

## Six million benefit through the LSC

*A Clear Direction*, the LSC's Annual Report and Accounts 2004-05, has been published.

The report highlights the achievements of the post-16 education and training sector which benefits 6 million people, and reveals information on the performance of local LSC areas. Key achievements for 2004-05 include:

- 860,000 young people and adults achieved Skills for Life qualifications and a record 175,000 apprentices recruited, both exceeding Government targets
- progress on adult Level 2 with 71.7 per cent of adults at Level 2 or above
- 75.4 per cent of all 16–18 year olds in education and training
- a 24 per cent rise in FE capital investment to £200 million on buildings plus £70 million on IT. Total investment since 2001 has passed £2 billion
- 348 Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), on target for 400 by March 2006
- Fashion Retail Skills Academy launched with £12.4 million funding from employers
- the launch of the LSC *agenda for change* programme; and
- an increase in FE and work-based learning success rates

Mark Haysom said: "We have made encouraging progress in transforming the learning and skills sector over the past 12 months and my colleagues and our partners should be congratulated for this. However, huge challenges still remain. Resources are inevitably limited and we must focus on those areas that will boost productivity and allow individuals to contribute to and participate fully in society".

With a £10.4 billion budget in 2006/07, the LSC aims to get the best return on funding, focusing on areas with the most impact on economic competitiveness, through key initiatives that include the National Employer Training Programme (Train to Gain), the LSC's National Employer Service, CoVEs and Skills Academies, with four more academies planned for 2006/07.

For more information see <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/AnnualReport2005/index.html>.

Leading learning and skills

update

January 2006

The Newsletter for Partners and Stakeholders of the Learning and Skills Council

# 14–19 reform plan

Radical plans to drive forward reform in secondary education have been announced.

The measures set out in the 14–19 Implementation Plan released in December, aim to tackle longstanding weaknesses in the education system. Namely that significant numbers of young people, including those that do well, are failing to be motivated by the learning currently on offer. The new plan is a partnership between the DfES, the LSC, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA).

The measures will ensure that by 2015, nine out of ten young people will choose to stay on in education or training at the age of 16. They include a new entitlement guaranteeing young people a choice of 14 specialised Diplomas, alongside the existing curriculum.

Mark Haysom, LSC Chief Executive, said it marked a crucial step in building an education system around the needs of all young people, employers and society that was not merely good but world-class. "Making sure that all 14–19 year olds have access to high quality and relevant learning is the LSC's number one priority for next year. The LSC has been a key partner in planning, funding and developing 14–19 learning nationally, regionally and locally. In effect, we have helped to lay the foundations on which we will build the new, improved system outlined in the Implementation Plan with our partners."

The plan includes:

- new specialised Diplomas designed in partnership with employers, combining skills development and general education
- the first five specialised Diplomas will be available in 2008, five more in 2009 and all 14 by 2010
- a national entitlement which will guarantee every young person a choice of all 14 specialised Diplomas, alongside the existing curriculum, no matter where they are in the country; and
- £315 million for the next two years to personalise learning for pupils at Key Stage 3, including extra support for those falling behind in the basics

Other key elements are changes to schools' performance tables to include maths and English alongside GCSE results and, trialling of "functional skills" at the core of English and maths.

All aspects of 14–19 reform will be in place by 2013 with each school and college providing access to a full national entitlement under which every pupil can choose to pursue one of 14 specialised Diploma lines. The 14–19 Implementation Plan is available on the DfES website at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/>.

## Train to Gain

In his pre-budget report, the Chancellor announced that wage compensation will continue to be made available for the first two years of Train to Gain.

Train to Gain is the new brand name for the National Employer Training Programme for which £38 million will be available in both 2006/07 and 2007/08, specifically to help businesses with less than 50 employers. This will enable the impact of this benefit to continue to be tested. To date, evaluation of the Employer Training Pilots (ETP) has found the impact of wage compensation to be mixed, with many employers stating that it isn't the main attraction of the service. An IES/MORI survey of 2004 asked around 1,500 participating employers which features of ETP they found most attractive. The most frequently cited features were the availability of free and subsidised training (88 per cent), followed by flexibly delivered training (76 per cent), free information advice and guidance through brokers (67 per cent) and then wage compensation (59 per cent).

David Way, LSC Director of Skills says: "Although wage compensation has not been the primary driver for employers to take up the training offered through ETPs, we know that giving staff paid time-off to work is difficult for smaller companies."

"We are therefore pleased that we will be able to test wage compensation further on this group of employers before making any final decision of the inclusion of it in Train to Gain long-term. The support will also ensure that low skilled employees are able to undertake their training during normal working hours, something identified as an important incentive for learners."

Train to Gain (including the funding for wage compensation) will be available in the ETP areas from April 2006, with the remaining LSC local offices offering the service from August onwards.

## Self-regulation

Self regulation is at the heart of the Treasury's 'Faster Closure' agenda, and in an important step toward this, the LSC, together with the National Audit Office (NAO), has proposed key changes to college regularity audits.

The changes mean that an interim regularity audit for 2005/06 will not be required from any college as long as they are able to demonstrate their governance and control over regularity and propriety with a statement to the LSC. This proposal, on which the sector has been consulted, follows an amendment by the LSC in December 2004 to its Audit Code of Practice for 2004/05 funding.

The NAO has advised colleges that the statement must cover their compliance with LSC terms and conditions of funding. Further guidance for colleges is available in Consultation on the Interim Regularity Report recently published by the LSC. Not only does this set out the criteria for those colleges that do not need to submit a report, but also makes the point that certain college governing bodies will still need to submit a report.

Discover more at <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/>.

## EMA events planned

With the extension of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) to learners on LSC-funded Entry to Employment and Programme Led Pathways in April, the LSC has been running a series of educational roadshows throughout the country with more events planned for 2006.

The events will give partners and stakeholders such as Connexions and Local Authorities the information they need to support learners through the application process. They will be held in Birmingham on 27 January, London on 1 February and Leeds on 3 February. Morning sessions will provide an overview of the EMA extension policy and implementation plans. This will be followed by an optional afternoon workshop on the specifics of filling in application forms and opening bank accounts.

To secure your place, please register online at [www.pauljamesassociates.co.uk](http://www.pauljamesassociates.co.uk) using conference code: **162389** and password: **ema**. For further information please email [emaextension@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:emaextension@lsc.gov.uk).

The EMA Unit is also reminding all learning providers that they need to nominate a 'Super User' for the EMASYS (web-based payment system).

## Offender learning

Breaking the cycle of repeat offending through transforming the skills and employment prospects of prisoners was highlighted in the Government's Green Paper on prison education announced in December. *Reducing Re-Offending through Skills and Employment*, jointly produced by the DfES, Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions, marks the start of a constructive dialogue between the partners involved in prison education, including the LSC, which is currently deploying the new Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) to the whole of England.

Of key interest are the proposals ensuring training providers and colleges are better able to provide the skills offenders need to get a job. A new model for delivery is proposed, the 'Offender Learner Campus', to develop new centres of excellence and better links with mainstream education and training. There will also be a new emphasis on skills and jobs for offenders across prisons and probation: through the deployment of New Regional Offender Managers, working with the LSC, who will help match training to job openings.

For more information on the Green Paper, please visit the Offender Learning and Skills website [www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning).

## Apprentice Awards

The LSC has launched its third annual Apprenticeship Awards to showcase outstanding apprentices and employers who are successfully using Apprenticeships. Sponsored by City & Guilds, the deadline for entries is February 2006. Both employers and apprentices are eligible for awards. To enter, or for more information, visit: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/awards) or call the awards helpline on **0800 019 2083**.

## Learner numbers up

The latest learner numbers Statistical First Release shows an encouraging increase in learner numbers in LSC priority areas, including full Level 2, Skills for Life programmes in Further Education (FE) and Apprenticeships. Overall, 4.21 million learners were recorded in LSC-funded Further Education, an increase of 1.2 per cent. A pronounced rise was seen in the number of adult learners on programmes contributing to the Skills for Life target with a 22 per cent increase.

## CoVEs valued

The latest evaluation report into Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) shows an encouraging rise in their reputation amongst employers, with 83 per cent rating the quality of training as excellent or good, and three quarters feeling they offered excellent or good value for money.

Over 700 employers who had used a CoVE in the last 18 months were interviewed revealing that CoVEs are continuing to build flexibility and responsiveness to employers into their delivery models. Those quizzed felt that using CoVE services had resulted in direct benefits to their business. Over half considered that accessing training through a CoVE had increased the efficiency of their business, while two-thirds agreed that the training had increased staff confidence, motivation and morale. For more information visit <http://cove.lsc.gov.uk/index.cfm>.

## Language Award

The Pathfinder 14–19 Networks for Excellence has been recognised with two European Awards for Languages. The British Sign Language for Successful Health care and Panjabi language learning within a Foundation Nurse cadetship each received an award from CiLT, the Government's National Centre for Languages.

The success of the projects was attributed to the partnership brokered via Pathfinders. Isabella Moore the Director of CiLT said "The partnerships evident in so many of these projects highlight the importance of making strategic links so that languages enrich and support broader priorities".

For more information visit <http://www.cilt.org.uk>.

## QIP updated

An update of the New Measures of Success Quality Improvement Pack has been issued. It covers how the three new measures that have been implemented, or are ready for national piloting, can be used together to stimulate quality improvement. They cover measures of Value Added (VA) for 16–19 learners and Distance Travelled (DT) for 16–19 learners; a new measure of Qualification Success Rate, and; Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA). The pack also gives more information about the Learner Satisfaction measure. The pack is available at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/nms>.

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