

successforall

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Success for All has five key themes:

- Meeting needs and improving choice
- Putting teaching, training and learning at the heart of what we do
- Developing the leaders, teachers, trainers and support staff of the future
- Developing a framework for quality and success
- Accelerating quality improvement

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 successforall@lsc.gov.uk

Three-year development plans

The three-year development plan for providers, first introduced in spring 2003, is fundamental to the successful implementation of the *Success for All* reforms and to the LSC's commitment to cut bureaucracy and develop a more strategic, trust-based relationship with its partners. As the key document for managing local LSC/provider partnerships and is central to the streamlined planning, funding and review arrangements in the LSC's new Business Cycle due to be fully implemented from autumn 2004.

The arrangements for the first round of three-year development planning were published in LSC Circular 03/09 in May 2003 so that providers could work with their local LSCs to agree a plan for 2003/04 to 2005/06.

An evaluation carried out in early 2004 showed that the sector had broadly welcomed the introduction of the arrangements in 2003 as the basis for their medium-term planning processes. This identified a number of features of

good practice and highlighted areas which could be refined to simplify the current arrangements. We are taking account of this good practice in the framework for development planning for 2005/06 to 2007/08 which we will publish later this year. This will also include further information on the process for reviewing current plans with providers early next year as part of the LSC Business Cycle. Development plans for 2005/06 to 2007/08 will continue to set out how each provider will work in partnership with the LSC to meet local needs and priorities. Plans will continue to include four headline improvement targets which reflect participation, employer responsiveness, high quality teaching and learning and workforce capability.

The document setting out the arrangements for development planning as part of the LSC Business Cycle will be of interest to all providers and will be available on the *Success for All* website at www.successforall.gov.uk later this autumn.

Focus on...

A monthly feature on *Success for All's* key players and good practice. This month: **Stephen Marston, Director of Adult Learning in DfES**

Focus on...

The Skills Strategy

The Skills Strategy recently celebrated progress in its first year since publication. Here, Stephen Marston, DfES' Director of Adult Learning explains the Strategy's rationale and the implications for colleges.

Q: Perhaps you could start by telling us what you think has changed in the year since the Skills Strategy was published.

SM: First, let's be really clear about the purpose of the Skills Strategy. It's fundamentally about making sure that England has a competitive workforce and to achieve this, investment in skills is vital. For the past year we've worked closely with the sector and with employers to put in place the structures and systems we need to make this happen. Apart from the systems, we've already made great headway in delivering results too, such as 200,000 more people with a Skills for Life qualification, 260,000 more adults with a first Level 2 qualification, 246,000 young people on Apprenticeships, 18 new Sector Skills Councils, over 60,000 low skilled employees trained through 10,000 employers involved in the employer training pilots, over 90 new Centres of Vocational Excellence. I could go on. Moving forward we'll see a continued emphasis on delivering what employers want and colleges have a vital role to play here.

Q: The Skills Strategy implies some changes in the expectations of who pays for what. Please explain the rationale for this.

SM: The government has a responsibility to secure, and pay for, high quality initial education and training for young people. But for adults, the State cannot and should not fund all the skills investment needed to sustain a competitive economy, capable of generating the standards of living we all want.

The government must target investment of public funds where there are fewest financial incentives for others to invest. In particular, we must help those with few skills and no qualifications to achieve a solid platform of skills for sustainable, productive employment. Beyond that, the returns that come from higher qualifications for both employers and learners make it reasonable to expect that they should contribute some proportion of the costs.

Q: So the Level 2 entitlement is not about restricting skills courses to the lower levels. It's more about where we focus our publicly funded efforts?

SM: Exactly. We are not saying that colleges should provide only lower level skills courses. On the contrary, they have

to provide what employers and learners need. It is simply that if employers and learners really want those things they will need to be persuaded to pay more for them. We need to work closely with employers and learners to ensure that the supply of training is well attuned to their needs in terms of delivery, content and assessment.

Q: That sounds like precisely the issue that *Success for All* aimed to address. Is it not working?

SM: *Success for All* has had a major impact. Many colleges pride themselves on understanding, and responding to, what employers need, through innovative, flexible delivery. They work closely with local employers and have set up business units for this area of activity. We need to build further on this. We need their example to become universal.

Q: What's in it for colleges? Why should they be concerned about all this?

SM: The gain for colleges and training providers is not just about more income from a wider diversity of sources. It is more important than that. It is about securing their position in public esteem and particularly with employers. It is about demonstrating that they are the bedrock of a successful modern economy and a fair society. That is what we all want.

OPSR study

Colleges now recognise and embrace *Success for All* as the crucial long-term reform strategy for the sector. This was one of the important findings of a second report into the implementation of *Success for All* by the Office of Public Services Reform (OPSR) – part of the Cabinet Office. The review team looked at progress of *Success for All* in colleges since their first report last summer. They also looked at its implementation among work based learning providers for the first time. A copy of their full report can be found at www.successforall.gov.uk

Five year strategy

In July, the DfES launched its *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*. This strategy sets out the government's vision for building a high quality, responsive, demand-led sector that is responsible for its own future. It reinforces *Success for All* as the bedrock reform strategy for improving the quality and responsiveness of the learning and skills sector. Further details of the five year strategy can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/5yearstrategy/

Teaching and learning materials

The national roll out of the Business Studies, e2e, Construction and Science teaching and learning materials will begin in September 2004. These multi-media teaching and learning resources differ between curriculum areas and comprise DVDs/videos, CD ROMS, written materials and interactive resources for both teachers and learners.

Recruitment is underway for 36 regional coordinators for each subject in the *Success For All* Standards Unit regions. They will coordinate regional and local dissemination events, workshops and support networks for each speciality.

The next round of regional road shows will be held mid October to mid November 2004, at which the final teaching and learning frameworks will be presented to teachers and curriculum managers.

Regional events will also be arranged to engage leaders and decision makers in the Standards Unit teaching and learning work and objectives.

A national coaching programme will also be delivered. This service will comprise mentoring/training subject leaders from individual colleges or groups of providers in the new teaching and learning frameworks and in related wider staff development methods. This 'coaching the coaches' programme will start in January 2005.

Further details will be published shortly.

Yes Prime Minister?

The hard work, commitment and success of the FE sector was recognised on 5 July when a number of principals, training providers and students were personally invited to meet Tony and Cherie Blair at No. 10 Downing Street.

Di McEvoy-Robinson, Principal of West Nottinghamshire College, one of the guests said: 'I was delighted to have been invited to No. 10 on behalf of my governors, colleagues and all 25,000 learners.

'On arrival at No. 10, I was fortunate to be one of a very small group representing post-16 learning and skills to be invited to meet privately with Tony Blair in the White Room. The Prime Minister gave an impromptu tour of the room, where many important 'deals' had been signed and sealed. His friendly style and genuine interest in the excellent work of the sector came across throughout the evening.

'We left the White Room to join other guests where I had the opportunity to discuss and debate the *Success for All* themes with government ministers, Mike Tomlinson

leading the 14-19 reforms, Chris Banks (Chair, National LSC), Sir Geoffrey Holland (Chair, Learning and Skills Development Agency), Jane Williams (Director, Standards Unit, DfES) and Lynne Sedgmore (Chief Executive, Centre for Excellence in Leadership).

'Before leaving I chatted with Cherie Blair who had recently finished writing a book on the partners of British Prime Ministers. So, like many busy working parents, she was looking forward to a relaxing summer break!

'The focus of learning and skills should be on identifying and satisfying the needs of individual learners, local businesses and communities. The invitation to No. 10 was a great personal honour and a reflection of the success of the sector in helping the many thousands of colleagues and learners in post-16 education and training to succeed.'

Fees, funding and learner support in FE

The LSC is consulting on changes to FE fees, funding and learner support. The changes proposed are significant for the sector and contribute directly to the '*strong shift in expectations in practice about who pays for what*' called for by Charles Clarke at the Learning and Skills Development Agency's 2004 summer conference.

A key proposal is to reform the LSC's method for setting and collecting fees. It suggests the best way of implementing a new framework is to set a fee income target for each college combined with a staged increase to a new fee assumption of 35 per cent.

There is a strong, consistent national push to drive up income from the sector, both from learners who already have skills and qualifications and from employers, reflecting the benefits they receive from learning. But this should be balanced in implementation by sensitivity to the differing circumstances of colleges and providers.

Important questions are:

- at what level should the fee assumption be set?
- over what period should increases apply? and
- when should the change start?

The Skills Strategy recognises that some adults need help to overcome financial barriers to their participation in learning. The paper explores:

- how to align learner support within Skills Strategy priorities
- how the new Level 2 entitlement group should be supported; and
- the implications for the allocation of learner support given the higher fees some learners pay.

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Subject to responses, final decisions on fees will be taken by the LSC in November and incorporated into the LSC 2005/06 planning round. Consultation closes on 8 October.

These are important issues for the sector. The LSC, with the Association of Colleges (AoC), will hold regional meetings to discuss these proposals. The consultation paper *'Investing in Skills: Taking Forward The Skills Strategy'* is available on the website (www.lsc.gov.uk) and from Publication on 0870 900 6800).

Quality improvement body

The DfES have commissioned KPMG to scope the responsibilities and functions of the new Quality Improvement Body, following the announcement by the Secretary of State in June. Initial interviews are being carried out with key stakeholders to help shape thinking on the design and the implications for LSDA to perform this new role. Further announcements will be made and a progress report published in November. This will provide the basis for further discussion before the final report is published in early 2005.

14-19 reform

The Working Group on 14-19 reform, chaired by Mike Tomlinson, will publish its final report later this autumn. The Secretary of State had welcomed the Working Group's interim report, published in February. He said that the success of the final proposals would be measured by the extent to which they stretch the most able, provide a high-quality vocational offer, cut down the burden of

assessment, reduce disaffection and increase employability. Further information can be found at www.14-19reform.gov.uk

AoC Annual Conference

The LSC is once again a main sponsor of the AoC Annual Conference. The event is being held at the Birmingham International Convention Centre between 16-18 November.

The theme of this year's event is Building on Success: Creating a better future for learners. It is a key date in the DfES and LSC's FE calendar and offers a forum to discuss post-14 education activity and policy.

The Secretary of State will deliver the keynote address on the first day, as will Mark Haysom on the last day and Chris Banks is also scheduled to speak during the event. The LSC has sponsored a seminar on day two, where Caroline Neville and David Way, along with provider and employer representatives, will be debating how we reconcile the needs of the learner with the needs of the employer. Anyone interested in registering for this event should email AoCconference@conferencecare.com or visit www.aoc.co.uk for further details of the conference programme.

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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 September is:

2004	Developments	Communications/consultation
September	National roll out of phase one Teaching and Learning Materials	
12 October		STAR Awards Ceremony Learning and Skills Beacon Awards Ceremony
2 November		Teaching and Learning Conference
11 November		Induction event for new Learning and Skills Beacons
16-18 November	<i>Success for All</i> – Two Years On publication	AoC Annual Conference
29-30 November		Post-16 e-Learning Practitioners' Conference
6 December		National Learning and Skills Beacon Forum