

# successforall

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### Success for All has four key themes:

- Theme 1** Meeting needs and improving choice
- Theme 2** Putting teaching, training and learning at the heart of what we do
- Theme 3** Developing the leaders, teachers, lecturers, trainers and support staff of the future
- Theme 4** Developing a framework for quality and success

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

## Way forward for three-year planning

Circular 03/09 and associated guidance on three-year development plans for colleges and providers were published on 31 May and are available at: [www.successforall.gov.uk](http://www.successforall.gov.uk)

Publication of the Circular is another step in the implementation of theme four of *Success for All* – developing a framework for quality and success.

The Circular explains the requirement for three-year development plans and what they should contain, and outlines the steps which colleges and providers and their local LSCs need to take in agreeing, reviewing and refining them. It also explains other aspects of the new framework for quality and success, including arrangements for three-year funding allocations and national floor targets for success rates. The Circular also highlights a number of areas for continued development to secure further benefits for learners, employers and local communities. The Circular applies to the majority of providers of LSC-funded education and training.

The Circular takes account of views gained from the huge consultation exercise involving more than 1,000 delegates from the sector who attended 18 events across the country. More than 400 written responses on the proposals were also received. An overwhelming majority of responses supported the principals underpinning implementation of theme 4 and welcomed a commitment to three-year planning and move to a trust-based relationship between providers and local LSCs.

‘This level of involvement has been of immense value to us in shaping the arrangements and helped to identify areas where we can carry out further work together,’ said John Harwood, Chief Executive of the LSC.

‘We look forward to working closely with all parts of the sector to ensure that together we deliver the very best for our learners, employers and local communities.’

## Focus on...

A monthly feature on *Success for All's* key players and good practice. This month: **Lynne Sedgmore, Chair FE Advisory Group**

## Focus on...

### A sensible way forward

**Lynne Sedgmore was delighted to accept the Chair of the LSC's FE Advisory Group for Theme 4 – developing a framework for quality and success. As well as pushing forward 'fundamental and crucial reform' it had the teeth, she felt, to ensure changes would be sensible and workable.**

'What interested me in chairing this was the dynamic and diverse group of principals who were invited onto it,' says Lynne Sedgmore. 'These are colleagues I hold in high esteem who are prepared to challenge and be forthright in their views.'

'The group is made up of people who are constructive but are not in any way poodles of the system. We want to support the new way forward while ensuring it is meaningful, appropriate and sensible.'

The principal and chief executive of Guildford College has helped steer the group of 20 through two circulars on Theme 4. The first went out for consultation in January and the second, produced at the end of last month, used feedback to formulate implementation and explain targets and three-year development plans.

She says the group has worked on behalf of FE colleges to ensure the development plan is as simple and straightforward as it can be. Members were keen to make certain it did not create more bureaucracy and that targets were kept to a minimum.

A lot of work and understanding will be needed over the next 12 months to make *Success For All* work effectively. 'There will need to be a commitment from all sides to take this forward, particularly in relation to Strategic Area Reviews,' says Lynne Sedgmore.

'The role of the advisory group from now on is to help drive forward the implementation programme and to monitor the revised arrangements during the first year of operation.'

The fact that the plan has fully taken on board the views of consultations and has been accepted by the DfES and LSC, has reinforced her 'pathological optimism that people want to do things for the right reasons and in the right ways.'

She feels the commitment towards partnership working is already evident for all to see. 'Like the rest of the group, I believe the most important thing is that we have been listened to by LSC national officials and that amendments and changes have been made as a result of what we have had to say from a range of perspectives.'

'There has been real progress in breaking down barriers to implementation. The LSC and Margaret Hodge have listened to the group and have amended the circular based upon what we have had to say about establishing a framework for quality and success. I think the process of engagement and

consultation has been far more thorough than in the past. My experience on the group has reinforced my belief that there is a genuine commitment to build partnerships and to assist providers.'

The acid test now is whether the proposed reforms work in practice. The next big step is for providers to produce their development plans and headline targets to be agreed with local LSCs.

'My personal view is that the majority, if not everyone in the sector, is strongly on board with the vision of *Success for All*, which puts teaching and learning at the heart of the reforms,' she says. 'What cynicism exists lies primarily with how things are implemented at local level – too much bureaucracy, too much micro-managing and too many local targets.'

'We have to continue to work hard to ensure that the sort of messages that are coming from Ministers and the LSC national office of working in trust and raising standards in partnership are implemented throughout all 47 LSCs. We will be open to feedback from providers about local interpretation, and will continue to pass this on to Ministers and the LSC to highlight where it is not working. We are an independent voice to channel these concerns if and when they arise.'

### Drive to cut red tape accelerates

Sir Andrew Foster, retiring head of the audit commission will play a key role in cutting red tape in the learning and skills sector, as head of the new Bureaucracy Review Group. The Group will have the power to review and challenge the impact of new and existing policies imposed across the whole post-16 sector.

Announcing Sir Andrew's appointment on 10 June, Margaret Hodge said 'together with the LSC, the DfES has created a gatekeeper group that will be a permanent champion of light touch control. Its powers will give it real teeth to root out unnecessary bureaucracy. The independent group will be fully representative of the sector with members from WBL, ACL colleges and school sixth forms.'

In a further move to cut bureaucracy, John Harwood announced the next 97 colleges to join the LSC's Trust in FE initiative. These colleges, from academic year 2003-04 onwards, will no longer be subjected to an annual audit, but will receive a 'light-touch' audit instead.

John Harwood also announced a joint project with the DfES to set up three test-beds to fast-track the key *Success for All* and anti-bureaucracy changes to evaluate their effectiveness and replicate good practice in other areas. Sussex, Greater Merseyside and Birmingham and Solihull LSCs have been selected to take part in this project. A limited number of providers in these areas will be invited to fast-track changes.

## Developing Teaching and Learning Frameworks

Theme 2 of *Success for All* aims to raise standards in teaching and learning, and promote excellence throughout the learning and skills sector. Working collaboratively with partner agencies, providers and expert practitioners, the DfES Standards Unit is currently developing teaching and learning frameworks in four key learning and skills areas – construction, entry to employment, business studies and science. Utilising recent evidence and known best practice, the frameworks will develop a range of innovative materials and staff development approaches to enhance the delivery of improvements in teaching and learning.

The process of development and trialling of materials and approaches is now well under way. Some 28 trial sites covering the full range of learning and skills providers and institutions have been selected and are actively engaged in the production and application of a diverse range of materials. These include paper-based activities and resources as well as videos, CD-ROMs and multi-media. Equally important is the development of methods and approaches to support teachers directly.

Led by experts from the sector seconded to the Standards Unit and supported by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), trial participants are focussing upon key elements in each learning and skills area, and their application across all levels, from basic skills through to Level 4. In business studies, the immediate focus is on how to help teachers concentrate on the individual learners' needs through better differentiation, to ensure that teaching makes its maximum impact. In science, materials are being developed which will help learners deal with key topics that traditionally cause real difficulties in understanding, such as molecular structures.

The trials are generating considerable interest amongst participating teachers and trainers already. Jane Williams, Head of the Standards Unit, commented: 'We are delighted with everyone's enthusiasm and are looking forward to sharing the outcomes of the work in the autumn.' As the engagement of learners is also important, the trials will incorporate lesson observation and the views of both teachers and learners will be gauged at the end of the trials process. The feedback from teachers and learners will form a key part of the evaluation, so that any modifications can be made before proceeding to the later pilot phase.

The trials will not end here. The development of teaching and learning frameworks in these learning and skills areas will continue. Additional elements are already being identified and when chosen will be developed and trialled. In addition, four new learning and skills areas – health and social care, information and communications technology (ICT), maths and land based further education – will follow a similar process, starting in September 2003.

## ACL shares the spotlight

Providers of adult and community learning make no secret of their belief that, for years, they have been consigned to roles as bit-part players while others in the FE sector have taken centre stage.

It is not surprising then that the sweeping education reforms now taking place have resulted in a sense of growing excitement at the prospect of a place in the spotlight and better billing.

Bob Powell, chief officer of HOLEX, shares the views of his members that changes mean more prominence for part-time adult education in the big production. While more needs to be done, particularly in the areas of leadership and management, he believes things are moving quickly, and in the right direction.

'It is something we have fought for long and hard – a level playing field and equal treatment for all providers,' he says. 'ACL has been relatively poorly resourced in comparison with other areas and has not been subject to the same regimes.'

'We are encouraged that the DfES is now aware of the potential part we have to play in the evolving skills strategy.'

HOLEX is an organisation representing more than 110 non-college providers of further education, including local authority adult education services and voluntary and community sector bodies. Its members range in size from those dealing with 50,000 learners a year to those handling just 500. One thing they have in common is that all their learners are adults and that the vast majority are part-time and below Level 3.

'We are encouraged by *Success for All* and particularly by the way it is being consulted upon' he adds. 'The DfES and the LSC are clearly in listening mode. In the past the ACL has been a relatively ignored area of the learning and skills sector, but at last we are being listened to.'

Providers are particularly pleased that they are now subject to a four-year Adult Learning Inspectorate cycle and, from August, will be required to keep Individual Learner Records.

'I think we welcome this because it does shine a light in places where we feel we have good practice. The first 34 ALI inspections show teaching and learning grades are up there with FE colleges.'

'It has also exposed this history of neglect in areas of infrastructure development and quality. We feel that we now have the vehicle to make the move to improve management performance, performance management and data collection.'

# 16-19 organisation: key principles

On 10 June Margaret Hodge gave the keynote address at the annual conference of the Learning and Skills Development Agency, to over 800 delegates from the learning and skills sector.

In what later emerged as Margaret Hodge's final speech to the sector as its minister, she praised its achievements. College success rates for all qualifications have increased from 54% in 1998/99 to 59% in 2000/01. In 2002/03 64% of work-based learning areas were satisfactory on inspection, up from 57% in 2001/02. And over 150 Centres of Vocational Excellence are now operating, with evaluation showing a significant impact.

Margaret Hodge emphasised the importance of Strategic Area Reviews to the *Success for All* strategy and highlighted the key principles for reviewing the organisation of 16-19 learning:

- distinct learning environments and support arrangements for young people;
- respect for learner choice, including for high quality sixth forms;

- a wide curriculum offer through collaboration between providers; and
- value for money.

The DfES and the LSC will shortly issue guidance on 16-19 organisation to inform Strategic Area Reviews.

In the ministerial reshuffle on 13 June, Margaret Hodge took up a new post as Minister for Children. Her replacement as Minister for Lifelong Learning is Alan Johnson who will feature in next month's *Success for All* newsletter.

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## Calendar

The *Success for All* calendar for colleges and providers is updated in each issue of the newsletter. The calendar as at the beginning of June is:

2003	Developments	Communications/consultation
May-July	Colleges and providers continue discussion with LLSCs on development plans and headline improvement targets	
30 June		Focus on Policy Seminar – Three-year development plans
July	LSC assessments for capital programme	
July	National Skills Strategy and outcomes of Review of Funding of Adult Learning published	LSC launch event for National Skills Strategy
14 July		Focus on Policy Seminar – Success for All and the Skills Strategy
31 July	Providers and LSC agree development plans	
31 July	Floor and improvement targets in place	
15 September		Focus on Policy Seminar – Success for All and 14-19 Strategy
5 November		Focus on Policy Seminar – Qualifying the Workforce
11-13 November		AoC Annual Conference