

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

## On course for the StARs

The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) programme of Strategic Area Reviews (StARs), is well on course.

Over the last 12 months, local LSCs have been working closely with partners, including local education authorities, employers, schools and training providers. They are now beginning to draw up outline plans to reshape provision to match the needs of learners and employers.

'Most of the 47 local LSCs are now moving out of the initial information gathering phase of the programme and are starting to address the issues they have identified, and put in place the measures needed to provide the education and training that their local people and businesses need' says Caroline Neville, the LSC's National Director of Learning.

'It has been widely accepted that local provision was too supplier-led and needed to be changed. There was trepidation in some quarters at the start but we are delighted with the way that partner organisations have worked with us to get us to the stage we are at now.

'We have received tremendous support from stakeholders and are continuing to

work with them to draw up outline plans, which will go out for full consultation in all local LSC areas.

'In some areas, these plans may involve some large changes to current education and training provision, while in others the changes may be very minor. In all areas, we are extremely hopeful of gaining a consensus on the plans from the partners involved.'

Despite the huge scale of the review programme, the LSC is well on track a year after its launch. Consultations on outline plans will be followed by the incorporation of review outcomes in local LSC plans in Spring 2005.

'What happens from then on,' explains Caroline, 'very much depends on the scale of the changes required, which will be different in each local area. Some changes will be able to be implemented very quickly while others may take several years.

'However, this will not be the end of the process behind StARs, which have always been at the heart of core business for the LSC. Local LSCs will continue to work with partners to plan provision to meet the needs of learners for the foreseeable future.'

## Focus on...

A monthly feature on *Success for All's* key players and good practice. This month: Best practice from Matthew Boulton College

### Training excellence on display

Matthew Boulton College has secured many shop windows for its high standards of training. If you visit the new Birmingham Bullring, the chances are that the store displays on view have been produced by students on its specialist year-long retail course.

The college's links with the sector are a highly visible example of the innovative training work it is doing across the region with a wide range of employers from retail, engineering, business and professional services firms to the health service and local authorities.

Companies in the Bullring shopping centre have, for the last three years, been enrolling window dressing staff on the British Display Society course that leads to a Retail Display Technicians Certificate.

'This is a unique creative programme we have developed after looking at the needs of the industry,' says vice principal, Hilary Rimmer. 'We train over 30 people a year from stores such as Selfridges, Debenhams and River Island and we have achieved gold and silver medals for the performance of our students. The certificate is coveted by the industry.'

'We are very proud of our work with the retail sector, which is just one example of a whole raft of initiatives we have underway with a variety of employers and industries.'

The college's vocational learning is marketed by its Corporate Services department but all departments are responsible for liaising with and working with employers. The majority of teaching staff have worked in industry and deal directly with employers on an individual basis through the development and delivery programmes.

Peter Tudor, who recently joined the college as Director of Business Development, is particularly impressed by the fact that every school has taken on the responsibility of working with employers.

'Most colleges will have a business development unit which usually serves as their main vehicle for employer engagement, but the way it works at Matthew Boulton College is unique in my experience,' he says. 'The whole college has grasped the challenge of employer

engagement and every school is heavily involved with employers. This is the key to our success. Working with employers is seen as an integral part of our business.'

Matthew Boulton operates in a local, regional, national and international capacity, delivering training for start-up enterprises, SMEs, PLCs and international organisations. This can take place on site, online, or in the workplace. Training hours are flexible and are extended to work alongside any company shift patterns.

In looking at training needs, Matthew Boulton advises employers on the selection of tools and equipment; provides facilitation and consultancy services and advises on staff recruitment.

In February last year, the college gained the Queen's Award for Higher and Further Education, acknowledging its advances in industry training and its impact on industry.

### Leadership and Management

There have been two key developments:

- The first annual conference for The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) took place at the end of March at the Belfry Hotel.

Some 200 delegates from across the Learning and Skills sector took part. There were presentations from Jane Williams, Director of Teaching and Learning at the Standards Unit, John Burgoyne, Professor of Management Learning, Lancaster University and Nigel Benwell, Head of Executive Development, Lloyds TSB. The main sessions were complemented by a series of research and good practice workshops where participants engaged with expert practitioners and heard feedback from attendees currently on the CEL's programmes. The audience was unanimous in its support for Lynne Sedgmore, Director and Chief Executive Designate of CEL who closed the conference. For more information contact: Cath Witherington Tel: 0114 259 3458 or email: [cath.witherington@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cath.witherington@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

- The Standards Unit has published a report on its joint consultation with the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, *Developing the Leaders of the Future: A Leadership Strategy for the Learning and Skills sector*. The report summarises the responses received, which includes both written responses and comments made by delegates at three consultation conferences in Autumn 2003. Detailed reports of the three consultation conferences can be found on theme 3 pages of the *Success for All* website at [www.successforall.gov.uk](http://www.successforall.gov.uk)

## High levels of satisfaction

Over 72,000 employers in England were surveyed in 2003 for the LSC National Employers' Skills Survey. This was the first study of its kind managed by the LSC and was undertaken by independent market research contractors. A wealth of information has been generated by this survey. A series of questions on employer satisfaction have produced valuable feedback covering; use of FE by employers, frequency of use and satisfaction with provision. Summary high level analysis shows:

- On average 29% of employers in England have used further education establishments to train and develop their staff.
- There are wide regional variations in employers' use of further education establishments. The lowest use was in the London region where only 20% of respondents used further education establishments for staff training, while the highest percentage was 36% in the East Midlands.
- Private companies are the least likely to use FE to develop their staff, according to the findings. Only 29% of private business respondents said they used further education establishments compared with 36% in the public sector and 42% in the voluntary sector.
- Usage levels depended strongly on the number of employees. 25% of organisations with 1 to 4 employees had used FE establishments, rising to 71% of organisations with 500+ employees.
- There were substantial sectoral differences in usage. Sector usage varied from 16% to 55%.
- The research also showed that employers experiencing difficulties in attracting staff with the right skills are more likely to use further education to train their employees. 37% of respondents with staff vacancies used FE services, rising to 40% with hard to fill vacancies and 42% with skills shortage vacancies.
- In terms of overall national satisfaction, 81% of employers using FE for staff training over the last year expressed satisfaction with the service they received. Only 7% said they were dissatisfied with courses provided.

Further work is taking place to analyse the data and investigate the factors that contribute to increased employer satisfaction.

## Exclusive preview

Do you teach business studies, construction, Entry to Employment (E2E) or science? If you do, then you'll be interested in the 'Transforming Teaching and Learning' workshops to be run for each curriculum area by the Standards Unit in the English regions between 14 June and 9 July.

These **free**, one-day workshops will give teachers, trainers and their managers an **exclusive preview** of the teaching and learning materials and associated delivery strategies developed by the Standards Unit's expert practitioners. Delegates will get a free **CD-ROM** containing a selection of the materials and hear from the experts who developed and tested them.

We can accommodate one or two delegates from each provider at each curriculum-specific workshop within a region. Places are limited and attendance will be on a first come, first served basis. You can download further details, including dates, and a booking form at [www.successforall.gov.uk/contentList.cfm?funcSectionId=26#bk227](http://www.successforall.gov.uk/contentList.cfm?funcSectionId=26#bk227)

## 14-19: opportunity and excellence – progress report

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has produced a progress report on the 14-19 reform programme. The report sets out key achievements and next steps since the Government announced the reforms in 14-19: opportunity and excellence last year. The aim of 14-19 is to transform the learning experience for young people, so by the age of 16 they are committed to continued learning, whether in school, college or the workplace. Over the past 15 months real improvements have been achieved, including:

- introducing legislation to provide greater flexibility into the Key Stage 4 curriculum;
- expanding the 'Increased Flexibility Programme', leading to more GCSEs in vocational subjects as well as more students studying them;
- providing additional guidance and support materials for professionals on the new work-related and enterprise learning provisions at Key Stage 4;
- increasing the number of young people to the highest volumes ever on the new Modern Apprenticeship programmes;
- publishing the National Framework for Careers Education and Guidance;
- improving financial support provisions through the forthcoming national roll out of the Education Maintenance Allowance; and
- embedding collaboration and innovative practices in our thirty-nine 14-19 pathfinders.

The report recognises that the *Success for All* reforms continue to underpin these achievements and identifies the significant steps that lie ahead. The report is available at [www.TeacherNet.gov.uk](http://www.TeacherNet.gov.uk)

## Business Cycle brings new clarity

The LSC is introducing a new Business Cycle that will have far reaching effects on the way it works with further education, work based learning providers and key partners to meet the nation's skills priorities.

The new approach, being introduced in the autumn for the academic year 2004/05, brings together the planning, funding and strategic review processes into a single integrated cycle.

The new business cycle supports the LSC's increasing emphasis on planning education and training to meet the skills needs of both individuals and employers.

It heralds a new strategic approach to the LSC's relationship with colleges, other training organisations and partners such as the ALI, Sector Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies and Business Link, based on sharing knowledge, collaboration and trust to tackle skills gaps at national, regional and local level.

It reflects the LSC's commitment – set out in Chief Executive Mark Haysom's vision for a 'New LSC' – to introduce simplicity and clarity in its activities, reduce bureaucracy and to work with greater openness and transparency.

The new way of working is central to the LSC's proposals for plan-led funding and three-year development plans for providers, published in October 2003, which take forward the aims in *Success for All*.

Bringing the review of providers' performance within an annual cycle will allow the LSC to establish a more streamlined and responsive planning system, enabling it to adjust and redistribute budgets for the next funding year based on performance in the current year, rather than the previous year.

The LSC's aim is to offer real incentives for colleges and other training organisations to address skills priorities and, if necessary, to fund new providers of high quality training to close gaps in provision. In this way, funding will be targeted where it will make the most difference.

The new business cycle has a number of key phases.

The first, from November to January, embraces an annual strategic review of learning and skills priorities, including an annual statement of priorities from the National Skills Alliance – the consortium of social, economic and delivery partners driving forward the government's Skills Strategy – an annual statement and updated skills action plan from the new Regional Skills Partnerships and publication of local learning and skills assessments.

Phase two, January and February – part of a rolling process – focuses on the annual review of three-year development plans between providers and the LSC.

In February and March, local LSCs will produce draft annual plans and budgets, taking account of gaps in provision and the need for budget adjustments or redistribution.

In phases four and five, April and May, the new LSC Regional Directors will submit plans on behalf of their local LSCs. The LSC's National Management Board will review the plans and carry out any adjustment or redistribution locally or within regions.

Budgets for providers and targets will be confirmed in phase six, May-June, when funding contracts are agreed.

## Equality and Diversity

Jane Williams (Director, Standards Unit) and Rob Wye (LSC, *Success for All* Programme Director) recently wrote to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) to set out how we plan to embed equality and diversity in *Success for All*.

One of the four success criteria of *Success for All* is that learners, including those who are disadvantaged, receive the support they need to benefit from education and training. We have already begun to increase the diversity of leaders and managers in the sector through the Commission for Black Staff in FE. And through StARs we expect to see more black and ethnic minority group and other specialist training providers entering the market.

However, we need to go further and to assist us in our work we ran a very successful policy seminar on equality and diversity on 22 March in Birmingham. The seminar involved over 50 practitioners, experts and policy-makers exploring how the principles of equality and diversity inform the *Success for All* strategy. It also identified scope for improvement and considered how progress might be incentivised, measured and monitored. Using the feedback from the seminar, we will seek further advice and support from the EOC, CRE and DRC to further embed equality and diversity in *Success for All*.

**Please note that there is no direct link between the STAR awards and the Honours System. (See February's newsletter headline entitled 'Recognising Outstanding Individual Achievement through the Honours System').**

## Skills Strategy

The government's Skills Strategy, 21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential, outlined a major rethink in the way learning and training should be delivered to meet the country's skills deficit.

### Funding and Fees Reform

A major theme of the strategy is the need to re-prioritise resources so that they are directed to meet skills needs. Currently funding does not distinguish between learning that meets skills priorities and learning that does not. In addition, fee income has fallen in recent years with many colleges failing to charge fees where individual employers should be making a contribution. Work to implement changes in funding and fees will proceed in two main areas by:

- re-directing funding away from lower priority provision towards high priority skills learning and learners, and
- addressing the low/no fees culture that has developed to help colleges and providers raise the funding needed to reflect these new priorities.

### Regional trials

The LSC will be working with colleges and partner organisations in the North East and South East to trial some of the key initiatives announced last year. In particular, the two regions will be trialling the introduction of the new entitlement to Level 2 skills, which will offer free tuition for a first full Level 2 qualification to any adult without a good foundation of employability skills.

These regions will also introduce the new Adult Learning Grant and there will be linked action to improve information, advice and guidance for adults. Regional Skills Partnerships will be asked to identify skills and qualifications most needed by employers in those regions. That will mean that adults benefiting from the new Level 2 entitlement know that their new skills and qualifications carry the best possible chance of secure and rewarding employment. Access the Skills Strategy website [www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy) which is updated regularly.

### New Deal for Skills

The New Deal for skills, announced by the Chancellor in his Budget on 17 March, sets out new ways of tackling both long standing barriers between welfare and workforce development and the problem of numbers of people with no or low skills. It is also a concrete response to recommendations in the recent report by the National Employment Panel: [www.nationalemploymentpanel.org.uk](http://www.nationalemploymentpanel.org.uk) The New Deal for Skills sets out some specific new measures to help people move from low to higher skilled work:

- new incentives and support for those out of work to help them gain new skills and move into work;

- better joint working between Jobcentre Plus offices and Information Advice and Guidance partnerships to offer a more integrated skills service;
- a skills passport which will set out entitlements to learning as well as recording individuals' skills and qualifications.

## CoVEs increase business efficiency

Research with employers who use Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) to train staff has shown that 47% believe they have increased the efficiency of their businesses as a result.

More than 500 employers throughout England took part in the independent research conducted by GHK Consulting on behalf of the LSC, which manages the programme and funds 274 CoVEs. The number of centres is due to rise to 400 by 2006.

All of those surveyed had been in some form of contact with a CoVE in the previous six months.

Most employers reported using CoVE services for nationally recognised qualifications, such as NVQs and Apprenticeships, and for provision at Level 3. More than half also used centres for Level 2, with one in five using them for both Level 1 and Level 4 training.

The flexibility offered by CoVEs was popular with employers. Most used centres for part-time or weekend classes and almost a third used customised training packages designed to meet their specific needs.

The benefits of using CoVEs included providing employees with business-relevant skills, improving competences and leading to the introduction of new working practices. Almost half considered that the use of CoVE services had increased the efficiency of their businesses.

The quality of training was rated by 82% of users as excellent or good, with 72% of service users stating that they used their CoVE regularly and 91% stating they would definitely or probably use CoVE services again.

## 'Investing in Excellence and Good Practice' website launched

The LSC launched its 'Investing in Excellence and Good Practice' website in March. The website has been developed to provide guidance and information on how good practice can be used to improve quality and raise standards across the post-16 sector.

The website contains examples of excellent practice from inspection, relevant good practice publications and details of LSC programmes to promote good practice across a

range of sectors and providers. The website gives details of Beacon and CoVE providers and uses a search facility to help you access good practice from a variety of sources.

The website can be found at <http://goodpractice.lsc.gov.uk>  
Please forward any feedback about the website to [rigp\\_enquiries@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:rigp_enquiries@lsc.gov.uk)

## The future starts to take shape

With an outstandingly high level of designs submitted to the Colleges for the Future competition, it was impossible to pick just one winner...

From his very first days at the LSC, Mark Haysom has been quite clear about the organisation's overall goal. 'It is,' he says, 'quite simply to meet the needs of local employers and communities through world-class teaching in world-class buildings.'

'Learning must take place in modern and stimulating settings. This is the way forward for further education. We can't expect people to gain the skills for the 21st century in buildings designed for the 19th century. Using the talents and enthusiasm of design specialists we will achieve our vision.'

The competition, run in partnership with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), did not disappoint. Registrations flooded in from students and architects across the UK and Europe, attracting so many world-class designs that the judges decided to award a joint first prize.

Sharing the top honours were a team of three London students – Tamsin Green, Kenny Tsui and Justin Lau – and Sarah Williams and Richard Hyams of AEDAS Architects, London. Both teams received £4,000.

Competition judge, Paul Grainger, Chairman of the RIBA-LSC Forum and Principal of Runcorn and Widnes Sixth Form College, said 'Careful design is crucial to the success of college buildings – the location of learning is just as important as the content of the curriculum. This competition has produced a broad range of stimulating suggestions for the learning environment.'

Over the past three years, the LSC has backed and invested in capital projects worth £2 billion in college and other educational buildings. This high level of funding is set to continue as the LSC pursues its goal of world-class teaching in world-class buildings.

'Being involved in this competition was an exciting and challenging experience,' says Mark Haysom. 'All applicants, particularly the winners, should be congratulated on their foresight and innovation.'

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

## Calendar

The *Success for All* calendar is updated in each issue of the newsletter. The calendar as at the beginning of May is:

2003	Developments	Communications/consultation
6 May		Focus on Policy Seminar – LLSSC
15-21		Adult Learners' Week NIACE Awards Ceremony
19-20	Bureaucracy report	ALP National Conference
June	Standards Unit Regional Network established	
15-16		LSDA Summer Conference Teaching and Learning Workshops start
21-23		AoC/SFCF Summer Conference
29		Beacons Event