

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 (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. [Send us your feedback on the newsletter or views on *Success for All* to \[successforall@lsc.gov.uk\]\(mailto:successforall@lsc.gov.uk\)](#)

CoVEs' annual conference

The annual conference for the LSC's Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) team took place at the end of September. Over 60 representatives from across local and national offices along with other stakeholders came together for the day to look at the successes of the last year and discuss the ongoing development of the CoVEs programme.

There are nearly 300 Centres of Vocational Excellence across all economic sectors requiring intermediate level vocational skills. The pace is now increasing towards meeting the target of 400 CoVEs throughout England by 2006, while ensuring that the level of engagement with local employers as well as the quality of the courses themselves continues to increase.

Over the next six months, the national office team expects to receive further proposals from colleges and work based learning providers who are looking to sign up to the CoVE brand.

At the annual conference, there was a strong focus on how the CoVEs programme fits with both the LSC's priorities for the next twelve months and the wider aims of the Skills Strategy. With the first sector skills agreements setting out the skills needs for each sector at the end of the year, CoVEs will need to respond to this and demonstrate how they are making a difference in their industries through putting employers at the core of the training provided.

The UK is predicted to experience a 2.1 million net increase in jobs by 2010 and as a result, new employees will be required who will need training, even for employers in sectors currently in decline. With the support of FE colleges, work based learning providers and employers, the CoVE network will continue to grow and develop, providing access to top quality, vocational training for all those who need it. Please visit <http://cove.lsc.gov.uk> to find out more about CoVEs or contact the national team on 024 7682 3256.

Focus on...

A monthly feature on *Success for All*'s key players and best practice. This month: **The LSC's Business Cycle**



Focus on...

Business cycle sets wheels in motion

Following local office testing and some fine tuning, the LSC's business cycle is now well on its way to becoming standard practice throughout the organisation.

"It's a mix of business as usual and radical transformation," said Rob Wye, Director of the Chair and Chief Executive's Group, who is taking the lead on implementation. "We're doing much of what we were doing before but we're doing it very differently. It's vital that the business cycle becomes fully absorbed into the way we work as an organisation – and that's everybody's responsibility."

Covering strategic review, planning and funding, the cycle has been designed to help the LSC tackle the learning and skills agenda by better matching education and training provision with employer, individual and community need. At its heart is an annual statement of priorities at national and regional level, informing the three-year development plan of each provider. The plan now provides the mechanism for performance review.

All new initiatives and policies are expected to take account of the cycle, bringing a variety of benefits to planning and collaboration. Structures are in place within the LSC to ensure it is held to account, so that existing policies and attention to bureaucracy remains high on the agenda.

"People will be able to see clearly when certain activity is scheduled," said Rob. "Once projects are initiated, they are far less likely to be interrupted with fresh guidelines or policy changes. It means we have a simpler way of working, involving less bureaucracy and greater clarity. It also ensures that we have a robust mechanism to manage the risks that are raised as a result of the business as usual."

The East and West Midlands regions acted as "test-beds", contributing towards refining the process.

"Both regions were also able to share knowledge – with other regions and with national office," said Rob. "Where any difficulties were identified, we have been able to fine tune the process. Overall, the cycle has been well received by providers, who have said they can see its strengths."

This article first appeared in **thesource**, the LSC's staff magazine, in October 2004.

LSC agenda for change

As the largest provider of educational opportunities to post-16 learners, and with over four million learners, the future shape and direction of FE in England, and how it responds to the nation's needs, is central to Government's education agenda. Significant progress has already been achieved, building upon the best of what we already have, to improve standards and modernise through the *Success for All* reforms and investment.

However, the Skills Strategy, Mike Tomlinson's 14-19 reform proposals and the Government's HE strategy, are placing major new and multi-faceted demands on colleges.

The LSC has a critical leadership role in accelerating this transformation. It has therefore launched a major change programme to drive this forward, in partnership, with colleges. This programme identifies pressing issues confronting both the LSC and FE colleges that require innovative and creative solutions. Highlighting five areas for reform the LSC agenda for change has been developed in full consultation with college principals and is based on information received from the regional road shows held earlier this year.

The focus will be meeting employers' needs, driving up quality, reforming funding, improving efficiency and overhauling management information and data systems. Members of the LSC's management team will lead each theme. They will set up task groups for each of them, with significant representation from colleges. Each group will agree a way forward and an urgent timetable of work to deal with these key issues.

Many in the sector believe their work is not fully understood nor appreciated in terms of its local, regional and national impact. The LSC wants to change that. As part of its agenda, a senior LSC team will work with principals on how we can collectively raise awareness with key stakeholders to enhance their reputation and, while recognising the shared commitment to transform, win credit and esteem for what colleges already achieve.

Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners

In July, the DfES published its five year strategy for children and learners.

The strategy further reinforces *Success for All*, endorsing many of the same themes, such as improved quality and more flexible, demand-led provision, which is responsive to the needs of learners, employers, the economy, and communities. This article explains what the strategy means for the 14-19 phase.

The vision is of a transformed and coherent 14-19 phase of learning with a rich mix of learning opportunities. Young people can select personalised programmes and gain qualifications that will meet their needs and aspirations and those of their communities. Delivery of this agenda includes greater choice and diversity of providers to drive up quality. This means giving institutions greater autonomy in serving their local communities so that successful provision can expand and local strengths can be fully exploited.

It is not intended that greater autonomy should result in a free-for-all; the work of the Tomlinson Group has made it clear that no single institution will be able to deliver the broad curriculum implied by the 14-19 agenda. The vision is for local partnerships that bring their individual strengths to collectively provide a high-quality, broad-based offer that meets the needs of all young people in every area.

Local planning through the delivery of Strategic Area Reviews (StARs) will need to take account of the new measures announced within the strategy. Detailed guidance on the new 16-19 elements is under development.

In considering the implications, there is an opportunity for colleges and other providers to develop closer relationships with Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools. The *Success for All* test-bed work on collegiate models undertaken by Birmingham and Solihull and Sussex LSCs should provide some valuable insights. (See the article *Test-beds Go Collegiate* by Adrian Perry in this issue).

The strategy proposed a single capital budget which aims to combine schools and FE 16-19 resources to support new investment for 16-19s. This development should prove to be a useful lever in bringing about collaboration, in particular where new sixth form provision or collaborative arrangements can ensure a broad range including vocational options.

Currently, school sixth forms fall outside the scope of three-year development planning and have their own whole school planning and quality improvement arrangements through the LEA. At the same time, school sixth forms fall within scope for StARs and form a key element in the partnership development model set out in the strategy. New measures of success will apply to school sixth forms too. To support collaborative planning and to ensure that school sixth forms are integral to the local planning arrangements, the LSC will assess the feasibility and associated timescales for fully extending the three-year development planning arrangements to this part of the sector. The aim will be to bring all LSC funded provision in school sixth forms into the development planning framework by spring 2007.

The strategy requires teachers, lecturers and trainers delivering vocational qualifications to have recent experience and continuing contact with business and industry. Themes 3 and 4 of *Success for All* will be providing

support and clear guidance to providers on how targets for workforce capability can best meet this requirement.

To manage quality effectively at a strategic level, local LSCs will be able to draw on the resource that the new Quality Improvement Body will offer to achieve the commitment in the strategy to dramatically improve success rates. Providers will contribute to sector-wide targets for rapid improvements in success rates through the agreement and achievement of challenging targets within their own development plans.

The five-year strategy and *Success for All* can be seen as two of many complementary delivery mechanisms that work together to support the radical transformation of the post-16 education and training sector. This will be vital to deliver inclusive provision that meets the needs and aspirations of all learners, employers, communities and the economy.

Test-beds go collegiate

Adrian Perry, who leads the *Success for All* test-bed project for DfES, looks at an emerging collegiate approach to provision.

Many of the *Success for All* approaches – wider staff training, sharper definitions of mission, better performance indicators, improved teaching – involve work inside institutions.

However, a number of people believe that more attention needs to be given to establishing collaborative networks to meet the needs of a community. For example the multiplicity of bid funding – “Aiming Higher”, post-inspection, Local Intervention Development Funding (LID) – might be better pooled across schools and colleges to support an area action plan. Sometimes a collective decision is needed to ensure that emerging employer needs are met without overlapping.

In Birmingham and Solihull, the local LSC has tackled this issue with an ambitious programme to set up “collegiates” – federal arrangements that bring together local providers to meet community needs. As part of the test-bed, the LSC has established a study project to see how funding streams can be better shaped to meet geographical needs.

In West Sussex, the local LSC has also worked with Chichester College, the LEA and schools to bring forward a pattern of provision to meet local needs. As part of this, a new vocational centre has been set up in Bognor, linked to the local comprehensive school. The college has worked with schools to pilot the new teaching and learning materials coming out of the Standards Unit – not just improving practice but building relationships of respect and trust.

The Sussex LSC is interested in leadership programmes that go beyond institutional management to recognise the

particular challenges of effective partnership working, an approach that has attracted the attention of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, the sector's leadership college.

There are enormous challenges in such approaches – governance issues, finding space for vocational specialisms, integrating work-based learning, managing shared resources. We aim to hold a study conference comparing the ways different areas have worked with collegiate solutions. In the meantime, we'd love to hear from you about ways of working that move beyond conventional ideas of partnership.

Please contact Adrian Perry, Project Leader on 07971 623346 or adrian@perry.net

Curriculum Planning

Through its *Success for All* test-bed project, the Sussex LSC has also been working with two of its local colleges, a general FE college and a sixth form college, to reduce bureaucracy by integrating the colleges' own planning processes with the LSC's arrangements for three-year development planning. This work has resulted in the development of a curriculum planning framework which is intended to support:

- colleges' internal management decisions about growth, curriculum development, quality improvement and resourcing, and
- discussions with the LSC about the volume, mix and quality of provision and how it needs to be developed to address the learning and skills priorities of the local area.

We intend to make this curriculum planning framework more widely available to the FE sector as a resource to support medium-term planning. However, we do recognise that many colleges already have well-established curriculum planning processes that form a sound basis to support discussions with the local LSC about provision. The framework developed in Sussex will, we hope, be a useful additional resource to promote discussion within colleges about provision, or as the basis for the development of an approach to medium-term planning which colleges can use and customise as they wish.

The framework will be available through the *Success for All* website from November onwards. www.successforall.gov.uk

Equipping teachers for the future

Kim Howells, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education, has announced the Government's plans to reform initial teacher training for the learning and skills sector.

All students deserve teachers and trainers who are both expert in their subject(s) and skilled at teaching. *Success for All* recognises that professional, skilled and qualified staff are essential and that the learning and skills sector must attract, motivate and retain the very best people.

The policy paper, *Equipping our Teachers for the Future*, proposes reform over a three year period.

The main features include:

- a new award of "Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills" (QTLS). There will be two stages leading to QTLS: an initial "passport to teaching" module, taken at the start of the teaching career; and a "full licence", to be completed within a period of five years
- investment in providers that offer high standards of support in the workplace
- new national standards and effective quality assurance, planning and monitoring arrangements across the sector
- substantial funding for the reforms, which will be introduced in full from September 2007.

The reforms will mean:

- qualified and professional teachers who deliver effective, stimulating and enjoyable sessions and who enjoy high morale and public esteem
- students who succeed in gaining the qualifications and the skills they need and deserve
- institutions enjoying improved performance, retention and success rates and enhanced credibility in the community.

You can download a hard copy of *Equipping our Teachers for the Future* from www.successforall.gov.uk Enquiries, email: sqd.team@dfes.gsi.gov.uk telephone: 0114 259 3683.

National Quality Improvement Body

Following the announcement by the Secretary of State in June 2004 to set up a new national quality improvement body for the post-16 learning and skills sector, development work has been carried out to agree the organisational design principles. The DfES has been working with the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to develop the design principles for the new body and to assess the feasibility of restructuring the agency to take on the role of the new body.

On 16 November, the DfES intends to publish a progress report on the design principles of the new body. Copies of the progress report can be found at www.dfes.uk/consultation and www.successforall.gov.uk

The Government's vision for this new strategic body is to provide high quality support for providers to enable them to raise quality and standards, and build on the excellent provision that already exists. The body will be responsive to the needs of frontline professionals, articulating a

compelling vision for the future role and shape of the sector, while meeting Government's priorities for improvement. It will ensure that those working in the sector are themselves advocates for continuous improvement and help to promote positive messages about delivering high quality services. It will be inspirational, providing leadership for the future vision on quality improvement and will simplify and bring coherence to the quality improvement system.

Learning and Skills Beacon status Awards

Twenty learning providers have been presented with Learning and Skills Beacon status at an Awards ceremony held in central London. Kim Howells presented the Awards to colleges and learning providers from across the learning and skills sector.

Learning and Skills Beacons – Awarded October 2004

BMW Great Britain Limited, Bracknell
 Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, Birmingham
 Brockenhurst College
 King Edward VI College, Stourbridge
 Bury College
 Knowsley Community College
 Cirencester College
 Lewisham College, London
 City of Bristol College
 Luton Sixth Form College
 Greenhead College, Huddersfield
 Moulton College, Northampton
 Northern College for Residential Adult Education, Barnsley
 North Devon College, Barnstaple
 Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington
 City Lit, London
 South Cheshire College, Crewe
 The Henley College, Henley on Thames
 Warwickshire College
 Treloar College, Alton, Hants.

STARS shining brightly

The inaugural STAR Awards ceremony was held on the evening of 12 October in London.

The event was the culmination of a year of hard work by the learning and skills sector and its partners in developing awards to recognise the people – teachers, support staff and managers – who make a real difference in the workplace. The ceremony started with a showcase where the learning and skills sector presented its quality and diversity with displays of artwork, fashion, music, etc. The Secretary of State, Charles Clarke, who visited the showcase, was impressed by the excellence of the work on display.

The second part of the ceremony was the awards dinner, compèred by broadcaster Dermot Murnaghan, where, following an informal speech from Lifelong Learning Minister, Kim Howells, the 13 STARS for this year were presented with their prizes – a cheque for £1,000, a trophy and certificates.

The feeling of this evening was summed up by Alex Richards, winner of the Outstanding Support other than Learning Award: "I am overwhelmed by this recognition. My mouth went dry when I was announced as a winner... All in all the Awards ceremony has been a heart-stopping evening."

For a full list of Award winners and STAR Awards information visit the website at www.dfes.gov.uk/starawards

BRG action plan

In its Annual Report published in June, the Bureaucracy Review Group (BRG) set out its recommendations for improving the strategic management of the FE and training sector and for reducing the level of bureaucracy. Feedback from the sector has been positive as has the response from those organisations to which the recommendations were targeted – DfES, LSC, Ofsted, ALI and QCA and the awarding bodies. The actions these national bodies are or will be taking to respond to the BRG's recommendations are published this month in *Action to reduce bureaucracy*. The key actions are:

- Ofsted and ALI are developing new arrangements for inspections from 2005 that will take more account of provider track records and self-assessment reports and will mean much lighter touch inspections for better providers
- LSC is planning a radical overhaul of its data collection systems to be introduced by 2007
- QCA and the National Assessment Agency are assessing the feasibility of extending their exam modernisation programme to vocational qualifications and will be putting proposals to the DfES by the end of 2004. QCA are also working with the awarding bodies on common centre approval arrangements and standardised procedures
- both DfES and LSC are restructuring, reducing staffing and redefining their respective roles and responsibilities.

The action plan is available on the Bureaucracy Busting pages of www.successforall.gov.uk/contentList.cfm?contSectionId=8

It's full steam ahead on the *Success for All* reforms

DfES Ministers were encouraged at a recent meeting by the progress being made by post-16 providers supported by *Success for All* reforms. As well as reported improvements across the sector in learner success rates and inspection grades, there is now a strong core of high quality provision which exists in Beacon providers and CoVEs. They were impressed by the continuing strong support for the reforms that is coming from all providers and recognised how vital that is to continuing success.

But Ministers also recognise that there is still much to do. They see *Success for All* as key to the delivery of our priorities for education and skills underpinning several key planks of the 5-year strategy for Children and Learners, including 14-19 reforms; more effective engagement of employers; the Adult Level 2 commitment and the expansion of higher education. As well as existing priorities to develop the workforce, too much provision is stuck in the 'satisfactory' category and the pace of reform must be ramped up if the sector is to live up to expectations.

Looking ahead Ministers want to see:

- an increasing focus on supporting and developing the workforce
- more promotion and transfer of good practice between post-16 organisations, building on the work of Beacons and CoVEs
- more collaboration between post-16 providers and schools so that each can feed off the other and achieve the maximum benefit for learners
- proposals for structural change which build on existing strengths to tackle unwanted weaknesses
- a provider network that is able to respond readily to demand from employers.

Success for All – the second year

A roundup of *Success for All* achievements over the past year and plans for the future are published in the programme's second annual review to be published this month and can be found at www.successforall.gov.uk

Success for All website

The *Success for All* website, www.successforall.gov.uk, will be relaunched in early 2005. It will have a new look and will be easier to use. You will also be able to subscribe to receive regular email updates on the latest *Success for All* news.

Success for All contacts:

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For latest news and developments visit:
www.successforall.gov.uk

Calendar

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

2004/05	Developments	Communications/consultation
11 November		Induction event for new Learning and Skills Beacons
16-18 November	<i>Success for All</i> – The Second Year publication	AoC Annual Conference
22-23 November		Association of Learning Providers (ALP) Conference
23 November		National Training Awards (NTA)
29-30 November		Post-16 e-learning Practitioners' Conference
2 December		Sixth Form Colleges Forum (SFCF) Conference
6 December		National Learning and Skills Beacon Forum
January/February		Annual Planning Review