

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 (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to keep you up to date with the change programme designed to transform the quality and responsiveness of the learning and skills sector. This month's issue is being distributed with The Standards Unit Newsletter where you will find updates on Themes 2 and 3. [Send us your feedback on the newsletter or views on Success for All to \[successforallnewsletter@lsc.gov.uk\]\(mailto:successforallnewsletter@lsc.gov.uk\)](#)

CoVEs Update

The network of 262 Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) are planned by the LSC on the basis of skills priorities determined by Regional Development Agencies and Sector Skills Councils. For providers working in collaboration, each centre receives between £0.5 million and £0.9 million in funding.

Each centre specialises in offering specific skills training. The largest numbers of CoVEs are currently serving manufacturing industries, closely followed by business services, construction, health and social work and hotels and restaurants.

The latest evaluation of the programme, involving interviews with 520 employers, showed that 82 per cent rated the centres as excellent or good, 89 per cent would recommend using CoVE services to other business colleagues and 75 per cent said they offered excellent or good value for money. Almost 40 per cent of those interviewed said they were more

satisfied with services offered by the centres than by other providers.

The standard of proposals received from providers wishing to establish CoVEs are continuing to rise, according to the LSC. More than 90 per cent of those who submitted proposals during the last commissioning phase of the programme were approved as a result of early and close collaboration between local LSCs and organisations hoping to achieve CoVE status.

'The last approval round was extremely encouraging and showed how effectively we are working with partners to commission strong proposals,' said Greg Cejer, the LSC's national CoVE programme manager.

'We are well on track to achieving our target of establishing 400 CoVEs by March 2006 and a great deal of good work is going on out in the field with providers working closely with employers and suppliers.'

Focus on...

A monthly feature on *Success for All's* key players and good practice. This month: **Best practice in Ashington, South East Northumberland**

Focus on...

Training excellence on display

Plans have been drawn up to create an £84 million learning park at Ashington in Northumberland following a Strategic Area Review (StAR) of the Wansbeck area carried out by the local LSC.

This was one of six district reviews carried out across the county to identify the skills base and needs of employers, alongside the skills needs of local people and communities.

The Wansbeck review highlighted the need to encourage people to take part in education and training, to raise their aspirations and to establish a strong entrepreneurial culture in the area.

Proposals for the new learning park involve the creation of a campus, which will place Ashington High School Sports College, Hirst Community High School Technology College and Northumberland College on a shared site to cater for students from 14 years upwards.

The development will take place under the joint leadership of key partners, including the colleges, county council, district council and the LSC. It is expected to be a groundbreaking educational project that will become a nationally recognised model of excellence.

The learning park will also provide a base for structured enterprise activities for businesses and individuals as well as offering integrated community facilities such as sports, leisure, public services, community education and a library, for local people.

The new development is not expected to address all of the education and skills problems of the area but will make a significant contribution to re-aligning provision and need when working with other planned developments across the county.

Plans for the new campus have been widely welcomed. Ken Tonge, Head Teacher at Ashington Community High School Sports College and Ged Lee, Head Teacher of Hirst Community High School Technology College were initially sceptical.

'Many of us were less than enthusiastic about the prospect of a StAR which appeared, at first, to be yet another layer of scrutiny about our work in school,' they said in a joint statement.

'In fact, the process was not in any way judgemental and furnished us with a valuable insight into the

educational and training offer from providers in our area and we have used the data when planning future provision for our partnerships'.

Chris Ord from the LSC *Success for All* Implementation Team said: 'Looking at the picture across the country we see a whole range of positive developments emerging which are really helping meet the needs of employers and learners in local communities'.

'Sustained improvement' in post-16 learning

The learning and skills sector has shown significant improvements according to the final report, *Evaluation of Post-16 Learning Arrangements*, from independent analysts, York Consulting.

The study was commissioned by the DfES to assess how key stakeholders and partners saw the evolution of learning and skills since the Learning and Skills Act 2000, which set up the LSC. The report shows 'sustained improvement,' especially in the area of reducing bureaucracy, since its interim report 12 months ago. It also concludes that expertise among LSC staff is strengthening, as are partnerships and communications across the sector.

The report states that *Success for All* is working well and that the StAR process is a good idea, which is helping dialogue between partners such as the LSC and local education authorities.

While there are remaining areas for concern, the report says of the LSC that there are 'indications that the restructuring programme may achieve its goals, with strong support for Regional Directors and the changes at national office.'

The full report can be found on the DfES website: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch> (scroll down to '2001060 – Evaluation of Post 16 Learning Arrangements' and open in Word format).

Banks is new LSC Chair

Education and Skills Secretary, Charles Clarke recently announced the appointment of Chris Banks as new Chairman of the LSC to succeed Bryan Sanderson, who steps down after four years in the role.

Chris, current Chairman of the LSC's Young People's Learning Committee and a member of the National Council, joined the LSC in his role as Chief Executive of food and drink company, Big Thoughts Ltd. Until a

management buy out in 2002, he had been Managing Director of Coca-Cola Great Britain from 1997. Chris was made a Commander of the British Empire for services to young people and the unemployed in the 2003 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Charles Clarke launches dialogue

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills Secretary, Charles Clarke, has unveiled proposals for the next stage of reform to develop a modernised and demand-led network of providers offering choice and value to learners and employers. Speaking at the annual Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) conference on June 15th, Charles Clarke outlined his vision for a new relationship with the sector. With success rates improving and positive signs that the *Success for All* reforms are being embraced by the learning and skills sector, he set out his proposals for empowering the front-line and creating a high quality, responsive, demand-led sector responsible for its own future.

'The sector needs to be a driver of economic development and social regeneration. We need world class training providers and colleges delivering what young people, adults and employers want and we know that we'll have succeeded when all employers see colleges as their partners of choice'.

'By 2008 we want to see a high quality, responsive demand-led sector, responsible for its own future and its own self improvement. The new vision must be based on trust and devolution of responsibility to the front-line'.

'I want to streamline the quality improvement landscape to ensure a clear focus and direction. I intend to establish a national strategic body to drive forward quality improvement and to bring together the commissioning and quality assuring activity currently dispersed across several bodies. I have invited LSDA to work with the Department to consider how it could undertake this new role'.

Charles Clarke also told delegates that he was looking for a change in culture and attitudes to achieve a new balance of responsibilities and funding between government, employers and learners which will require an historic shift in expectations and practice about who pays for what.

'The contribution that employers and individuals make towards the cost of training in the LSC funded sector is not as high as it might be reasonably expected when we look at the other countries'.

Concluding his speech, Charles Clarke said that he wanted a dialogue with the sector about the new relationship. He announced he would be meeting a group of 25-30 college principals before the summer break.

This will build on the regional roadshows Mark Haysom is currently leading to discuss the college of the future with the FE sector.

National Skills Event – 'One Year On' 7 July 2004

It is now a year since the Government launched the Skills Strategy White Paper *21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential*.

To celebrate the progress made in the Skills Strategy and to set the agenda for the next 12 months a 'One Year On' national event was held on July 7th. The theme was the difference skills make to the lives of individuals and the success of employers and the invited audience included business people, trade unions and training providers.

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills launched the Skills Strategy's first year report at the event. It included progress with improving the responsiveness of the supply side. A note on challenges ahead for the Further Education Sector can be found on www.successforall.gov.uk

Reducing Unnecessary Bureaucracy

The drive to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy affecting providers in the learning and skills sector continues.

The Bureaucracy Review Group (BRG), chaired by Sir Andrew Foster, has just published its first annual report. The report acknowledges the key role of providers working in the sector in delivering both the *Success for All* reforms and the Skills Strategy. The group recognises that changes introduced in response to Sir George Sweeney's reports and through *Success for All* are starting to reduce unnecessary burdens but is clear that too much bureaucracy still remains and much more must be done to free front-line staff so they can concentrate on their most important stakeholders, the learners. The BRG would welcome your views on their findings and recommendations via the secretariat: joy.rowlands@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

A copy of the executive summary from the report, which outlines key points and main recommendations, is

enclosed with this newsletter. The full report can be found on www.successforall.gov.uk

Click on 'Busting Bureaucracy' and then on the 'Bureaucracy Review Group'.

The Bureaucracy Task Force, chaired by Sir George Sweeney, has now wound up following publication of its third and final report, *Extending Trust*, in May. This report can also be found on the *Success for All* website, just click on 'Busting Bureaucracy' and scroll to the foot of the page for the link to this.

Funding

Over the past year the further education (FE) sector and other providers have exceeded expectations in participation, retention and attainment and it is this success that has created pressures on funding for this year. Although the DfES invested a record amount in FE in the 2002 spending review, it has added a further £130m to the LSC's budget that will allow allocations for 2004/05 to be kept on track for all colleges that are performing to target.

Partners in Learning

Delegates to the second annual conference of the Association of Learning Providers (ALP), heard Alan Johnson, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning at the DfES, and LSC chief executive, Mark Haysom speak about the importance of working with its members in facing the future challenges in the sector.

Alan Johnson praised the leadership and hard work of Worked Based Learning providers and the way the sector

has embraced the *Success for All* reforms, embedding them into the vision and plans of their organisations.

'We want to empower those responsible for delivery; ensuring resources go to the front-line. This will involve building a new relationship with the providers, one based on greater accountability, capability and trust with fewer centrally imposed external checks, and greater focus on stronger and effective internal quality assurance'.

Mark Haysom echoed Alan Johnson's sentiments when he said, 'At the heart of the LSC's aim to bring expertise, urgency and ambition to the world of education and skills are robust relationships with all those organisations that can help make a difference.'

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of ALP, said: 'As last year, the conference provided an ideal opportunity to bring together learning providers and other key partners to look at how we will continue to work together to meet the skills needs of the future. Of particular relevance to us is agreeing with government and the LSC, ways of increasing the opportunity for independent providers to contribute to delivery of their agenda. The key is in the Skills Strategy. There should be no artificial protection of one sector over another. The sole criterion is capacity to deliver high quality to employers.'

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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 July is:

2004	Developments	Communications/consultation
July		LSC Fees, Funding and Learner Support in FE (consultation)
31 July		Sector Skills Council to submit business plan to Sector Skills Development Agency
September	National roll-out of phase one Teacher and Learning materials	
12 October		STAR Awards ceremony
2 November		Teaching and Learning Conference