

Adult and Community Learning 2003/04

Planning Guidance

Consultation Outcomes

Allocations Process

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Further information

For further information, please contact the appropriate local Learning and Skills Council. Contact details for each local LSC can be found on the LSC's website (www.lsc.gov.uk).

Executive Summary

Date

December 2002

Subject

This document provides guidance on the LSC's planning approach for ACL for 2003/04, which is intended to provide local education authorities (LEAs) with a framework for a dialogue with the relevant local LSC, culminating in the development of an agreed plan for ACL provision for 2003/04.

It also presents the outcomes of the recent consultation carried out by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on adult and community learning (ACL).

The allocation process for ACL for 2003/04 is also described.

In 2003/04, the LEAs' guarantee of funding levels ends. The LSC will implement transitional arrangements, including the requirement for an Adult Learning Plan as the first steps towards implementing formula funding from 2004/05.

The Adult Learning Plan must include a review of the provision, stating the sources of evaluation on which this is based, delivered in the preceding year, and a rationale for proposed changes to provision for the coming year and beyond. The Adult Learning Plan will be the starting point for detailed dialogue with local LSCs to agree appropriate provision and funding. Where provision is subcontracted, the LEA should ensure that it consults with providers as part of the planning process.

The planning and funding process for 2003/04 involves the submission of data on learner numbers and the provision of the review of the Adult Learning Plan, or equivalent business plan, to the local LSC by 31 March 2003.

Intended recipients

This document is of interest to LEAs, learning providers and officers of local education providers involved in adult learning provision.

Status

For information.

Date for response

The planning and funding process for 2003/04 involves the submission of data on learner numbers and the provision of the review of the Adult Learning Plan, or equivalent business plan, to the local LSC by **31 March 2003**.

Foreword

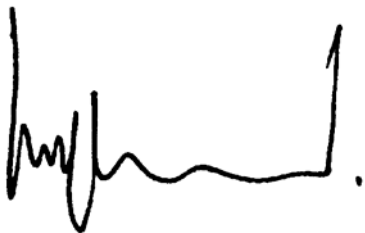
Dear Colleague,

I am pleased to provide you with the guidance in which outcomes of the recent consultation carried out by the LSC on adult and community learning (ACL) are presented. It also provides comprehensive guidance on the LSC's planning approach for ACL for 2003/04, which is intended to provide LEAs with a framework for a dialogue with the relevant local LSC, culminating in the development of an agreed plan for ACL provision for 2003/04. The allocation process for ACL for 2003/04 is also described.

Local LSCs will work with LEAs to ensure that there is sufficient breadth of provision to meet learners' needs, including the needs of disadvantaged people. We recognise that ACL forms an important part of the drive to widen participation in learning, to build a community's self-confidence and capacity, and to promote good citizenship and regeneration. Equally important is the more traditional role that ACL plays as the provider of learning opportunities for their own sake.

The proposed revised arrangements for ACL are intended to ensure that it is provision of high quality, innovative and based on a clear assessment of local need.

The LSC wishes to ensure that plans are co-ordinated locally; that they inspire confidence and arise from a unified local planning process that flows from the strategic to the operational. Local authorities, where they wish it, must have a central role in leading planning for a range of provision locally, and each authority should provide the LSC with a plan that is supported by and involves other providers, stakeholders and learners.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Harwood', followed by a period.

John Harwood, Chief Executive

Adult and Community Learning 2003/04

Section 1: Purpose and Context

Purpose

- 1 This document provides comprehensive guidance on the LSC's planning approach for adult and community learning provision (ACL) for 2003/04. It is intended to provide LEAs with a framework for dialogue with the relevant local LSC, culminating in the development of an agreed plan for ACL provision for 2003/04. It is recognised that in a small number of cases where the LEA ceases to act as the contracting body, the learning activity may be secured through alternative providers. This document also gives the outcomes of the recent consultation carried out by the LSC on ACL provision (section 2). Finally, the allocation process for ACL for 2003/04 is described (section 5).

Context

Adult and community learning

- 2 ACL is defined here as learning activity secured by LEAs and funded by the LSC. It is mainly provision that was the responsibility of LEAs under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, often described as 'non-schedule 2'. It encompasses a diverse range of learning activities that are predominantly non-accredited and specifically relate to the block grant allocated to LEAs for ACL.

Role of LEAs

- 3 The LEA is likely to have, in addition to responsibility for securing learning, a strategic overview of education and training in the local area and will wish to engage with colleagues throughout the local authority in planning for these and associated strategies, such as health and community care.
- 4 The LEA will also wish to consult with other strategic partners, for example local learning partnerships and local strategic partnerships.

Role of the LSC

- 5 The LSC has a statutory duty to fund and plan for all post-16 learning (excluding higher education). In Circular 01/13, *Post-16 Funding Arrangements for 2002/03*, the LSC set out how it would introduce a common funding approach for each of the four learning sectors.
- 6 The proposed future funding arrangements for ACL are set out in Circular 02/16, *Funding: Consultation on Arrangements for Funding Adult and Community Learning from 2003/04*. In developing a formula approach for ACL, the LSC wishes to address the national variation in available resources for this provision in order to improve the availability of learning opportunities for adults, irrespective of locality.

Funding Arrangements

Historic approach

- 7 The responsibility for funding ACL was transferred to the LSC in April 2001 with a guarantee, from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, of a minimum level of funding until the end of 2002/03, on condition that each LEA provided a satisfactory Adult Learning Plan. LEAs were expected to maintain at least a similar level of provision to that offered before 2001. Allocations for 2002/03 provided an uplift to take account of inflation and to widen and increase participation.
- 8 Ministers' funding guarantee to LEAs finishes at the end of July 2003. Section 5 of this document outlines how the allocations process will operate for 2003/04.

Current activity

- 9 Funding provided under the guarantee currently supports the provision of ACL across a broad spectrum. In order to ensure that all activity currently funded by the ACL grant is taken into account, data for 2000/01 and for 2001/02 has been requested from each of the 150 LEAs in England funded by the LSC. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) undertook the collection of data on behalf of the LSC.
- 10 The diverse information systems for ACL used by LEAs meant that the initial results from the 2000/01 data collection were very varied. Although it gave a valuable impression of the extent and nature of ACL provision, the return did not yield data of sufficient consistency to enable rigorous modelling to be carried out.
- 11 The date for the return of the 2001/02 data was 15 November 2002. At the time of publication of this document, it is too early to say whether the data overall is more consistent and robust, although initial indications are more encouraging than for the first data collection.
- 12 Throughout 2002/03 and 2003/04, the LSC will continue to work with NIACE and LEAs to ensure that data collection and modelling produces reliable results, in order to form the development of the funding approach for subsequent years.
- 13 The LSC will use the data returns to assess the effect of applying the formula to each LEA's provision. Modelling will take account of 2000/01 and 2001/02 data, and of a similar exercise planned for 2002/03. As soon as possible, each LEA will, it is intended, receive feedback on the likely effects of applying the formula to its provision.

Future approach

- 14 The LSC is developing a common funding approach for all sectors so that each sector will be funded on broadly the same principles. The LSC is developing a planning-led focus in the allocation of funding in relation to all providers as part of developing post-16 provision which matches local and national needs. The guidance given in this document on ACL reflects further progress in this area.
- 15 The proposed approach to funding for 2003/04 has been informed by the consultation outcomes and the ongoing data collection and modelling work undertaken on ACL. Although the outcomes of the consultation recognised a need to rationalise the funding arrangements for ACL, the data analysis

undertaken by the LSC indicates considerable variation in levels of resource across the sector. Modelling indicated that the spread in cost of guided learning hours (glh) ranges from 40p per glh to £70 per glh. To move the whole ACL sector to a formula approach will not be possible for 2003/04.

- 16 The change to national formula funding is likely to represent considerable changes in resourcing for some LEAs. The LSC is aware of the need to avoid destabilising provision during transition and will develop an appropriate timescale within which 'convergence' to full formula funding will be implemented. In order to work through the practical implications of applying a formula approach, the LSC has put in place a pilot study. From 2003/04 a small group of providers will trial the application of a full formula approach to their ACL provision. The findings from this pilot will further inform the development of the approach.
- 17 In previous years, funding allocations for ACL have been agreed on the basis of a plan, and in developing its own planning role the LSC anticipates a closer alignment of LEA and LSC planning. The local LSC strategic plans will be developed to reflect local and national priorities, and it will be expected that these priorities will also be reflected in LEA plans.
- 18 The planning and funding process for 2003/04 involves the submission of data on learner numbers and a review of the previous Adult Learning Plan, or equivalent business plan, to be submitted to the local LSC by **31 March 2003**. Further details of the policy context, strategic framework and operational details are given in this document.

Section 2: Responses to Consultation

Background

- 19 In July 2002, the LSC published Circular 02/16, *Consultation on Arrangements for Funding Adult and Community Learning from 2003/04*. In Circular 02/16, the intention to move to a formula approach for ACL provision was outlined, together with a consideration of some of the issues that will arise as a consequence of adopting such an approach. The deadline for responses to Circular 02/16 was 11 October 2002.
- 20 This section provides an analysis of the responses received.

Responses

- 21 Over 230 responses were received. The distribution of responses is shown in Table 1.

[insert Table 1]

- 22 A good response was received from across the range of those most directly affected by the changes. Views were diverse, reflecting the considerable range of delivery arrangements, types of organisation and nature of ACL provision delivered.
- 23 The following paragraphs discuss the range of responses to each topic of consultation, followed by a discussion of issues raised by respondents.

Funding achievement

- 24 Circular 02/16 set out three options for recognising achievement in the funding approach for non-accredited learning.

Option one

- 25 To follow a similar approach to that operated for work-based learning (WBL) and FE provision; that is, to include an achievement element of the weighted national base rate for each learning aim, which is conditional on the learner achieving. In FE this element is 10% of the weighted national base rate.

Option two

- 26 To allocate achievement funding as a block sum, when providers have demonstrated that they have a robust system for setting learning objectives, giving feedback to learners and assessing learners' achievements. Guidance and support will be given to providers to reach that stage, and arrangements established to determine if an appropriate system is in place. The provider's system would be subject to auditing. For those providers that have not yet established a suitably robust system, funding could be targeted to develop their system for setting learning objectives, and assessing and recording learners' achievements. This approach would be developed by the LSC's Quality and Standards Directorate, in liaison with other key agencies including the inspectorates. The possibility of links with the Adult Learning Plan would be explored.

Option three

- 27 To encourage providers to set learning objectives, and to assess and record learning achievements, but to remove from the formula the element for achievement.

Responses on achievement options

[insert Table 2]

- 28 There was a clear majority in favour of option two, to allocate achievement funding as a block sum. This option was considered most appropriate and sufficiently flexible for informal learning. It was felt by many that support to develop robust systems would be important to ensure the success of this approach.
- 29 This approach was favoured by some as a short-term option, as it was felt that time is required for providers to develop processes that are appropriate for ACL provision. Others felt that this approach should be extended to other sectors, as it would significantly reduce the audit burden.
- 30 There were, however, some reservations about how block funding would be released to providers. It was felt that a national policy would be required.

Fee assumption element

- 31 Circular 02/16 set out four options for reflecting a fee assumption element in a formula approach for ACL.

Option one

- 32 In the funding approach as applied to FE and WBL provision a fee assumption of 25% of the national base rate operates. Option one would apply the same percentage for ACL provision.

Option two

- 33 To base the percentage of the fee assumption on data on fees charged, for example 40%.

Option three

- 34 To increase the fee assumption as in option two, and to consider appropriate adjustments to the fee remission policy – for example to introduce partial fee remission where appropriate.

Option four

- 35 To adopt a flexible approach, by allowing for variation in the level of fee income, taking account of the profile of the learner and nature of the provision. The discretion to vary the fee assumption would be determined by the local LSC, when considering identified learner needs, and the needs of the community more generally.

Responses on fee assumption options

[insert Table 3]

- 36 Option three was the favoured approach to fee assumption: to have a higher standard fee assumption than 25%, but to consider appropriate adjustments to

fee-remission policy. It was felt that this option was the one most likely to contribute to widening participation, whilst retaining the current volume of provision.

- 37 Many felt that the fee remission categories should be broadened to encompass older learners and other groups of adults experiencing financial disadvantage. Whilst some could see the attraction of local diversity, most felt that any such changes to fee remission categories should be applied within a national framework.
- 38 The LSC will reflect the preferred options for fee assumption and achievement in its development of a formula approach, initially through the pilot study described in paragraph 16.

Issues raised and LSC response

- 39 There were a number of additional issues raised by the respondents to the consultation, and these are considered below. An indication of how the LSC intends to take these issues forward follows in italics after each point.

Proposed timetable

- 40 It was felt that the proposed timetable, whilst necessary if deadlines are to be achieved for implementation in 2003/04, would be challenging, given the difficulties of variation in funding and data collection. Pilot activity for 2003/04 should be considered to ensure the approach is suitable and effective. Any change, for example, to fee levels or the provision available may be resisted by learners and the wider community, and would require managing over a reasonable timescale. The timescale would make it difficult for some LEAs to follow their planning and decision-making processes.
- 41 *The LSC has taken account of this issue and this is reflected in the approach to allocations for 2003/04 described in Section 5.*

Transitional arrangements

- 42 The indication in Circular 02/16 of a phased approach to the introduction of the new arrangements was welcomed, and further clarification as to how this would operate for 2003/04 was requested as soon as possible, to assist with planning processes.
- 43 *A description of the funding process for 2003/04 is given in Section 5.*

Funding flows and subcontracting arrangements

- 44 Views on subcontracting arrangements were mixed, but there was a wish to see the funding arrangements clarified and streamlined where possible.
- 45 *The LSC recognises that existing arrangements are varied and could in some cases be simplified. There will not, however, be a 'one size fits all' approach to this issue. The LSC believes it appropriate that arrangements will be established through local planning processes. Where compelling reasons for rationalisation of funding arrangements exist, the local LSC would expect all of the parties involved to contribute to a debate about the best arrangement for the locality, in the context of the strategic needs for the area.*

Work outside the formula

- 46 Recognition in Circular 02/16 that some provision may not be appropriate for formula funding and a non-formula element of funding should be retained was welcomed. Each local LSC should agree the provision to be funded as non-formula provision in return for measurable outcomes.
- 47 *The way in which work outside the formula will be addressed is considered in Section 5.*

Local and national arrangements

- 48 Across a range of issues, many respondents felt that the LSC should take the opportunity to apply coherence through a national framework approach where possible in the funding arrangements. It was felt that allowing local discretion could perpetuate existing variations in resourcing levels.
- 49 *The LSC recognises that the approach adopted will have both national and local characteristics. As the approach is developed the degree of national guidance and local discretion to be applied will be considered.*

Arrangements for residential colleges

- 50 Several respondents noted that Circular 02/16 contained no mention of the future funding arrangements for residential colleges.
- 51 *The LSC currently funds a number of providers of residential provision, and wishes to develop a rate of funding which consistently addresses the costs associated with this element. It will therefore take advice from the National Rates Advisory Group (NRAG) in developing an appropriate approach to funding this provision as part of its 2003/04 programme of research, with a view to applying a formula approach to this provision from 2004/05.*

Arrangements for the voluntary sector

- 52 Many respondents requested clarification on how the role of the voluntary sector would fit in the proposed arrangements.
- 53 *The LSC sees the voluntary sector continuing to play a key role in delivering this provision, and would expect the sector to take an approach that will enable it to continue to take part. Many voluntary sector organisations operate through the support and infrastructure of an LEA, or by taking a 'federated approach' to meet the management, data and quality requirements.*

Costs of outreach work

- 54 Comments were received concerning the high costs of outreach work; and there were requests that the funding arrangements should reflect the higher costs incurred when delivering this area of work.
- 55 *The role of outreach work and the funding available for it will be part of the planning discussions that take place between local LSCs and their providers.*

Cost of delivering non-qualification provision

- 56 Many respondents stated that the delivery of non-qualification provision costs as much to deliver as qualification provision.
- 57 *The LSC has commissioned research into the relative costs of delivery for different kinds of provision.*

Typology for ACL

- 58 Some respondents welcomed the typology. Others expressed concern that it should not be applied as a planning/funding tool, as it did not appear to take account of the entire range of funded provision. It was felt that family learning, particularly, should be included in any such typology. Many felt that a shared definition of what is understood by ACL required further development.
- 59 *The typology as it appeared in Circular 02/16 was intended as a broad indication of the sort of provision covered by the term ACL. The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and NIACE have arranged for work to take place to further develop the typology, including input from ACL practitioners, and others with a thorough knowledge and experience of ACL.*

Developing an integrated planning approach

- 60 The aim to integrate and treat ACL equally with all other adult learning was welcomed. A successful strategic planning policy should apply to the whole curriculum; the separate arrangements for strategic planning, provider reviews and data returns are not appropriate in the longer term.
- 61 *The LSC wants to integrate the planning review and data processes as far as is practicable as soon as possible.*

Longer funding cycle

- 62 Many respondents felt that a move to a three-year funding and planning process would help to improve strategic planning processes.
- 63 *The DfES has announced its intention to move to longer funding and planning cycles across the post-16 sector. The practical implications of how such an approach might be implemented are currently under consideration. There are particular issues for ACL in that national formula funding arrangements are just beginning, which will require changes in levels of funding per learner over the next period.*

Individualised Learner Record for ACL

- 64 The development of an Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for ACL was felt to be a priority by some respondents.
- 65 *A consultation on ILR requirements for ACL is due in December 2002.*

Additional learning support and learner support

- 66 The recognition that additional learning support and learner support should be available for ACL provision was welcomed. Many respondents felt that new funding should be made available for this purpose.
- 67 *The LSC needs to identify the amount of funding that is currently being used for these purposes. It is expected that as the returns from the most recent data collection for 2001/02 are analysed, a better understanding will be developed. The LSC expects each ACL provider to earmark an appropriate amount of its existing ACL funding for learner support and additional learning support purposes and is working with NIACE to establish what this might be, using the questionnaire data. ACL providers will receive further advice in due course.*

Equalisation of resourcing levels

68 The aim to achieve more consistent resourcing levels for ACL was welcomed, but it was felt that this should not be achieved by penalising those local authorities that had historically maintained resources for ACL provision.

69 *Section 5 gives more details of the allocation process.*

Wider social and community benefits of ACL

70 Whilst most respondents welcomed the proposals to bring greater coherence to the funding arrangements for ACL, it was felt important that the social, health and wider community benefits are not lost through the application of a formula approach. Softer and less easily measurable outcomes are a distinctive feature of this sort of provision, and the approach that is developed would be required to recognise these aspects.

71 *The LSC will wish to work with ACL providers to ensure that the broader benefits of ACL provision can be appropriately evidenced and maintained.*

Section 3: Strategic Planning Approach for 2003/04

Context

- 72 The local LSC will be developing its own strategic plan in consultation with LEAs and others at the same time as LEA planning processes are taking place. It will be important that LEA plans are linked to and reflect the priorities identified in the local LSC's strategic plan. Local LSCs wish to be engaged in dialogue about 2003/04 plans during the development stage and beyond so that a synergy can develop between the plans. Local LSCs are aware of the importance of a strong focus on adult learning capacity in their own overall plans for their area.
- 73 Adult Learning Plans (Plans) for the current year were drawn up using the *Local Education Authority Adult Learning Plans 2002/03 Final Guidance* issued by the LSC in November 2001. Plans provided for 2002/03 were often perceived as being written for the LSC rather than as part of the local authority's own planning processes. The LSC wishes to move away from a planning model that expects an LEA full and 'final' Plan to be presented formally to the local LSC at the end of March for the following academic year. It wishes to understand more fully the local authority's planning processes, to share its own planning ideas, and to understand the reasons for the success and failure of provision at local level. The LSC will wish to direct resources to those who are responsive so as to address areas of unmet need and to enable planning for the longer term.

Review

- 74 Part of the planning process will be to review provision delivered in the preceding year, and include a rationale for proposed changes to the type and/or volume of provision for the coming year and beyond. The LSC wishes to understand the strengths and weaknesses of adult provision in the local area and, above all, wishes to understand the local authority's range of provision and its reasons for change or maintaining a particular offer. For example, if an LEA is considering introducing new IT provision on a particular housing estate, it would help the LSC if the rationale for this was set out briefly, in relation to strategic objectives or local market information.

Development

- 75 The local LSC will wish to purchase provision on the basis of a flexible Plan, which is responsive to changing learner needs. The Plan will be developed through discussion, and monitoring against the plan will continue throughout the year. The Plan will shift and reshape as emerging needs are identified, as successful strategies are developed, and less successful ones dropped.
- 76 It is expected that every opportunity will be taken for plans to be drawn up through a process of joint working and discussion of local and national priorities. LEA ACL services will wish to show how local and national priorities are linked to their own strategic objectives.

- 77 Those responsible for providing LEA plans will need to meet on a regular basis with their local LSC to discuss the proposals for funding and learner numbers during 2003/04 and beyond.
- 78 The LSC will wish to reassure itself that plans are sufficiently robust so that success can be evaluated and progress monitored.
- 79 The plans are expected to be responsive to changing national and local needs. The Plan should demonstrate and be driven by the need to meet these priorities. Any 'in-year' changes should be made in agreement with the local LSC, to ensure that priorities for provision remain aligned through the year.

National and Local Priorities 2003/04

National priorities

- 80 The important role LEAs have in providing adult education for the personal development of those living within their areas is fully recognised. In developing provision LEAs should indicate their learner volume targets for each of the following national priorities:
- basic skills;
 - widening participation;
 - family learning provision;
 - neighbourhood renewal;
 - citizenship;
 - IT skills at all levels; and
 - modern foreign languages (MFL), as part of the National Languages Strategy.
- 81 For citizenship, the percentage of the adult population engaged in learning is an appropriate measure. Further reference to each of these national priorities is set out in Annex A.

Local priorities

- 82 The local LSC, having built up a picture of all provision delivered in a locality, will identify specific local priorities that ACL provision can meet. For example, in encouraging participation by under-represented groups, the local LSC will wish to ensure that appropriate progression pathways for those learners are available.
- 83 There will be a balance to strike between supporting a wide range of learning opportunities and meeting national targets for participation, retention and achievement. This balance will vary from area to area, and cannot be predetermined by national policy.
- 84 National LSC policy is in the main confined to clarifying the parameters of the framework and it is for each local LSC to determine with their local stakeholders and partners their actual positioning within the framework. LEAs are encouraged to discuss local priorities with their local LSCs as part of their regular dialogue. LEAs will have their own views of particular priorities based on their own understanding of local areas and will wish to share these views as part of the planning dialogue.

Non-formula Activity

85 The local LSC will wish to discuss with key providers the allocation of funding for innovative outreach work, work with hard-to-reach learners or groups of learners or grants to voluntary organisations. These and other developmental activities are unlikely to fall immediately within the scope of formula funding and will require a specific focus within the planning dialogue with local authorities and others. Local LSCs will be at different stages in their understanding of this area of work.

Subcontracting

- 86 The LSC recognises that planning circumstances are different from one LEA to another, particularly where the LEA predominately secures rather than delivers provision. Nonetheless, the arrangements for consultation and planning should be consistent with those for direct-delivery authorities. This will be important where the LEA wishes to continue to have access to LSC funding, as part of their contribution to the dialogue with the LSC on planning matters.
- 87 For those LEAs with subcontractors, planning discussions should take place at the earliest opportunity so that all subcontractors are fully engaged in the planning process. The LEA will need to agree with its subcontractors how planning and learner number data are to be provided, and how quality will be assured. The LEA will wish to fully understand the data, and be able to demonstrate that understanding in discussion with the local LSC. The local LSC will be able to help where there are difficulties in collecting and collating data and would be able to assist in brokering discussions where this would maintain the momentum of the planning process.
- 88 Appropriate service level agreements are expected to be in place to regularise subcontracting arrangements and the nature of these should be shared with the local LSC as part of the planning process.
- 89 Where a subcontracting relationship exists, it is expected that the LEA will have the responsibility for the planning process, will be fully engaged in dialogue with its subcontracting partners and will be assuring quality appropriately.
- 90 Where a subcontractor is seeking direct funding, the local LSC, the provider and the LEA should engage in tripartite debate. The local LSC will wish to consider all of the issues relating to the most appropriate mode of delivery, taking account of quality, access and planning priorities.

Section 4: Timetable and Format of Returns

Introduction

- 91 Planning processes are at different stages in different localities and the LSC does not wish to impose a national approach to this process, which may be inappropriate in some instances. The arrangements for ACL planning should be flexible and responsive to the requirements of providers.
- 92 The timetable for the provision of ACL planning information cannot yet be fully aligned with that for FE due to the nature of the funding arrangements and the incompleteness of the map of local provision. The LSC intends to develop the content and format of a common planning framework for future plans for LEAs. It is intended to share draft proposals with providers during 2003 with the aim of developing a common approach across the learning sectors.

Presentation of Information

- 93 Local LSC executive directors have discretion in the extent to which textual information is needed alongside learner number data. Local LSCs will be mindful of the need to keep bureaucracy to a minimum when requesting further or supplementary information.
- 94 When submitting planning information to local LSCs, the local LSC staff should be liaised with. The LSC executive director should indicate to the LEA **by 20 December 2002** their expectations for the presentation of planning data. The LSC executive director will provide a named LSC contact person for the duration of the planning process.
- 95 It is expected that as a minimum LEAs will provide:
- a review of progress in the 2001-02 year, together with the provision delivered up to date of review in 2002/03;
 - a rationale for proposed changes to provision for the coming year and beyond; and
 - additions to the previous Plan addressing the policy developments described in the guidance on content at Annex A.
- 96 The Plan should comment on the achievement of targets in the 2002/03 Plan and include revised targets where appropriate. Plans should comment on progress towards or achievement of key performance indicators, with particular reference to objectives related to the national priorities for ACL.
- 97 The Plan will be prepared part way through the academic year, when outcomes will not always be quantifiable. It will therefore be necessary to comment on progress to date and provide further updates along with relevant operational data or updates to the business plan later in the year.
- 98 A business plan is an acceptable alternative to a review Plan where this is agreed with the local LSC (see paragraph 101).

- 99 Plans will be negotiated by local LSCs and there will be arrangements for national evaluation to ensure consistency of approach. Any evaluation or moderation will take place in summer 2003. It is likely that this will focus on evidence of good practice, as in 2002/03. The LSC will arrange for part of this evaluation to be undertaken through national or regional seminars.
- 100 An analysis of good practice in Plans in 2002/03 is available from local LSCs.

Business Plans

- 101 The Adult Learning Plans provided to local LSCs in 2001 and 2002 included for most LEAs considerable detail about their LEA strategy and mission for ACL without in every case including an outline of actual planned provision and a review of progress to date. Some local LSCs requested business, or 'operating', plans from LEAs to fill this gap. Where business plans were provided, these were found to be most helpful to the local LSC.
- 102 Local LSCs may prefer to request a business plan only from each LEA in preference to requesting a review of the Adult Learning Plans 2002/03 for the year 2003/04.
- 103 A suggested framework for a business plan is attached at Appendix 1 to Annex A.
- 104 The business plan approach relies on the development of SMART objectives. The strategic objectives need to relate to the achievement of the objectives of the LSC, as well as to the objectives of the wider authority.
- 105 The business plan should link objectives to activity; show how resources link to activity and the impact this has on LEA targets or on progress towards national targets, for example for basic skills. The LEA will wish to reflect on the achievement of national and/or local targets with their LSC, and will wish to arrive at common agreement on specific milestones for further progress. For example, on the achievement of national targets, the LEA and the LSC will have particular regard for basic skills attainments.
- 106 The business plan may include a statement of operational priorities related to key objectives. For example, priority quality improvement issues might include improvements to learner guidance, initial assessment and information.
- 107 Where there are areas needing development, these should be included in the business plan, alongside the activity and actions required to address any shortcomings.
- 108 A business plan needs to have a manageable number of strategic objectives, each of which might have one or more contributory objectives.

Format of Returns

- 109 Two paper copies of any textual information requested should be returned to the executive director at the relevant local LSC on or before **31 March 2003**. Forms are provided for the return of learner number data. These are set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to Annex A to this document. By local agreement, the LEA may return data and/or textual supporting statements electronically, provided that the signature of the chief education officer is made available to show their endorsement of the Plan.

Learner Numbers

- 110 The learner number forms were piloted in the LEA ACL sector in respect of 2002/03 and have been updated for use in 2003/04.
- 111 Some authorities found completion of the learner number forms challenging. The best possible information should be provided with an indication at the earliest opportunity where there are particular problems in providing the data and information requested. Colleagues at the local LSC will be able to help where there are difficulties in collecting and collating data and can assist in brokering discussions where this would maintain the momentum of the planning process.
- 112 Learner number data should be presented no later than **31 March 2003**. LEAs are encouraged to discuss with their local LSC the timing of the presentation of planning information at the earliest opportunity and to raise any associated issues, for example, where there are local authority committee timetables that are not synchronised with the LSC timetable.
- 113 The Plan should confirm learner number data for 2001-02, and include learner numbers for 2002/03 as full-time equivalents (FTEs), noted as at the end of the autumn term, and forward projections for the full year 2003/04. An LSC-defined full-time course is 450glh, which is equal to 1 FTE. For example, a learner studying on a Maths course of 225glh and an ICT course of 225glh constitutes 1 FTE, but 0.5 FTE would be entered under Sciences and Mathematics, and the other 0.5 FTE under ICT.
- 114 This should include learner numbers funded through the 'family learning' part of the ACL allocation. Where the LEA has learner numbers for family literacy and numeracy projects, these should be recorded under separate monitoring arrangements with the local LSC.
- 115 The learner numbers should complement those provided to the LSC as the submission of ILR data. This data collection series will commence from ACL providers for the first time in 2003/04. The LSC will be consulting about the proposed specification of the ILR for 2003/04, including that for ACL, in December 2002.

Section 5: Allocation of Funding 2003/04

Allocation at Local LSC Level

116 Local LSCs will be engaged with local authorities in planning for provision in 2003/04, and will agree the resourcing to support this. It is proposed that the overall funding levels for ACL for 2003/04 should be maintained at the level of grant made for 2002/03, plus an inflationary element. Allocations will be made on this basis at local LSC level.

Protection for Providers

117 In order to ensure a suitable measure of stability for existing providers, the LSC will apply a protection mechanism. The allocations made to LEAs for 2003/04 will be protected at a minimum of 90% of the value of the grant allocated in 2002/03, including family programmes and ethnic minority student achievement grant (EMAG) where applicable. Such an approach is in line with the protection arrangements in operation for FE colleges. The protection arrangements are contingent upon LEAs fulfilling the planning requirements, and determining appropriate provision in partnership planning with local LSCs. This will lead to a Plan for 2003/04 that is accepted by the local LSC as described in Annex A.

Growth Funding

118 Local LSCs in receipt of any growth funding will agree allocations of growth to local authorities based on a national funding approach. Using the data received from LEAs on ACL provision delivered in 2000-01 and 2001-02, the LSC will further develop an understanding of the existing variation in resourcing currently supported ACL provision. To inform the allocation of growth to local LSCs, a consistent level of funding will be established, which will be applied to any agreed growth in provision. Such an approach will ensure that growth funding is allocated on an equitable basis, and does not perpetuate the existing variation in levels of resource in relation to volume.

119 Any growth funding available for 2003/04 is likely to be directed at those areas which appear to be under-resourced, taking account of all adult learning provision available (that is, provision made by colleges and other providers, as well as ACL). Relative levels of resource will be analysed, including consideration of 'other provision' currently delivered to adults and funded through the further education stream.

Work outside the Formula

120 If the information is available, the allocation made to each local LSC will show the level of non-formula funding activity, based upon the data returns made by LEAs. It is intended that this information will assist local LSCs in gaining a better

understanding of the extent of non-formula activity and how this can contribute to the overall needs identified for an area.

Timescale

- 121 By the end of December 2002, the LSC will make available to each LEA an indicative funding allocation for the year 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004. This will be updated during the early spring to include indicative allocations for any special initiatives associated with ACL that are not available at the time of the December notification.

Section 6: Future Developments

122 This section outlines some of the developments which will affect the longer-term arrangements for the delivery of ACL.

Information and Learning Technology

123 The LSC's National Learning Network (NLN) Programme Board recently approved an information and learning technology (ILT) strategy for ACL. It envisages that the NLN will be extended to include ACL providers. All FE and sixth form colleges are part of the NLN. Benefits include:

- robust local ICT infrastructure;
- broadband access to the Internet via the Joint Academic Network (SuperJanet);
- learning materials;
- advice services; and
- professional and staff development programmes.

124 A detailed ILT implementation plan is currently being prepared by ACL ILT experts. The scope and timescale of the project will be determined by the outcome of the current spending review. Further details will be available in early 2003.

Audit

125 The LSC's 2001/02 funding of Adult Learning Plans is through grants made under funding agreements with LEAs. These grants are paid on profile for the sums set out in the funding agreement. As for all LSC funding of its providers, the LSC's chief executive must ensure that LEAs receiving grant have appropriate arrangements for financial management and accounting and that the uses to which the LSC's payments are put are consistent with the purposes for which they have been given and comply with the conditions attached to them.

126 For 2001/02, the LSC obtained assurance on LEAs' application of ACL funds by the following means.

- The work of the Audit Commission's appointed auditors of LEAs to examine financial statements. LEAs were requested in Circular 02/10 to make statements to the LSC by 31 October 2002 on the application of ACL funds. The Audit Commission's appointed auditors are due to report to the LSC on these statements by February 2003.
- Reviews by provider financial assurance teams in local LSCs have taken place. These reviews were of LEAs' internal control over the use of LSC ACL funds and of the application of these funds.

127 For 2002/03, the LSC intends to continue to take the majority of its assurance from the work of the Audit Commission's appointed auditors, although its local provider financial assurance teams may again perform a limited sample of reviews. The scope of the 2002/03 audit will include all recurrent and capital ACL funding. Further guidance will be issued in due course.

- 128 For 2003/04, the LSC will continue to take assurance from the work of the Audit Commission's appointed auditors. The LSC may in 2003/04 fund ACL at providers other than LEAs. Assurance over LSC funding of other providers will as far as possible be combined with existing audit arrangements for these providers. The scope and extent of the 2003/04 assurance work will reflect changes to the LSC's funding allocations and reconciliation process for ACL. Assurance work may therefore include the accuracy and validity of providers' financial claims and data returns for ACL funding.

Developing the Formula Approach in 2004/05

- 129 Building on the developmental work planned for 2002/03, including further data analysis and the pilot work described in Section 1, a formula approach for funding ACL will be extended as far as is practicable in 2004/05, whilst retaining appropriate transition and stability mechanisms for providers.

FE and ACL planning

- 130 Several respondents to the recent consultation expressed the wish to submit a single Plan for their ACL and FE provision. The LSC recognises and shares this aspiration, and will be working to ensure that FE and ACL planning processes can become increasingly aligned in future. The aim across all learning sectors will be the introduction of a single planning framework that covers all the LSC-funded provision delivered by the provider. Such an approach will need to be developed in the light of the policy developments announced in *Success for All* (DfES November 2002; see also paragraph 136).

Broader developments

- 131 The development of the funding and planning approach for ACL will be made in the context of a number of broader strategic developments that will have implications for the whole of the post-16 sector.

Bureaucracy Busting Taskforce

- 132 This external group, chaired by Sir George Sweeney (Principal of Knowsley Community College) has been working since January 2002 on the issue of unnecessary bureaucracy. The focus of Bureaucracy Busting Taskforce (BBTF) work was on FE colleges. However, the recommendations made by the BBTF are likely to influence LSC policies across the learning and skills sector, and a second group will be convened in December 2002 to consider bureaucracy issues in WBL, ACL and school sixth forms.
- 133 The report of the BBTF, *Trust in the Future*, was published in November 2002 and the LSC's initial response was given in a pamphlet, *Trust in FE: Working in Partnership*, which was published in late November 2002. Both of these documents are available on the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk/news_docs/Bureaucracy_Report.pdf and www.lsc.gov.uk/news_docs/BureaucracyLeaflet.pdf
- 134 A key recommendation of the BBTF report was the need to develop a relationship of trust between the LSC and FE colleges, which would then obviate the need for overly bureaucratic monitoring. The LSC's response included a

commitment to introduce a planning-led approach to funding for FE colleges from 2003/04. Some of the developments envisaged for FE colleges are already operating in ACL, in particular the funding of an agreed Plan. The LSC has sought, through the approach described in this document, to build on and develop the existing planning and funding framework for ACL so that this reflects the emerging planning-led focus. The strategic planning role of local LSCs will become increasingly important as local and national priorities are addressed. The planning role of LEAs, and the learning delivered by ACL, will be important aspects of the local LSC's strategic approach.

- 135 The LSC will be developing its response to the BBTF's report during 2003. These developments are likely to be of interest to the whole learning and skills sector. In addition, the work of the second phase of the BBTF commencing in January 2003 is likely to involve wide consultation and discussion.

Success for All

- 136 The future direction of the DfES *Success for All* strategy, informed by a consultation process conducted during 2002, was published in November 2002. This document is available on the DfES website (www.dfes.gov.uk).
- 137 This document is primarily focused on FE; however, some specific policy development and the overall strategic direction described in the document are both relevant to the learning and skills sector as a whole.
- 138 Key aspects described in *Success for All* which will be of immediate relevance to ACL include the introduction of three-year funding arrangements across the learning sectors, a focus on a planned approach to meeting learner, employer and community needs and providing better choices through improved responsiveness and quality of provision. The LSC will consult on the implementation of the policies described in *Success for All* from January 2003.
- 139 Local LSCs will be involved, from April 2003, in leading strategic area reviews that will review patterns of provision in each area, and how these match the needs of learners and employers and address local and national targets and priorities.
- 140 It is expected that institutions will establish or review their educational or training mission and focus on the strengths they can offer. The role of ACL in widening participation and supporting social inclusion is recognised and assessment of local ACL needs will be a part of the strategic area review.
- 141 There will be a focus on ensuring high-quality provision is available, which matches learner and community needs and encourages progression in learning. A range of strategies is envisaged to improve the quality of teaching and learning, including targets and performance measures. These will include minimum expectations set out as floor targets, and improvement plans where these are not currently being delivered. The establishment of three-year funding plans which link to annual learner number volumes is envisaged. Such plans will need to include, for ACL, consideration of the impact of transition to a national formula funding approach from 2004/05 and convergence issues.

DfES Review of Funding of Adult Learning

- 142 The *Treasury Spending Review* for 2002 indicated that in respect of funding for adult learning:
- 143 *'The Government will . . . take a radical look at structures, funding and accountabilities for the provision of skills and learning from April 2000'.*
(*Treasury Spending Review*, April 2002)
- 144 The DfES, in taking forward this commitment, is currently engaged in a wide-ranging review of the funding of all adult learning.
- 145 The overarching aim is to consider how the government's various support mechanisms for adult learners post-19 could be more effectively deployed. The DfES will wish to explore ways in which the relationship between policy interventions and the achievement of learning targets could be improved.
- 146 The review is due to report in the summer of 2003.

Annex A

Adult Learning Plans Guidance

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Adult Learning Plans Guidance

Introduction

- 1 This annex sets out a comprehensive menu of items for potential inclusion in an Adult Learning Plan. It is not intended that every LEA should provide an update to every item. Key areas where there have been policy changes or other developments or where specifically requested by the local LSC should be included. Items are grouped under headings in a similar way to those set out in the *Common Inspection Framework*.

Strategic Management

Organisational details

- 2 This section should include details of the person who is to be the LEA's contact for matters relating to the Adult Learning Plan and any alternate in the event of that person's absence. Please include their job title(s) or other similar designation and a note of their role in the LEA, in relation to the chief education officer.
- 3 Also include here a short summary of how the authority secures adult learning opportunities, for example through direct delivery, through subcontracting with providers, through a network of community schools or supporting other organisations.

Mission statement

- 4 This should be a concise statement reflecting the authority's overall aim in securing adult learning opportunities. This may be the mission statement or equivalent policy statement of the strategic aims of the local authority and specifically the LEA.
- 5 A mission statement could include the LEA's customer base; a values statement; how the LEA will work with specific communities or target groups; or how the LEA relates to the wider community. An example of an item from a mission statement could be the LEA's vision that it will develop and encourage a learner-centred approach.

Coherence with other provision

- 6 The Adult Learning Plan should indicate how ACL fits with other work funded by the LSC, for example provision made as a former external institution.
- 7 The relationship between the work described in this Adult Learning Plan and other work in lifelong learning carried out by the local authority, from funding sources outside the LSC or in other local authority departments should be set out briefly. This should include the number of contracts, indicative amounts of funding and any strategic priorities for that funding. Where possible, the value of contracts, the contract arrangements and the volume of learners or programmes should be estimated and included in the Adult Learning Plan.

- 8 Interaction with other providers in the local LSC's area should be described, and in particular work to avoid overlap and duplication of provision. It would help each organisation to understand how provision fits the map in the locality if there could be an indication of why the partner organisations were chosen for consultation or other partnership working.
- 9 The DfES has recently published guidance on extended schools (www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools). Hard copies are available from DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60, or by email (dfes@prolog.uk.com). LEAs and local LSCs are recommended to consider how adult learning, and in particular family learning, opportunities could be offered on school premises. Pathfinder LEAs in particular will wish to involve their local LSC in their planning for extended schools.

Strategic objectives

- 10 An Adult Learning Plan should include a statement of strategic objectives for the year to come, linking the mission and needs analysis to expected timescales and the indicators that will be used to assess progress towards their achievement.
- 11 Strategies to improve retention and achievement, where applicable, should be indicated with the current baseline and the improvement expected.
- 12 Plans to withdraw or develop significant new areas of provision should be included with a rationale for such plans.
- 13 Dialogue concerning the development of strategic objectives would usually involve a shared understanding of how objectives were developed and any priority order attaching to objectives.
- 14 Strategic objectives should link to operational activity, so that each organisation can understand what action is to be undertaken and the outcomes expected. The local LSC or local authority business plan may cover similar detail.

Quality Assurance and Staff Development

Key performance indicators

- 15 The local LSC will make arrangements for the timing and collection of key performance indicators; national performance indicators are set out in Table 4 and Table 5 (local performance indicators) will be agreed with the local LSC. These will usually be collected each term rather than annually, and will usefully inform the regular planning discussion between the LEA and the LSC.

[insert Table 4 and Table 5]

- 16 The funding system of the LSC will require the development of the Individual Learner Record (ILR) which records details of each individual learner and their learning programme and support.

Quality assurance

- 17 Adult Learning Plans should provide a brief summary of evidence concerning the standards attained by learners and the quality of their learning experience during 2002/03. Authorities should outline their arrangements for monitoring reviewing and reporting the quality of provision they make or contract to providers.

- 18 The Adult Learning Plan should include a description of the process by which self-assessment reports and development plans are produced. The Plan should show how the process fits with other quality assurance arrangements for ACL.
- 19 Any national or local awards that have been achieved by providers should be highlighted.

Quality improvement

- 20 Adult Learning Plans will need to include local targets for quality improvement, to be achieved in 2003/04. A target should be set for learner success rates in accredited provision only made by ACL providers.
- 21 The targets should be expressed as percentage point increases in 2003/04 over the preceding year 2002/03, as demonstrated in Table 6.

[insert Table 6]

- 22 The plans should also give some brief narrative explaining how the improvement target will be reached.
- 23 The improvement plan will reflect local priorities but should align with the LSC's draft Quality Improvement Strategy (QIS) which was circulated in October 2002.
- 24 For accredited provision made by ACL providers, learner success rates are the qualifications gained by the expected end date divided by the qualifications commenced (but excluding learners who drop out before the first census date, and excluding internal transfers).
- 25 Further targets are likely to be developed within the framework of the DfES *Success for All* programme, for example floor targets will establish minimum performance targets for different types of provider. The LSC is developing its approach in respect of these targets and further details are likely to be available in the first part of 2003. The broader aspects of *Success for All* are considered at Section 5 (paragraph 136).
- 26 Measures are in development for ACL provision that is:
 - not accredited;
 - for school sixth forms; and/or
 - for learndirect.

Quality awards

- 27 It would be helpful to list any quality awards that relate to the LEA's delivery of adult learning, such as the Basic Skills Q Mark, Investors in People or Charter Mark.

LSC performance review

- 28 Performance review helps to drive up quality. The LSC uses a formal framework to keep its assessments up to date, based on a range of quality and performance indicators. Performance review assessments are based on information supplied to the LSC as part of normal data gathering, monitoring activity and partnership working.
- 29 Following development work undertaken in 2001/02, the scope of the LSC's performance review will be extended in 2003 to include ACL. Authorities will wish

to consult Circular 02/19, *Reviewing Performance: Refined Arrangements for Colleges and Providers from October 2002* and the LSC Briefing document on *Reviewing the Performance of Colleges and Providers*. Both documents are available on the LSC's website.

- 30 From October 2002 the LSC will undertake performance review assessments twice a year, in late autumn and late spring. The refined framework comprises three key performance area, Participation and Recruitment, Learner Experience and Performance, and Management. There are five performance categories, with the following descriptors:
- excellent performance;
 - strong performance;
 - acceptable performance;
 - performance gives cause for some concerns; and
 - performance gives cause for serious concerns.
- 31 In the Adult Learning Plan the LEA should identify the evidence that will inform the assessment of performance in each of the key areas and also ensure that Adult Learning Plans refer to action plans for improving performance.

Health and safety

- 32 The LSC believes that learners are entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment, and will seek assurance of this. The LSC has issued a policy statement on learner health and safety. It is available on the LSC's website (www.lscdata.gov.uk/healthandsafety). The key areas that LEAs need to include in their Adult Learning Plan are described below.
- The local authority's health and safety arrangements for ACL learners.
- 33 This should include evidence of the LEA's commitment to health and safety including a copy of the health and safety policy statement and a description of the arrangements in place for health and safety management. It will also cover the systems for risk assessment and accident and incident reporting. If the local authority contracts out provision, evidence will be needed of how the health and safety of learners is assured. The Adult Learning Plan needs to show how the authority intends to develop and improve its health and safety arrangements.
- How a safe and supportive learning environment is assured for learners.
- 34 This should include a description of the system for ensuring adequate supervision of learners and safe systems of learning and working. Where relevant it needs to include identifying appropriate placements and arrangements for ensuring adequate supervision of learners and safe systems of work. It will also cover arrangements for assuring learners' safety on excursions or visits.
- 35 Suitable and sufficient risk assessments are the key to identifying control measures necessary to ensure the safety of learners. They should take into account individual capabilities including gender, age and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Adult Learning Plan should indicate where improvements will be made to existing arrangements.
- Communication on health and safety issues with learners.

- 36 This will include a description of how learners are informed of health and safety arrangements and their own responsibility under these arrangements. It should refer to planned improvements.
- 37 Local authorities will already have arrangements in place for assuring the safety of their own staff and will be seeking to build on their good practice. This aspect does not form part of the Adult Learning Plan.

Equality and Diversity

- 38 The LSC's vision is to create a learning society which is free from discrimination and prejudice and which encourages and helps all learners reach their full potential.
- 39 The LSC has a statutory obligation under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (the Act) to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:
- people from different racial groups;
 - men and women; and
 - people with or without a disability.
- 40 Also under the Act, the LSC must report annually to the secretary of state on the equality arrangements made during the preceding year, how effective these were and equality plans for the following year. The remit letter (November 2000) requires the LSC to pay due regard to the needs of older learners.
- 41 Local authorities and other providers are central to the process of mainstreaming equality of opportunity which is concerned with building equality openly and actively into policy-making processes at all levels and at all stages. It ensures that policies, programmes and actions specifically seek to achieve equality and do not put any group of people at a disadvantage. In cases where some groups are already at a disadvantage, mainstreaming identifies where special measures are needed.
- 42 Work to promote equality and diversity should be integral to all policies, and operations and authorities will want to cross-reference activities described elsewhere in the Adult Learning Plan that contribute towards this goal.
- 43 In this section of the Adult Learning Plan, any positive action that is being taken to widen participation among under-represented groups should be detailed or cross referenced. The LSC has specific duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to ensure that in carrying out its functions it does not disadvantage people from any racial group. The Adult Learning Plan should also show how equal opportunities performance is monitored and evaluated, including progress against agreed action plans to close equality gaps on the grounds of race, age, sex and disability and to widen participation to under-represented groups.

Basic skills

- 44 Increasing participation in basic skills programmes is a government priority and the LEA should identify the numbers of basic skills learners funded through the ACL budget on the learner number forms. It is recognised that the majority of basic skills provision made by LEAs has been carried out in their role as former external institutions, but that in some instances LEAs have funded work in this

area from the budget covered by the Adult Learning Plan under their power to make provision in this area.

- 45 Any intentions to use the funding provided on the basis of this Adult Learning Plan to support the government's priority in the area of basic skills should be described, with particular reference to quantifying provision linked to the national standards. Where applicable, the way that general provision supports basic skills or includes an element of basic skills should also be detailed. This may include contributions to the 16–19 Action Plans. The LEA should indicate its arrangements, actual or planned, to support learners with basic skills needs attending provision made as part of this Adult Learning Plan.
- 46 LEAs should note that basic skills provision should be free to learners. There should be no fees charged for registration, examination, course materials or any other aspects of the learning programme.

Widening participation

- 47 The LSC nationally is currently developing its Strategy for Widening Adult Participation. It will identify a range of actions by which the LSC will support providers in seeking to recruit from currently under-represented groups. The Strategy is due to be launched in February 2003 as a consultation document.
- 48 The emphasis will be on widening adult participation as a theme relating to all LSC-funded activities, ensuring that the profile of learners on all programmes is being developed beyond traditional participants. The strategy will recognise the need for a differentiated strategy that addresses the complexity of circumstances giving rise to non-participation.
- 49 The LSC would wish to see in the Adult Learning Plan for ACL:
- the LEA's assessment of the impact of its previous activities to widen participation; and
 - its plans to develop those activities, including identifying the groups or geographical areas being targeted.
- 50 If the LEA wishes to include separately its own strategy for widening participation, this would be helpful. However the LSC is particularly interested in the impact of the strategy on individual aspects of the Adult Learning Plan, and would therefore welcome references to widening adult participation throughout.
- 51 LEAs will be in discussions with local LSCs on the development of Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs). These will have direct relevance to the widening participation agenda.
- 52 Table 4 and Table 5 should be completed to show how particular groups of learners are represented in provision as against the profile of the local adult population.
- 53 Any specific activities the LEA plans to undertake in 2003/04 to widen participation in adult learning should be described, including the relevant target learner numbers. Where activities are to improve retention or achievement the LEA should set out its targets and rationale.

Family learning

54 Funds for family learning in 2003/04 will be linked to the main budget for family learning with the local LSC and providers of ACL. Nonetheless, each LEA will need to discuss their proposals for planning and monitoring data at appropriate intervals in relation to the delivery of family programmes. The LEA should show in its Adult Learning Plan what impact the funding for 2002/03 has had and their plans, including any plans for change, in the review of the Adult Learning Plan. They may make reference to:

- plans to help tackle social disadvantage and widen participation;
- planned provision for the family in the broadest sense, that is children at all ages, male and female family members and at the extended family;
- work with local partners; and
- contribution to the 16–19 Action Plan.

55 The range of activities will be influenced by local needs and circumstances and might include the following:

- supporting the costs of a wide range of provision which is free to participants;
- creating and/or sustaining a family learning co-ordinator post in the LEA;
- staff training and development;
- purchase of materials and equipment or refurbishing a venue or space for family learning; and
- research and evaluation.

56 The performance monitoring information that applies includes:

- number of participating adults;
- number of participating children (under 18 years);
- percentage of adults and children with disabilities/learning difficulties;
- percentage of male adults;
- percentage of adults and children from minority ethnic groups;
- percentage of adults 60 years and older;
- percentage of primary school children; and
- percentage of secondary school children.

Family literacy, language and numeracy

57 These activities involve parents and their children learning literacy, language or numeracy skills in schools or other community-based settings. Courses vary in length but offer parents and children opportunities to learn, both together and separately.

58 Funding to support family literacy, language or numeracy is used to teach parents and their children. Activities may include grandparents and siblings as well as the immediate parents or legal guardians of children who act in a parental capacity.

59 Courses currently supported include family literacy, language and numeracy workshops and short courses and 'keeping up with the children' courses for

parents. The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) and Basic Skills Agency are developing new models of family literacy, language and numeracy provision, including Early Start courses for parents and children aged 0–1, courses for fathers, workplace family programmes and residential courses.

- 60 The LEA should outline its current activity in delivering and planning family literacy, language and numeracy and the ways in which its Adult Learning Plan contributes to Skills for Life, (the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills) and the links to the local LSC's Adult Literacy and Numeracy Delivery Plan. Reference should be made to the local authority's plans associated with family literacy, language or numeracy, for example Neighbourhood Nurseries.
- 61 A clear outline of the LEA's capacity to respond to additional funding for family literacy, language and numeracy from April 2003 to enhance its provision should be included in the Adult Learning Plan, showing how many families could benefit, why these families are targeted, how the activities contribute to Skills for Life and other national literacy and numeracy strategies, widening participation and parental involvement initiatives.
- 62 The Adult Learning Plan should also indicate the models of delivery proposed, how they will use all aspects of the Skills for Life learning infrastructure – screening, initial and diagnostic assessment, learning materials, qualifications and national tests and so on, and how they will record learning and achievement of parents and children and track their progression routes. It should also provide information on proposed levels of attendance and retention, and the percentage of parents making progress and gaining qualifications. These are likely to be the performance indicators that ABSSU will require.

Neighbourhood strategies

- 63 The LEA and the LSC should be involved in strategic level consultation concerning joint strategies for neighbourhood renewal, particularly where the local authority includes designated 'deprived' wards in receipt of neighbourhood renewal funds.
- 64 Where the local authority has specific objectives relating to neighbourhood renewal, these should be included in any planning document. An outline of any key projects or activities in support of this and the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal should be covered during planning discussions. Outcomes are recorded under separate arrangements where activities relate to the LSC neighbourhood learning in deprived communities fund.

Citizenship

- 65 The LSC recognises that learning encourages people to develop as active citizens and to play a full part in their local community. It strengthens families and helps build stronger neighbourhoods. The LSC would wish local authorities to have regard for promoting active citizenship, including civic leadership.

National languages strategy

- 66 The government's national languages strategy aims to increase the quality and scope of modern foreign language (MFL) teaching. As part of the strategy, the LSC aims to encourage planning of the appropriate provision through the ACL

budget for MFL and community languages tailored to local needs and requirements by local employers.

- 67 The LSC recommends that LEAs have particular regard for curriculum, teaching, learning and good practice in language provision. The LSC wishes to understand where LEAs have developed models of delivery, for example dedicated language centres, and the effectiveness of delivery where there are dispersed or rural locations, progression issues and curriculum issues to take into account.

Adult EMAG

- 68 Adult EMAG will support the following items of eligible expenditure:

- gross salaries, employers' national insurance and employers' superannuation contributions of employing adult education tutors (employed by the LEA) to facilitate provision for ethnic minority adults, and to develop links between schools and adult education;
- costs of appropriate teaching materials;
- training costs for teachers and classroom assistants, including training fees;
- travel and subsistence for teachers and classroom assistants attending a training course
- training materials; and
- supply cover.

- 69 It is a condition of funding for adult EMAG that each LEA should provide a brief action plan detailing what they will spend their funding on, and that an annual report be provided. LEAs should agree return dates for these documents with their local LSC.

- 70 Allocations will be sent out with the main grant in December 2002.

Disability Discrimination Act

- 71 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) is extended to education from September 2002. Under part 4 of the DDA, colleges and LEAs will have new legal responsibilities:

- not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason related to their disability; and
- to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled learners.

- 72 These new duties apply to any service which is specifically for students. They are anticipatory, so LEAs will need to anticipate the likely needs of disabled learners and not merely respond to individual needs as they arise.

- 73 The LSC will support LEAs and other providers in taking on board the implications of this new legislation. The following support measures have already been undertaken.

- Guidance leaflets have been produced and circulated to all LEAs and colleges. Copies can be accessed from the LSC website, by selecting Disability Discrimination Act part 4 from the Documents page.
- A programme of training events is being staged for providers between January and March 2003 to raise awareness and understanding among ACL

and FE staff and to enable the attendees to train colleagues on return to their institutions.

- Staff training materials in electronic format for providers to customise for staff development training are available on the LSC website.
- A resources review, providing an overview of useful documents, websites and contacts for FE colleges and LEAs has been developed and will be distributed to LEAs and colleges as well as being available on the LSC website.
- Leaflets for learners have been produced and can be found on the Disability Rights Commission website (www.drc-gb.org) and shortly on the LSC website.

74 Further work being undertaken includes:

- development of a mapping toolkit for ACL providers to help in the assessment of their accessibility for learners with learning difficulties and/or difficulties for implementation 2003/04;
- production and dissemination of good practice guidance on gathering information on disability from learners; and
- provision of a dedicated DDA part 4 web portal as part of the new LSC website when it is launched in 2003.

75 LEAs will be expected to:

- consider the strategic implications of the DDA part 4 for their provision and make clear in their plans how they will respond to the requirements of the DDA;
- respond to the requirements of the DDA part 4 by planning to develop best practice in meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including auditing current provision and anticipated need; and
- use the information leaflets and staff development materials commissioned by the LSC in a planned programme of staff development.

76 The Adult Learning Plan should set out the LEA's work to implement these requirements. Support will be provided through local LSCs.

Disability statement

77 Authorities are requested to send a copy of their Disability Statement to the local LSC with their Adult Learning Plan.

Resource Management

Needs analysis

78 The needs analysis will underpin plans for provision and should therefore be drawn together in collaboration between the LEA and the local LSC. The needs analysis should include consideration of local labour market information and demographic data, referring in particular to the segments of the adult population addressed by each organisation's mission or values statement. For example:

- adult literacy and numeracy rates;

- health statistics;
 - issues emerging from a provider's self-assessment record; and
 - needs expressed in the 16–19 Action Plan.
- 79 It is recommended that planners should compare their learner recruitment, retention and achievement profiles with that of the community or communities they serve. Particular areas of focus might include age, sex and ethnicity and attention should be given to the needs of under-represented groups including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is not recommended that maximum targets for numbers of learners in particular groups should be set, but that their needs are considered in the context of the profile of the local population.
- 80 The main conclusions of a needs analysis should relate to future plans for provision. There should be a clear link between the analysis of need and any intended outcomes.
- 81 Statistical or benchmarking data in support of objectives or outcomes may be included to illustrate how specific objectives may be achieved.
- 82 Both the local authority and the local LSC will be consulting major bodies within their areas to gain a full appreciation of the local education and training market and to identify those they have consulted and the outcomes of such consultation. Learning partnerships should form part of this consultation process.
- 83 The Adult Learning Plan should indicate the number of other providers in the locality, including other local authorities, and indicate the extent to which planning is undertaken jointly or in collaboration or consultation with other providers.

Fees and fee policies

- 84 Authorities are asked to include in their Plan a brief statement of their policies in relation to learner fees. If substantial changes to learner fees or fee policies are proposed during 2003/04 these should be included with the rationale for the changes proposed.

Learner support

- 85 FE learner support funds may not be used to support ACL provision.
- 86 Learner support funds for ACL learners are provided for within the overall funding of the Adult Learning Plan. This was set out in section 4 of the original LEA ACL guidance from the DfES (July 2000).
- 87 The LEA should indicate in its Adult Learning Plan the arrangements (if any) in place for supporting learners on ACL provision and any improvements planned for 2003/04.
- 88 Support for learners includes assistance with the costs of such items as childcare and transport. Support for the latter may be given on a group basis. Learner support may include discretionary fee support (as for FE learner support). It does not include group fee concessions or additional learning support, which are dealt with separately below.
- 89 In order to ensure consistency for ACL and FE learners engaged in non-accredited learning, the LSC expects that eligibility criteria for ACL learner

support will have regard for the FE learner support terms and conditions published by the LSC.

- 90 The LSC expects each ACL provider to earmark an appropriate amount of its ACL funding for learner support purposes and is working with NIACE to establish what this might be, using the questionnaire data. It is anticipated that ACL providers will receive further advice for 2003/04 in due course.

Information, advice and guidance

- 91 Information, advice and guidance (IAG) form an important part of learner support. The LEA should detail the arrangements for this aspect of learner support within the provision secured and also set out the links with IAG partnerships.
- 92 The Adult Learning Plan should include reference to any general adult guidance services or specific guidance activity in addition to funding from the IAG partnerships, and indicate any planned improvements or changes to this aspect of work.

Additional learning support

- 93 Additional learning support refers to arrangements which help individual learners with additional learning needs to gain most from their learning such as help with basic skills or study skills aids for learners with disabilities.
- 94 The Adult Learning Plan should indicate the arrangements (if any) for additional learning support for learners on ACL provision and improvements planned for 2003/04.

Subcontracting

- 95 The LEA should list the organisations with which it subcontracts the delivery of provision, indicating the category of provider (for example, FE college, voluntary organisation), the approximate value of the contract and the numbers of learners engaged through the contract.
- 96 It would help if the Adult Learning Plan shows whether collaborative partners or subcontractors also receive LSC funding separately from their arrangements with the LEA.
- 97 If significant changes from the pattern of contracting are planned, this should be set out with the reasons for the change.
- 98 The management of contracts and monitoring arrangements for subcontractor's delivery relative to target should be described and the value added by the LEA in the management of such contracts specified.

Accommodation strategy

- 99 The Adult Learning Plan should include a short accommodation strategy. This should indicate the rationale for using the premises currently utilised for the delivery of adult learning and issues that may arise in 2003/04 in relation to the accommodation occupied.
- 100 There is separate guidance on capital funding and local LSCs have already written to LEAs with detailed guidance on applying for capital funding. The LEA accommodation strategy will need to accompany any bids for capital funding,

including applications for minor works and DDA compliance capital grant support.

Staffing and management

- 101 The LEA should include a copy of its management and staffing structure and the name and titles of key staff, to indicate the designation and job purpose of members of the staff team. It is not necessary to provide this information for the staff of subcontractors, other than for key contacts.
- 102 The LSC will be able for its part to provide information concerning its staffing structure and reporting lines, with the names and details of key contacts.

Accountability and governance

- 103 The local authority should outline the structures by which it demonstrates formal accountability for the ACL it secures. This may include use of governing bodies or reports to committees of the authority.

[Insert Appendices 1–3:]