

# Workforce Strategy for the Work Based Learning Sector 2011

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# Contents

2.0   <b>Introduction</b>	p02
3.0   <b>Core priority: Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of strategy, policy-making, planning and training</b>	p03
3.1   <b>Priority 1: Understanding the nature of the workforce</b>	p03
Theme 1: Gathering robust data on the workforce	p03
Theme 2: Using data to understand the workforce and improve future planning	p04
Theme 3: Using data to understand workforce diversity and target actions	p04
3.2   <b>Priority 2: Attracting and recruiting the best people</b>	p05
Theme 4: Recruiting the people we need	p05
Theme 5: Increasing the diversity of the workforce at all levels	p06
Theme 6: Improving and promoting the workforce image	p07
3.3   <b>Priority 3: Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce</b>	p07
Theme 7: Professionalising the workforce through relevant training and continuing professional development	p07
Theme 8: Identifying, planning and delivering the required skills needs of the workforce	p08
Theme 9: Ensuring appropriate leadership and management development exists at all levels throughout the organisation	p08
Theme 10: Ensuring there is a flexible, fair and supportive working environment for the workforce	p08
4.0   <b>Notes</b>	p10
5.0   <b>More information</b>	p11

# Introduction

The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, facilitated by Lifelong Learning UK, has been in place since 2007.

The Association of Learning Providers (ALP), representing work based learning (WBL) providers, has been closely involved in the development of the Workforce Strategy since its inception and supports its overall vision and aims.

In 2010, ALP and Lifelong Learning UK signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement. This includes a commitment to collaborate on a range of activities which are of mutual benefit to both organisations in serving the needs and interests of learning providers delivering funded work based learning programmes.

Lifelong Learning UK and ALP have identified the following areas for collaborative work in 2010-2011:

#### **Workforce and skills development:**

- The implementation of the Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England as appropriate for work based learning
- Standards development.

#### **Sector research:**

- Ensure the sector understands the need for robust labour market information and the impact of LLUK having such data for the benefit of the WBL sector
- Inform and shape research activity, such as the Sector Skills Assessment.

**Equality and diversity**, including workforce profiles and addressing barriers to progression.

Work based learning providers have much in common with the rest of the post-16 skills sector, including recognition of the need for a professional workforce. However, the wide range of professions, the exclusive focus on the workplace and the diverse size and scope, mean that some key elements of the Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England require alternative or additional approaches.

This led to the development of these documents customising the Workforce Strategy for WBL providers. The document details how each priority and theme impacts upon WBL. At the end of each priority is a list of actions. The actions are split into three groups: firstly actions currently in place to support the priority for WBL providers, secondly the new primary actions for the current year, and finally, further actions that could be planned for the next financial year.

The main new action for this year is the development of an HR forum for providers, and the production, from this, of good practice guidance in a range of workforce issues. The actions will principally involve Lifelong Learning UK and the Association of Learning Providers working together, with broad ranging arrangements with other partners.

## Strategic Priorities

### 3.0 | Core Priority

Ensuring equality and diversity are at the heart of strategy, policy-making, planning and training

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**Equality and diversity are embedded throughout the themes outlined in this document.**

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#### Action

ALP and Lifelong Learning UK will work to promote the Equality Framework for the Lifelong Learning Sector, the Online Analytical Processing Tool (OLAP), and other equality and diversity initiatives.

### 3.1 | Priority 1

Understanding the nature of the workforce

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#### Theme 1: Gathering robust data on the workforce

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There is currently no overall analysis of the workforce in work based learning. Workforce data cannot be extracted from national SOC/SIC code datasets, which leaves primary data the only source.

In 2008 and 2009 there was a limited collection of workforce data from providers. This was large enough to give indicators about the workforce but not for any results to be statistically significant. This lack of data hinders WBL in a number of ways, which is explored further in Theme 2, on page 4.

In 2010 for the year 2009 -10 Lifelong Learning UK are co-ordinating two programmes of information collection. The first looks at a limited data set to establish a baseline for the number of staff qualified as defined by the FE teaching regulations of 2007. The second is a more detailed individualised data collection that gives a range of data across the whole workforce.

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## Theme 2: Using data to understand the workforce and improve future planning

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The lack of workforce data hampers future planning for the WBL workforce in the following ways:

### On a national level

National organisations supporting the WBL workforce are not able to quantify interventions to ensure the workforce needs can be met.

### On a regional level

Most funding to support capacity building is delivered sub-nationally. Without robust data identifying needs, where there is competition for funding WBL is at a severe disadvantage and will miss out on scarce resources.

### At a provider level

Workforce data supports providers in planning for Ofsted and meeting the limiting requirement for equality and diversity. It enables:

- Succession planning
- Planning for changes in skills delivery
- Increasing the diversity of the workforce
- Ensuring that staff achieve qualifications required under regulations/contract and for entry to professions.

### Impact on learners

Good quality data supports workforce planning and enables learners to be confident that all their learning is delivered by a diverse, qualified and skilled workforce.

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## Theme 3: Using data to understand workforce diversity and target actions

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WBL providers are diverse in terms of their organisational typology, size, geographic coverage, the sectors in which they work, and programmes/specialisms that they deliver. As such there are a number of datasets that need to be made available to providers. Lifelong Learning UK produces and publishes an annual analysis of reported data of which the latest is 'The work based learning workforce in England - factsheet for 2008-09'. Lifelong Learning UK intends, starting with the 2009/10 data, to publish a detailed analysis of the workforce by diversity indicators alongside this. Providers that input data forms are able to access the Lifelong Learning UK Online Analytical Processing tool (OLAP), which allows benchmarking across the country or a local area against demographic data, and against similar providers.

## Actions

### > Existing

Lifelong Learning UK is carrying out two surveys for 2009/10. These are:

- an aggregate survey looking at what percentage of 'teachers' meet the regulatory requirement classifying them as qualified
  - a detailed Staff Individualised Record data collection.
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# “A highly qualified, professional workforce is one of the hallmarks of good provision.”

## > Future agreed actions

ALP and Lifelong Learning UK will work together to:

- encourage work based learning deliverers to respond positively to the collections of workforce information
- submit appropriate change requests for data collection to ensure it meets the requirements of the variety of staff disciplines in WBL
- produce good practice guides on using data from the new WBL HR forum
- develop and offer a wide range of workforce development focused events to WBL providers including using data.

## > Further suggested actions

- Lifelong Learning UK will produce (advised by ALP) a range of comparative datasets for providers illustrating the use of data
- ALP and Lifelong Learning UK will work together to enhance the OLAP tool, increasing its functionality for regional comparisons
- from baseline data, targets will be set against a range of diversity indicators
- from baseline data, targets will be set to increase returns
- data returns will be simplified with the aim of linking information with other databases such as that held by the Institute for Learning (IfL)
- impact measures will be developed to measure how data has stimulated a change in employee demographics.

## 3.2 | Priority 2 Attracting and recruiting the best people

### Theme 4: Recruiting the people we need

The working environment within WBL has many rewards, but also a number of challenges.

People move to work in WBL for a number of reasons including; to pass on skills; to work with specific groups of people (e.g. young people or the unemployed); or to build a new/second career. Many occupations pay more for doing the job than for training people in it, so few move for financial reasons. The number of applicants to posts has generally increased in the last two years but most providers report that it is still difficult to recruit good staff.

In support of this Lifelong Learning UK, as part of their Catalyst programme, ran a programme called ‘Pass on your Skills’, which developed innovative recruitment processes for attracting potential trainers to join the FE sector workforce.

A significant number of providers are confused about the role definitions for ‘teachers’ and what qualifications should be taken by WBL staff. As a result there has not been a consistent or coherent approach to IfL registration.

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## Theme 5: Increasing the diversity of the workforce at all levels

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There is evidence of good practice within WBL as exemplified in the June 2010 Ofsted report on 12 excellent providers and the November 2010 report. The FE system partners have been piloting an equality and diversity framework for the sector since summer 2010. This is coordinated by Lifelong Learning UK and a number of WBL providers, both large and small, are involved in this pilot. The final framework will be launched in early 2011. One of the challenges in increasing the diversity is the lack of data, as explained in theme 1. The diversity challenges within WBL have not been quantified.

### Actions

#### > Existing

- ALP is working with partners to produce an interactive tool to measure diversity.
- Lifelong Learning UK is working with partners to develop the Equality Framework for the Lifelong Learning Sector
- Lifelong Learning UK is collating the information gathered from the Catalyst programme, including its strand on recruitment. These tools will support providers into the future and can be found on the Excellence Gateway  
[www.excellencegateway.org.uk/catalystlegacy](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/catalystlegacy).

- Lifelong Learning UK operates an Information and Advice Service, which specialises in advising people on entering the FE sector.

#### > Future agreed actions

ALP and Lifelong Learning UK, with IFL where appropriate, will work together to:

- develop an HR forum that will produce good practice guidance for WBL providers for a range of workforce issues, including the recruitment and initial training of staff
- develop a strategy for new qualifications and update existing qualifications that meet the initial career pathways and aspirations of all WBL staff
- clarify the roles within WBL which need registration with IFL
- promote the Equality Framework to providers
- develop and offer a wide range of workforce development focused events to WBL providers.

#### > Future suggested actions

- working with data and the Equality Framework, Lifelong Learning UK and ALP will produce plans and actions to address the issue of under-represented groups working in WBL.

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## Theme 6: Improving and promoting the workforce image

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ALP actively promotes the notion of a professional and well-trained workforce to both its members and partners. To this end there is an ALP representative on the IfL Council, who is able to pass on the experiences of staff in WBL.

Senior managers within WBL welcome this and other actions in support of the professionalisation agenda. There is concern that there is confusion about the workforce, ranging from who needs to register with IfL, through to which qualifications and standards staff could be working to.

There is general agreement that raising the profile of CPD for all staff is crucial. This need is one of the main drivers behind the development of the HR forum for WBL providers.

## 3.3 | Priority 3

### Retaining and developing the modern, professionalised workforce

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## Theme 7: Professionalising the workforce through relevant training and continuing professional development

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WBL is the thread that binds together the FE sector. It covers organisations whose primary purpose is the delivery of learning solutions for and in the workplace, and is a methodology of working that is used across the whole FE Sector. This is illustrated by the fact that most, if not all, FE colleges have a WBL section. WBL goes beyond the FE sector and can be found throughout all parts of the lifelong learning workforce and in all other sectors.

The wide range of staff disciplines needed for effective delivery requires a different response from management, HR and training staff for each employee group. To ensure that staff can develop the wide-ranging skills required to meet the complex needs of learners, innovative ways of delivering initial training and CPD are being developed. The challenge is to access the right training, at the right time, in the right way – a differentiated approach to CPD. One approach to this is in the new Learning and Development qualifications where there is a small core and a large number of options with flexible pathways for different roles.



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## Theme 8: Identifying, planning and delivering the required skills needs of the workforce

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One of the critical aims in this theme is to develop the skills of managers who have responsibility for workforce development. They are the main target audience for the good practice guidance to be developed from the planned HR forum.

In addition, factors such as size of organisation, location, and the sector they operate in are important.

- Size matters because smaller providers do not have the purchasing power on their own to secure training that meets their specific needs
- Location plays a part, as there is better provision and support in some areas than others
- Sector is important as structured support for CPD from the areas they train in varies across sectors.

The changing and increasingly complex nature of the learner population means that the skills required differ from year to year, and providers have to be responsive to these needs.

An ongoing theme is the increasing use of technology to support learning. ALP have taken the lead with this through their Learning Innovation Grant (LIG) programme, the reports on which highlight practical innovations in delivering learning.

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## Theme 9: Ensuring appropriate leadership and management development exists at all levels throughout the organisation

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As with Theme 8, size, geography and sector matter with respect to leadership and management. There are no recognised career routes in many providers, with a flat structure being the norm. Although there are no specific qualification programmes designed to meet the needs of WBL providers, there is much specific management support in both general programmes and specific WBL-focused activities supported by LSIS. Management qualification pathways are being built into the updated Learning and Development qualifications.

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## Theme 10: Ensuring there is a flexible, fair and supportive working environment for the workforce

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The studies into high value working show that one of the main incentives for the workforce is to be in a fair and supportive working environment. There is no uniform panacea for this, and it varies according to the size and working culture of an organisation. In addition it will reflect the culture of the sector in which training is delivered. Increasingly it is recognised that retaining a professional committed workforce is important to the success of any organisation, and quality marks such as Investors in People reflect this. Providing a flexible, fair and supportive working environment for the workforce depends on leadership and management. The good practice guidance to be developed will incorporate this.

## Actions

### > Existing

Lifelong Learning UK with partners are:

- developing new qualifications in Learning and Development and in Assessment and Quality Assurance
- reviewing the learning delivery qualifications
- revising the Learning and Development Apprenticeship
- producing a guide to apprenticeships for the wider FE sector
- developing qualifications and CPD processes for support staff working in providers
- reviewing pedagogy related to the use of technology in training and implications for future trainer training
- improving access to the tools developed across the sector for using technology
- developing approaches to best practice in WBL with respect to the mentoring of trainee trainers
- developing an action plan with partners to address weaknesses identified in recent Ofsted reports
- ALP, Lifelong Learning UK and IfL have a joint position on the professionalisation of the WBL workforce
- ALP have published reports on the LIG activities.

### > Future agreed actions

ALP and Lifelong Learning UK will work together to:

- develop an HR forum focusing on the needs of work based learning providers. A major outcome from

this will be good practice guidance on workforce issues aimed at the providers of work based learning programmes

- develop a strategy for new qualifications and qualifications that meet the career pathways and aspirations of work based learning staff. These may be additional to the ones already in existence and include leadership and management
- promote the Equality Framework
- develop and offer a wide range of workforce development focused events to WBL providers.

### > Future suggested actions

- Lifelong Learning UK will investigate the market for further apprenticeship frameworks at a range of levels
- Lifelong Learning UK will identify best practice in developing approaches to the interface between level 3 and 4 learners
- ALP, Lifelong Learning UK and partners will develop higher level specific qualifications for leadership and management
- ALP and partners will develop and offer a wide range of training events to members
- Lifelong Learning UK, ALP and partners will investigate innovative and flexible approaches to delivering CPD to a wide range of staff
- Lifelong Learning UK with partners will develop activities to address the Ofsted action plan outlined above.

# 4.0

## Notes

# 5.0

## More information

> For more information about this document please visit

<http://www.lluk.org/england/workforce-strategy-for-the-further-education-sector-in-england/>

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**al<sup>p</sup>** association of learning providers

