CoVE status, the College must now formulate the robust development plan required for the next stage of the process to become a CoVE.

Information Technology was identified as a priority sector in the LSC's Local Strategic Plan, which confirms that the local economy demands high levels of skills and qualifications, especially in Information Communications Technology (ICT) and other technical areas, making it particularly vulnerable to skills shortages.

The proposed new CoVE will aim to address this growing skills gap by helping to provide the high quality professionals that industry needs. West Thames College will support ICT in business by focusing on network management, software engineering and web technologies. It will provide ICT training for three specific target groups: employers, second language speakers and full-time students looking for opportunities to progress.



Introducing the Strategic Area Review

The Strategic Area Review is a new process aimed at assessing provision – both currently offered and required – in each part of the country.

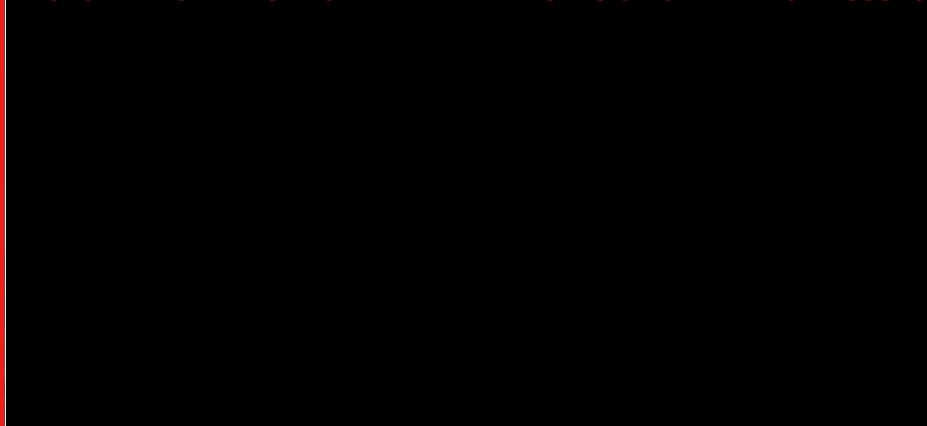
An outcome of 'Success For All', the Government's reform strategy for further education, the Review process will assess provision against the:

- Emerging priorities and needs of learners, employers and local communities
- Need to drive up the quality and success rates in many areas of provision and improve their cost effectiveness
- Volume and type of education and training needed to meet the LSC's national targets and to deliver the Government's four key policy priorities of 14-19 learning, entry to Higher Education, workforce development and adult basic skills.

Locally, the Strategic Area Review will build on the work done previously by London West LSC, including the results from the recent Area-Wide Inspection reports for Brent and for Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham. London West LSC will work with all its key partners, including the local education authorities, Jobcentre Plus, local communities, Connexions, schools and colleges, and other learning providers, to deliver Strategic Area Reviews.

London West LSC's Executive Director Peter Pledger said: 'The new Strategic Area Review process will help to ensure that learners within London West have the right mix of high-quality, safe and accessible learning opportunities capable of meeting their needs, along with the requirements of employers and local communities.'

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Advocating excellence: (left to right) Bill Stokoe, Chair of Corporation, Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College; Margaret Hodge MP; and London West LSC Executive Director Peter Pledger

Funding announcement

Margaret Hodge, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Further and Higher Education, announced further national funding of £130m for the Government's Excellence Challenge Scheme during her visit to Acton and West London College in mid-February.

The Scheme aims to increase the proportion of non-traditional students going to university. London West has three Excellence Challenge areas – Ealing, Brent and Hammersmith & Fulham – along with an associated initiative in

Hillingdon. The additional money will be used to extend the life of the Scheme by a further two years to 2006.

Speaking at the event, Ms Hodge said: 'Widening access to Higher Education is a priority for this Government.' London West LSC has contributed £450,000 to local Excellence Challenge initiatives as just one of the ways in which it actively supports efforts to open up higher level learning to young people and adults in the area.

Researching London West

The findings of four important new research projects were presented at a launch event held at London West LSC on 21 March.

When the first annual Needs Assessment was produced in 2001, it was felt that certain groups in the community were under-represented in education and learning. Determined to find out more about the root causes of this situation – and to remedy them – London West funded four research projects to look at the following groups: lone parents; estate residents; people with disabilities; and young offenders.

Martin Freedman, Head of Research at London West LSC, said: 'Each of the projects was carried out by an independent consultancy. We have been impressed by the co-operation, collaboration and information sharing that has

taken place between the consultants working on the four different pieces of research.'

The projects emphasised the need for learning provision to be flexible and for more work to be done on linking learners to provision. Both the disabilities research and the study on lone parents revealed inconsistencies in the way that we currently collect information on these groups.

The audience included representatives from organisations that had taken part in the research, from public, private and voluntary sectors. Delegates discussed the key research findings and how they could best be used to the benefit of the four identified groups.

For further information, contact Martin Freedman on 020 8929 8483.

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YOUNG PEOPLE

The London Jobs and Training exhibition resulted in a very positive response from visitors and exhibitors

London Jobs and Training

Bringing schools and businesses together

Thousands of local school children are benefiting from events and activities arranged by Education Business Link organisations that receive funding from London West LSC.

Established in April 2001, Education Business Links London West is a consortium comprising six local Education Business Partnership (EBP) organisations and four national organisations. By working together across the six west London boroughs, the consortium aims to bring together schools, businesses and community organisations in order to enhance the work-

related learning experiences of young people.

In the current financial year, London West LSC has provided funding to the tune of £728,000 to support a range of activities. These include work experience, professional development placements in business for teachers, enterprise activities, key skills events, industry days, employer mentoring and vocationally-orientated out-of-school learning provision.

In a project unique within the London area and part funded by London West LSC, Hounslow EBP has enabled students from local schools to receive valuable language and work training opportunities in three European cities. These week-long visits are invaluable work-related language opportunities which allow the students to immerse themselves in the language and culture of their host city. Hounslow EBP also works with schools and chambers of commerce in the European cities to

facilitate reciprocal visits to Hounslow schools and employers.

Meanwhile, North West London EBP organised a project in which pupils from a Brent high school built a small house on the top floor of IKEA's Brent store car park. It has also arranged for businesses around the Wembley area to mentor a group of sixth formers from the local Copland Community School and Technology Centre on topics ranging from business studies to travel and tourism, as part of their studies towards Advanced Vocational Certificates.

Consortium Manager David Scott said: 'The value of this funding from London West LSC is that it enables our partners to undertake a crucial brokerage role, ensuring that coherence and efficiency are achieved in bringing schools and businesses together.'

Dramatic performance in Brent

All maintained secondary schools in Brent have been offered a free show as part of their Year 9 options evenings. This important pilot activity has been launched by London West LSC in response to the need to increase awareness of options among young people, as highlighted in Brent's Strategic Area Review.

'*I'm a parent, get me out of here!*' is an exciting performance created and delivered by the highly acclaimed ImpAct Theatre Group. The show is designed to educate parents and students about the range of Post-14 options available and the need to have a broad education. Its main emphasis is the importance of choosing wisely, as the decision students make now will affect their Post-16 learning opportunities and careers.

Brent schools that have signed up for the show, which is sponsored by London West LSC, include Alperton High School, Wembley High School, Copland Community School and Technology Centre, Willesden High, Preston Manor High and Queens Park School. For more information, contact ImpAct direct on 08700 111288.

New Work-Based Learning Provider Support Unit

London West LSC is committed to ensuring that work-based learning achieves parity as a Post-16 learning option, and to improving:

- The quality and range of work-based learning in the area
- Participation in work-based learning
- Achievement of Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships.

As one of a range of measures designed to achieve these objectives, London West LSC is setting up a new organisation, which will be a distinct legal entity, operating under the name of The London West Work-Based Learning Provider Support Unit.

Proposals received from individuals and organisations interested in establishing, developing and managing the new Support Unit are currently being assessed. The successful tenderer will start work on the project at the end of March, with a view to the Unit being operational from the end of July at the latest.

Partnershi

The West London Learning Partnership (WLLP) and London West LSC joined forces in mid-February to stage a conference on work-based learning designed to support success and achievement in the London West area.

The conference was attended by more than 70 delegates, including existing and potential work-based learning providers and many other stakeholders. Following an opening speech by WLLP Chair Rachel Davies, the conference began with a series of presentations:

- **Clare Arnold, London West LSC's Director of Operations and Quality** – explained the objectives of Area Inspections, the proposed Strategic Area Reviews and the role of the LSC in collaborating with key partners to develop action plans and strategies
- **Patrick Kelly, Training Consultant from**

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On a fact finding mission: Sir Roy Gardner (left) and London West LSC Executive Director Peter Pledger

Top level visit

London West LSC and BAA welcomed the head of the Government's Modern Apprenticeship (MA) Task Force on a fact finding visit to BAA Heathrow's engineering centre in early February.

Leading industrialist Sir Roy Gardner toured the centre to see for himself how BAA's successful MA programme works in practice. BAA currently has 45 young people undertaking a four-year Advanced MA programme in Engineering Maintenance, which is run under contract to London West LSC.

BAA has been running apprenticeship schemes for around 26 years. A total of 230 aspiring engineers have successfully completed training, with 145 going on to a full-time position at the airport.

During the visit Chris Green, Heathrow Airport's Head of Engineering, told Sir Roy: 'We are very proud of the apprenticeship scheme, which has real benefits to BAA and the local community where we recruit most of our apprentices from. We need specialist skills that are in short supply: this scheme enables us to develop local young people with these skills and to give them a career in engineering.'

Brand new learning programme

From August 2003, young people in England who are not yet ready or able to enter Modern Apprenticeship programmes or other employment directly, will be offered a new learning programme called Entry 2 Employment (E2E).

The main objective of the E2E programme, which will replace Life Skills, Preparatory Training and other training at level 1, is to help young people to become more 'job ready'. Combining greater flexibility with increased levels of learner support, E2E offers a valuable entry point for those who:

- Would benefit from the opportunity to improve their skills for life
- Are feeling unsure which career direction to take
- Know what sort of work they would like to do, but cannot progress because of their literacy or numeracy needs.

A draft framework for E2E can be found on the LSC website (www.londonwest.org). The main learning objectives for young people participating

in E2E will be to develop their motivation and confidence, personal effectiveness, Basic and/or Key Skills and to acquire vocational knowledge, skills and understanding through sampling a range of work and learning contexts. Wherever possible, all E2E participants will work towards some qualification – this in turn can prove a powerful motivator to continue learning.

London West LSC's Head of Provider Contracting, Andy Colley, is convinced that the new learning programme will work. He said: 'E2E will allow the LSC to work closely with training providers to offer a range of exciting opportunities to local learners. We hope to identify and contract with a range of innovative training providers who will work with us to encourage disadvantaged young people to return to learning. We also want to give learners who are uncertain about what they want to do the opportunity to try out different options that will lead to a full-time learning programme in the vocation of their choice.'

p in action

London Underground – spoke about the complementary roles of employer and provider in offering effective work-based learning, and about the importance of effective communication

- **Edwin Addis, London West LSC's Policy and Planning Manager (Equality and Diversity)**

– introduced a pilot project for Equality and Diversity Impact Measures, designed to monitor and identify new measures

- **Phillip Walker, Director of Community and Client Services at Havering College of Further and Higher Education**

– promoted the value of work-based learning and effective partnerships with employers.

Delegates were then invited to attend two of four workshops: Working with Partners; Leadership and Management; Skills for Life; and Using Work-based Training to Re-engage Young People. After lunch

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ImpAct performers demonstrated how to be a successful work-based learning provider

delegates were entertained with an amusing, specially commissioned, interactive performance by the ImpAct Theatre Group, highlighting how to be a successful work-based learning provider.

WLLP Manager Lorraine Collins, who organised the conference, is currently seconded part-time to the LSC to support activities around the Area-Wide Inspection report for Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham. She said: 'The report identifies the need to

develop work-based learning in London West, which is why we are very pleased to have been able to work with the LSC to stage this event.'

Peter Pledger, Executive Director of London West LSC, closed the conference with a hard-hitting message confirming the need to act quickly in order to improve the range and quality of provision, and to drive up participation and achievement levels across the local area (see *Support Unit* article on page 4).



6 ADULTS

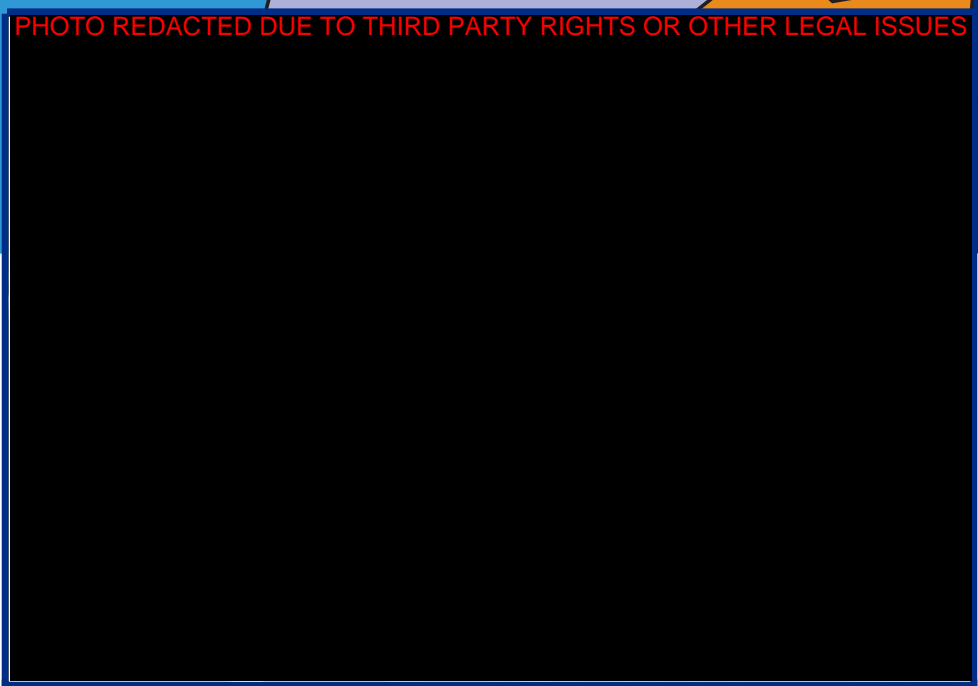
What learners really think

The results of the first comprehensive and independent, national survey of Post-16 education and training have been published by the LSC.

The findings, based on feedback from the 13,000 people interviewed in the first year of a five-year LSC research programme, reveal that learners are highly satisfied with the teaching and training they receive at work and in colleges.

However, although these results are highly encouraging, there is no room for complacency and the LSC has already begun working with partner organisations to identify areas where action is required to raise standards.

The survey was conducted by the independent research company NOP.



Supporting 'Skills for Life': Helen Cross (pictured left), newly appointed Teacher Training Manager for London West LSC, and Ellen Quaye, Head of Adult and Community Education

Survey results

Working well:

- More than 90% said they were satisfied with the education and training they received
- 'Very/extremely satisfied' with their learning experience is the verdict from 76% of people in accredited Adult and Community Learning, 64% of those in Further Education and 62% of those in work-based learning
- The quality of teaching and training, the biggest single influence on learners' satisfaction levels, is also highly rated across all three sectors mentioned in the previous point
- Almost nine out of 10 of all learners who left school with a negative attitude said they are now more confident in their ability to learn and have a greater enthusiasm for their subject.

Improvement needed:

- Just over half of learners questioned felt that some lessons were unproductive, quoting problems like 'disruptions from other learners' and 'staff shortages, including cancelled lessons'
- 16 to 18-year-olds are less likely than other groups to feel that the way they like to learn is understood.

Training the trainers

The additional funding secured by London West LSC to support capacity building of professionals in Basic Skills teaching has been used to fund a residential course for trainers in Further Education and other learning institutions.

The course was jointly planned and facilitated by a range of key partners from across the London region. It was developed to support the implementation of 'Skills for Life', the new curriculum standards and teaching qualification framework for volunteers, support tutors and teachers of Basic Skills.

Ten of the 11 institutions involved in Basic

Teacher Training in London West attended the course, which helped teacher trainers in many different ways, including enabling them to explore literacy and numeracy subject specifications and the FENTO Standards for Teaching and Supporting Learning. The event also created the perfect opportunity to introduce London West LSC's newly appointed Teacher Trainer Manager, Helen Cross.

Delegate feedback from the course confirmed that this was a much-needed event and that it had succeeded in creating a number of networks and sub-regional collaboration opportunities for the future.

A local learndirect update

Learndirect provision in London West:

- Is the operational responsibility of the North West London Colleges Consortium
- Has grown from two development centres in 1999 to a total of 36 centres or access points in 2003
- Has been highly successful in attracting 'hard to reach' local learners:
 - ▼ More than 50% of current learners have not studied in the last three years
 - ▼ Up to 71% of learners enrolled on courses come from ethnic minority groups
 - ▼ 30% of learners are in the workplace
- Presently services around 10,000 learners a year
- Is easily accessible, well resourced and strategically sited in community venues such as The Iranian Centre and the Neasden Temple
- Continues to evolve – pilot developments are currently taking place around Skills for Life provision, online testing for numeracy and literacy, using ICT to teach learners with English as their second language, and diagnostic assessments
- Will eventually operate as a single, unified hub.

Sowing the seeds for family learning: (left to right) Lorraine Collins, West London Partnership Manager; Ellen Quaye; Titus Alexander; and Alison Leake, Acting Principal Officer, Adult Education and Training Services, London Borough of Hounslow

Putting the family first

awareness of the term 'family learning'; to disseminate good practice on family learning courses, events and workshops; to support the development of quality learning within family learning programmes; and to develop a common strategy on family learning.

Key speakers included Titus Alexander, independent educator, author and a founder member of the Parenting Education and Support Forum and Self-Esteem Network and Ellen Quaye, Head of Adult and Community Education at London West LSC.

Titus Alexander said that nurturing positive learning within families had the potential to transform society from the bottom up and was the most important task in education today. Likening family learning to tending a garden, he said: 'Like gardens, every family is different. All

living things flourish with care and attention. Too much and they are smothered, too little and they become stunted or die. Supporting family learning is about offering skills, seeds, cuttings, ideas and help for other people's gardens.'

Ellen Quaye highlighted the importance of the LSC and partner organisations working together to develop a family learning strategy for London West. She said: 'Family learning straddles a number of key government agenda, including social inclusion, the skills agenda, widening participation, neighbourhood regeneration, raising educational standards and supporting families. The only way that we can do this effectively is to have a common approach by identifying and targeting specific communities, areas and schools and working with providers to deliver high quality learning.'

More than 80 professionals involved in planning and delivering family learning in the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow took part in a successful family learning conference, the first of its kind in West London.

London West LSC and the West London Learning Partnership joined forces with London Borough of Hounslow Adult and Community Service to organise and promote 'Sharing Good Practice in Family Learning' at the Civic Centre in Hounslow at the end of February.

The conference sought to define a common

Relevant, modern and accessible learning

London West LSC will shortly be embarking on a concentrated marketing campaign designed to increase the demand for learning from adults across the local area.

The campaign, which will run from the end of March for five weeks, targets new learners from more disadvantaged groups by presenting learning as relevant, modern and something that

can help them get more out of life. An important outcome of the campaign will be the generation and subsequent fulfilment of requests for course prospectuses.

A number of new approaches will be trialled during the campaign, including advertising on the inside and outside of buses, supplemented by direct marketing giving people the option of

requesting course information via a central phone number – another new idea – or by freepost. When evaluated, these initiatives will provide useful information to guide future marketing activities.

Bite Size biting back in 2003

Yes! Bite Size will be back in 2003. Full details will follow in the near future but, in the meantime, get ready for the free course frenzy!

London West LSC is keen to get training providers on board with Bite Size, particularly if you haven't been involved before. If you are an employer, perhaps you would consider holding a Bite Size course for your staff – one that could run during the lunch period, because the courses are between one and three hours long.

This year, Bite Size is being promoted on a regional basis to increase participation in learning and work, as well as to promote progression onto qualifications and employment. More details will be provided in the next issue of *the area*.

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