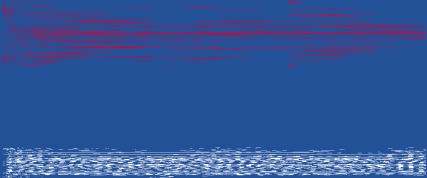


Successful Participation for All: Widening Adult Participation Strategy
For Consultation

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Foreword

Helena Kennedy famously remarked that one of the key features of our education system was that 'if at first you don't succeed — you don't succeed.'

The polarisation in our population between those who have succeeded and those who have not is very marked, much more marked than in many other European countries. There are many ways in which this disadvantages our society. We have clear shortages of craft and technical skills; we have far too many adults who have not attained a qualification at level 2; and the proportion of adults facing very real difficulties with literacy and numeracy is scandalously high. All of these factors adversely affect our economy and our society.

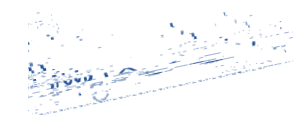
That is why a key goal for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is to widen participation in learning. It is not enough simply to have more activity – people taking qualifications and attending courses. We need to attract more people into learning.

This Widening Adult Participation Strategy (the Strategy) suggests a new, planned approach to widening adult participation. It not only identifies ways in which more adults may be attracted into learning, but also how they may positively be engaged and retained in the learning process. It applies to all LSC-funded providers engaged in the education and training of adults.

We have developed the Strategy with our key partners at national, regional and local level and now wish to consult widely on its content.

Widening adult participation is one of the most challenging, yet vital aspects of the LSC's agenda. We welcome your views and comments on the proposals set out in this Strategy.

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John Harwood
Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Council

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Summary Recommendations

- 1 Actions designed to motivate adults to participate in learning, to overcome barriers to learning, and to help providers raise participation and achievement are proposed. They fall under the following broad headings:
 - partnership approach;
 - appropriate provision;
 - targets and research;
 - equality and access; and
 - funding.
- 2 The recommendations relating to each of these are described in summary below.

Partnership Approach

- 3 The LSC will:
 - a show strategic leadership in engaging potential learners by:
 - actively supporting appropriate partners and networks; and
 - ensuring synergy between its activities and those who provide innovative learning opportunities;
 - b ensure that we build on the many employer initiatives and projects taking place, seeking to ensure a widening participation focus and using the existing educational infrastructure whenever appropriate; and
 - c ensure complementary plans and approaches are agreed with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to include a broad provision of higher education (HE), embracing professional qualifications, work-based learning and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 4 and 5.

Appropriate Provision

- 4 The LSC will:
 - a conduct a consultation on the application of credits, the proposed principles, the uses and value of credit systems, and the issues and risks associated with implementation;

- b explore steps to facilitate the access of external candidates to examination centres;
- c develop a comprehensive curriculum offer both within and outside the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to address the needs of all adult learners;
- d ensure that open and distance learning, e-learning and blended learning are fully embraced across all learning sectors to offer increased opportunities for engaging potential learners;
- e build on the success of the BiteSize campaign, focusing the concept in future years in particular on widening adult participation; and
- f ensure that the new BiteSize campaign is linked to an accessible programme of information advice and guidance (IAG) to encourage progression beyond the taster.

Targets and Research

- 5 The LSC will:
 - a commission a systematic review and synthesis of recent research and statistical evidence on under-representation and on 'what works' in order to provide a solid foundation for future research on participation and strategies for widening it;
 - b ensure a national framework and methodology for research on under-representation and priority groups is developed;
 - c develop a sound evidence base at local level linked to the national framework and to national benchmarks for participation, so that local priorities can reflect local needs and realities; and
 - d put in place a longer-term, ongoing research programme on participation, underpinned by (b), including strategies to support local LSC and providers in applying research results.

- 6 Following the research actions proposed, the LSC will set specific widening adult participation targets at national and local level.
- 7 The LSC will ensure that the information held on providers is used to assess the extent to which such providers have the local capacity to widen adult participation.

Equality and Access

- 8 The LSC will:
 - a ensure a mutually supportive approach is adopted by the LSC's Widening Adult Participation and Equality and Diversity Strategies;
 - b use the Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) to help monitor progress in widening adult participation;
 - c within its Quality Improvement Strategy, develop a quality improvement and development (QID) strand for providers to develop good practice in widening adult participation. The QID will be:
 - developed on an area basis, involving providers with expertise or capacity in this area;
 - consistent with the LSC's Quality Improvement Strategy;
 - based on a mediated quality improvement model, using consultants to help managers introduce and sustain beneficial changes;
 - encompassing of the relevant recommendations of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) document Inclusive Learning (FEFC, 1996); and
 - d ensure that IAG is at the heart of all LSC-funded provision, developing proposals for a coherent and integrated national IAG service by 2003.

Funding

- 9 The LSC will:
 - a increase the level of funding allocated for the disadvantage element of the funding formula in 2003/04;
 - b focus funding on learners from the most disadvantaged areas as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2000) data;
 - c increase the funding uplift for learners undertaking basic skills programmes (literacy, language, and numeracy provision up to level 2) in 2003/04;
 - d apply disadvantage funding arrangements for work-based learning at the provider level in 2003/04;
 - e introduce the disadvantage element into adult and community learning (ACL) as this is progressively brought into formula funding;
 - f develop allocations policy and consider changes in eligibility criteria to target further education (FE) Learner Support Funds (LSF) more effectively; and
 - g continue the development of the FE LSF 'level playing-field' for adults across all learning sectors and types of providers.
- 10 We will also seek to use our funding in pursuit of 'winning hearts and minds'.
- 11 Specifically, the LSC will:
 - use market segmentation techniques to make sure that the funding arrangements for each segment are both cost-effective and designed to encourage adults to join and benefit from learning programmes; and
 - involve all key partners in the educational chain in developing consistent and focused programmes that target each segment appropriately.

Rationale

There is good practice in widening participation, but it is not systematic, consistent or equitable.

Learning Works (FEFC, 1997)

- 12 The LSC has a firm commitment to making education and training accessible to all, and to raising participation and achievement across the full range of the communities it serves. This consultation document outlines our approach to a Widening Adult Participation Strategy (the Strategy) and seeks advice and comment from stakeholders on the effective development of the Strategy on the actions proposed.
- 13 The LSC's commitment derives from its mission and vision and its conviction that securing higher levels of knowledge and skills is a key to economic prosperity and social cohesion.
- 14 Although the Strategy will build on the LSC's objectives for young people, it does not specifically address the 16–19 age group. Whilst also it is intended that this Strategy will contribute to widening participation activities in higher education (HE), it does not address itself to HE institutions.
- 15 Following the outcomes of the consultation, an agenda for action will be set out, primarily for the LSC itself but recognising that 'successful participation for all' can only be achieved through partnership with our wide range of stakeholders.

LSC Mission and Vision

- 16 The LSC is responsible for funding and planning education and training for people over 16 years old in England, except those in HE.
 - Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training which puts learners first.
 - Our vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have the knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.

- 17 The LSC's interim Corporate Plan to 2005, Championing the Power of Learning (LSC, 2003) makes powerful economic and human cases for higher levels of knowledge and skills:

As the rate of change we face as a nation gathers pace, we continue to need higher levels of learning to sustain our existing levels of employment and to attract new investment in high value added key sectors. While the information revolution brings benefits for the majority, we cannot ignore those left at the margin. Despite our collective endeavours, there are an estimated one in five adults in the United Kingdom who have difficulties with literacy and numeracy. As a result, they are more than ever excluded from our fast-moving society.

The trend away from unskilled jobs to new jobs created in a dynamic economy requiring skills of a much higher order continues. The economic case for a radical improvement in skills is extremely strong. Without it many people will not find or retain satisfying work, and the nation will lose competitiveness. Moreover, changes in the economy will demand more skilled people. Over 2.2 million new jobs will need to be filled by 2010, as a result of growth in the economy and the replacement of retiring workers. We will also need to address the shortage of skilled craftsmen.

The human aspect is important too. Failure to develop people's talents to the full reduces opportunities for personal satisfaction and wastes individual potential, restricting their contribution to family and community life.

Championing the Power of Learning (LSC, 2003)

LSC's Role in Widening Adult Participation

18 The Grant Letter 2003/04 from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (the Secretary of State) refers to the high-level objectives set out in the Remit Letter of November 2000 and which remain the cornerstone of the LSC's work. They are:

- encouraging young people to remain in learning and increase their attainment;
- increasing demand for learning, and the achievement of skills and qualifications by adults;
- maximising the contribution of education and training to economic performance; and
- raising standards in teaching and learning, and ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

19 The Remit Letter also sets out the LSC's role with regard to increasing demand for learning by adults:

The Council's role starts with its new duty to encourage individuals – adults as well as young people – into education and training. The Council must spearhead the drive to widen adult participation in further education, increasing the number drawn from those whose background or circumstances have disadvantaged them.

Secretary of State's Remit Letter, November 2000

20 The policy context in which this Strategy is being launched is fast-changing. The Government has set ambitious Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets to raise attainment and skills. The PSA targets relating specifically to the LSC's remit are detailed in Annex A.

21 The publication by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) of Success for All (DfES, 2002) heralds a drive to strengthen teaching and learning and the quality of provision in the learning and skills sector across colleges, the workplace, and in adult and community learning (ACL). The LSC's Workforce Development Strategy, and its

co-operation with regional development agencies (RDAs) in the preparation of Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs), and regional education and training pilots all rely on extending participation and achievement in education and training among employers and employees who currently see little incentive to join in. Meanwhile, the Government is working towards the June 2003 publication of its Skills Strategy that is informed by a review of the funding of adult learning.

22 The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the reports of the policy action teams that led to it highlighted the failure of education and training to meet the needs of the residents of the poorest estates and communities in Britain. Few who live in these poorest wards see much evidence that education and training can make a significant difference to their lives. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's findings (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001) suggest that few educational providers engage residents in shaping learning programmes. Where people do join in, too often they find that provision fails to meet their needs or aspirations.

23 All these policy initiatives recognise the imperative of extending participation and achievement to those communities currently under-represented. The Strategy is designed to address that challenge and to make a real difference.

24 The Strategy recognises that learning opportunities for individuals and groups will be developed in a range of contexts, from community settings to workplaces, and with a wide range of partners. It recognises too that learners will engage across the full continuum of learning opportunities – from first steps short courses and Skills for Life courses, through retraining to substantial vocational and high-level skills provision.

25 The LSC is convinced that its Strategy builds on strong foundations. There is a wealth of successful local practice, for example in colleges, in ACL provision, in the Union Learning Fund and in ACL Learning Fund projects. In addition, many local LSCs have engaged energetically and effectively in widening participation in their areas. The LSC inherits powerful analyses of what needs doing, through the work of the FEFC's widening participation and learning difficulties and/or disabilities committees (FEFC, 1996; FEFC, 1997).

26 Five years after the Kennedy Report, it is clear that the learning divide remains. It is clear too that the individuals and groups least represented in education and training are the most socially and economically disadvantaged. The challenge facing the LSC and providers is making provision that meets the learning needs and aspirations of these individuals and groups.

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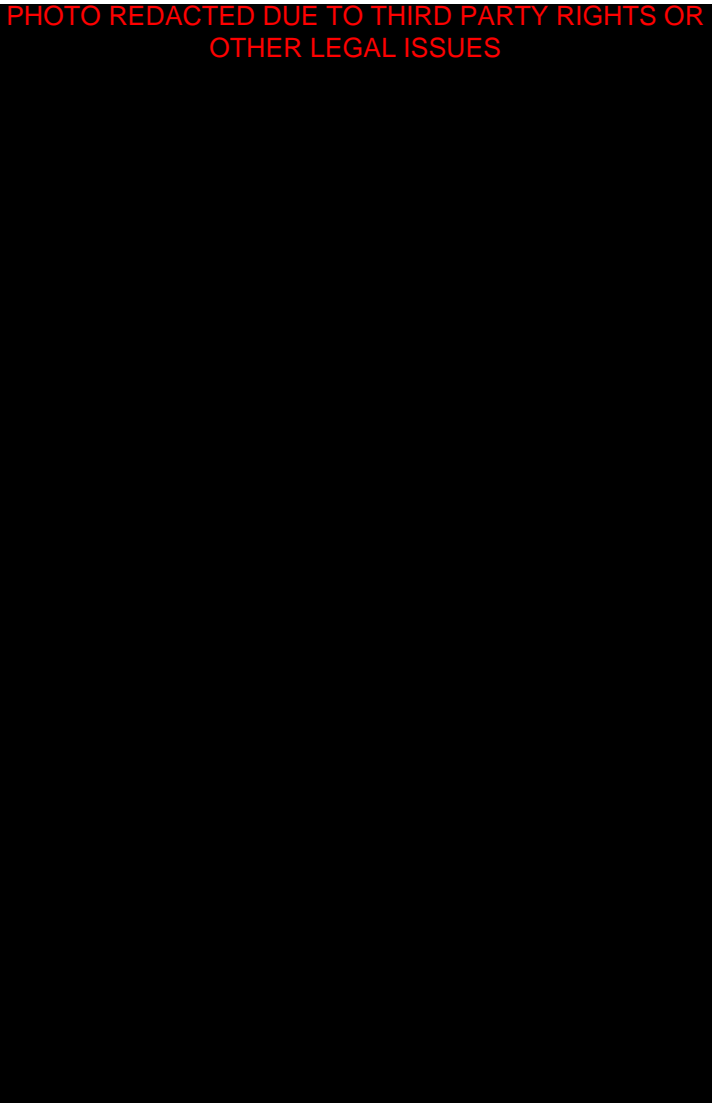
Background

Widening participation is a process where education and training providers successfully adapt their programmes and ways of working to meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals and groups whose experiences or circumstances inhibit participation. It involves:

- attracting and engaging learners;
 - identifying appropriate programmes;
 - appropriate support for learners during their programmes; and
 - securing achievement.
- 27 In September 2001, the LSC worked with the DfES to provide advice to Ministers on:
- identifying and disseminating good practice in widening adult participation by FE colleges; and
 - the prospects of future growth in adult participation through the FE sector over the period between 2003 and 2006.
- 28 In line with the terms of reference, the LSC limited the study of good practice to colleges but agreed that any future study of widening adult participation and future plans for its development should apply to all LSC-funded providers that are engaged in adult learning, where much good and innovative practice also exists.
- 29 A Widening Participation Review Group, supported by a steering group, researched and co-ordinated the advice. The LSC also commissioned the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to identify the characteristics of colleges where there was evidence of success in widening adult participation and to investigate the prospects for future growth (Taylor, 2002).
- 30 In March 2002, the LSC made recommendations to Ministers on how to widen adult participation in FE colleges. These recommendations are detailed in Annex B.

Ministers endorsed these recommendations and strongly support the production of a national Strategy.

- 31 Activity to produce the Strategy began in July 2002. A National Widening Adult Participation Steering Group was established, comprising some of the members of the original steering group, with extra representation from LSC policy team members, and external partners who have an expertise in, and commitment to, widening participation.
- 32 The Steering Group (details contained in Annex C) oversaw the production of this Strategy. In addition to the Steering Group and external partners, the LSC’s Adult Learning Committee and Adult Programme Board have been consulted on the content of the Strategy.



Context

Current Adult Participation in Learning

- 33 The English Local Labour Force Survey (ELLFS) measures adult participation in all forms of learning. It uses the same definition as the National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) and includes both taught and non-taught learning. The ELLFS results for 2001 (summarised in Annex D) indicate that adult participation in learning has increased from 74% in 1997 to 76% in 2002.
- 34 There are variations in participation according to the gender and age of learners. Participation in any kind of learning among women is lower than among men but the difference may be explained by women’s lower participation in the labour market. In terms of taught learning, there is barely any difference in participation between men and women. Overall, participation in learning decreases considerably with age.
- 35 Annex E lists some of the key findings from a survey of adult participation in learning that was conducted by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in 2002 (Sargant and Aldridge, 2002). Using a more formalised definition of learning than NALS or ELLFS, this survey indicates that only one in four adults (23%) are currently learning, with 42% of adults having participated in some learning activity during the previous three years. Over a third of adults (36%) have not participated in any learning since leaving full-time education.
- 36 The NIACE survey also shows a high degree of stability with the NIACE surveys of 1996 and 1999 and ‘confirms that the UK still faces an enormous task in involving all its people in the learning society, and that the learning divide between the learning-rich and the learning-poor continues to exist, (NIACE, 2002).

- 37 The NIACE survey gives compelling evidence that socio-economic class remains a key determinant of adult participation in learning. Three-fifths of all upper- and middle-class respondents (AB) and 54% of C1s (white-collar workers) are current or recent learners. This compares with 37% of C2s (skilled manual workers) and only 25% of DEs (unskilled workers and people on limited incomes). Adults in socio-economic groups AB are more than twice as likely to be current or recent learners as those in groups DE. Finally, 58% of DEs have not participated in any learning since leaving school compared with just 17% of ABs. People with access to the Internet are twice as likely to learn as those without.

Strategy

- 38 This Strategy takes into account the initial recommendations made to Ministers and the key recommendations of the Kennedy Report detailed in Annex F. Many of the Kennedy recommendations (learning targets, strategic partnerships, financial support for widening participation, basic skill entitlement, and e-learning) have been implemented at national level and by providers and agencies locally and regionally.
- 39 The Strategy acknowledges the Kennedy Report analysis that learning is the key to economic prosperity and social cohesion. Kennedy argues that since many of the capabilities needed for success at work are the same as those needed in personal, social and community life, learning for living and learning for work are inseparable. These capabilities can be learned and developed in a wide variety of ways over a lifetime.
- 40 This Strategy applies to all LSC-funded providers engaged in the education and training of adults, with observations and proposed actions relating to these providers across all learning sectors. It seeks to stimulate developments in widening participation,

as well as revitalising and strengthening existing efforts by learning providers and other partners. It will do this by introducing new policy initiatives, by targeting resources and action and by pulling together a number of discrete policies to achieve greater impact.

41 The LSC, unlike the FEFC at the time of the Kennedy Report, has a responsibility for planning, as well as funding, education and training. This enables a new planned approach to be developed for widening adult participation. The proposed strategic area reviews, area inspections, provider reviews and market segmentation are some of the tools that are available to the LSC to transform the pattern, structure, quality and responsiveness of local delivery. By using the funding and local flexibilities now available with mainstream budgets, we can also ensure that the mix and quality of provision in each area is appropriate to meet learner, employer and community needs.

42 The LSC's development of the Strategy will need to be done in careful partnership with other agencies responsible for other social policy streams that impact on learners and potential learners. These include local authorities in relation to, for example, regeneration, social services, transport, arts and libraries; voluntary and community sector agencies working with specific under-represented groups; trade unions and employers' groups, and other government agencies.

43 This Strategy will operate on two levels.

- It will seek to motivate learners by developing understanding of their aspirations and the part that learning of all types might play in helping them achieve their goals.
- It will identify barriers which currently exist within the delivery system which deter individuals from participation, providers from engaging with learners, employers from workforce development, and communities from embracing lifelong learning.



Motivating Learners

Put simply, we want to avoid a viewpoint which locates the difficulty or deficit with the student and focus instead on the capacity of the educational institution to understand and respond to the individual learner's requirement. This means we must move away from labelling the student and towards creating an appropriate educational environment; concentrate on understanding better how people learn so that they can better be helped to learn.

Inclusive Learning (FEFC, 1996)

44 What factors motivate adults to enter learning? The NIACE survey on adult participation in learning (NIACE, 2002) shows that more than 9 in 10 adults say they believe learning makes a difference to your life – that it leads to better jobs, a more interesting social life, and that it helps you to help your children. Yet a quarter say that it is 'not for the likes of them'. Participating in education seems to have little to do with their life as they earn their living, bring up a family and enjoy leisure time. A key purpose of the Strategy is to make an education and training offer that stimulates confidence and curiosity to participate and succeed.

45 Every human being continues to learn throughout their lives. For some people however, learning is not a conscious activity, and they would not describe themselves as learners or consider that they have skills in this aspect of their lives. Others do not view learning as a liberating concept but rather as an unpleasant chore.

46 In contrast, many other adults have developed the skills which enable them to make use of different forms of learning to suit their immediate needs, preferences or budgets. Some of these include:

- the use of reference materials in books, manuals, online, in libraries;
- learning from the skills and experiences of friends, colleagues and family;

- talking to 'experts' in health, finance, housing, transport, consumer affairs and so on;
- training in the workplace;
- structured learning opportunities from clubs, colleges, open and distance learning, and e-learning; and
- accessing courses and qualifications.

47 It is important that we adapt education and training practice to make it relevant to the individual and collective aspirations of marginalised groups. The Strategy must address the full range of learning activities so that entry points to learning are available in non-educational settings, and are flexible enough to fit around individual learners and groups of learners.

48 Such an arrangement was described by Professor John Tomlinson in the report for the FEFC's Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities Committee (FEFC, 1996), where he recommended as a tool for inclusion an approach to further education which developed provision around the learners, rather than requiring the learner to fit into pre-existing patterns of provision. While Tomlinson's starting point was the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the report said much about all under-represented groups.

Barriers to Learning

59 What are the barriers to raising participation and achievement levels? The Strategy seeks systematically to eliminate the barriers which inhibit participation by some groups of potential learners.

60 Many people may wish to participate but find their progress blocked by a range of obstacles. These barriers generally fall into three main categories:

- attitudinal;
- practical; and
- structural.

Attitudinal Barriers

61 Attitudinal barriers include:

- lack of confidence relating to poor self-esteem;
- negative attitudes to learning;
- perceptions of irrelevance;
- negative peer pressure; and
- lack of motivation.

62 Many of these arise from the legacy of negative experiences in statutory education. A clear requirement therefore for those seeking to draw such people back into learning is to reassure them that the experience will be positive, enjoyable and convivial. The key is to overcome negative expectations. Such messages will need to percolate through publicity, be evident in the subtleties of recruitment, enrolment and assessment and, most importantly, in the attitudes of teaching staff. For many people, accessing learning will need to be a gradual process, which allows time for confidence to build. Across the varied sectors of education and training, there must be a continuum of provision - coherent, progressive and flexible, underpinned at every stage by guidance and support.

Practical Barriers

63 Practical barriers include:

- financial constraints;
- lack of time;
- lack of good and affordable childcare;
- geographical isolation; and
- lack of information.

64 When adults take the decision to participate in education and practical barriers cause them either not to enrol or to withdraw at an early stage, their negative expectations of the system are reinforced. The failure may be the system's; the risk is that adults will internalise the difficulties as their responsibility.

65 The LSC has targeted funds which support access for learners, but the following questions need to be asked about these funds:

- should some types of programme and some groups of learners be prioritised;
- is their allocation transparent and consistently applied nationally;
- are they sufficiently and appropriately targeted at the most disadvantaged groups; and
- are learners made aware of the availability of such funds?

66 Participation in learning can often have an impact on an individual's eligibility for benefits. The decision therefore to engage in learning can be high risk and life-changing. Not surprisingly, some people will not make that choice without confidence that they will not jeopardise their financial security.

Structural Barriers

67 Structural barriers include:

- lack of relevant and appropriate local learning opportunities;
- availability of work-related training; and
- patchiness of effective IAG.

68 Structural barriers relate mainly to the way in which learner needs are met through the way the curriculum is organised and delivered. While qualifications should not be seen as the sole outcome of learning, they are centrally important to people who previously have not had their learning publicly recognised. The facility to acquire qualifications in small units is supportive to adults seeking to combine learning with other life activities.

69 A more flexible arrangement for credit will ensure that learning is recognised and equally regarded across the country. These are important national developments which are not in themselves designed to widen adult participation but will greatly enhance it.

70 Different and innovative ways of learning, including open and distance learning, e-learning and blends of these with conventional learning must be explored. As more innovative ways of learning are set up, arrangements for taking public examinations need to be extended to ensure that these are not made unduly difficult for learners who choose alternative routes.

71 It is important that the Strategy recognises and identifies barriers common to the range of under-represented groups and those which are specific to particular groups, or to individuals within them. Whilst the groups may share an experience that the education and training system does not meet their needs or aspirations, providers will need to be sensitive to the differences in practice necessary to overcome barriers for different people.

72 It is also important that in considering key issues that relate to motivating learners and barriers to learning, we do not focus solely on the question 'What is it that prevents people joining in?', but also on the question 'How do providers need to change to be accessible and to meet learner, and potential learner, needs?'

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Consultation issue 2

Please comment on the extent to which the Strategy identifies the key barriers to widening participation.

Do you regard any of these barriers as being more significant than others?

- 73

Key issues and proposed actions designed to motivate adults to participate in learning, to overcome barriers to learning, and to help providers raise participation and achievement are set out under five headings. These embrace many national and local LSC policy developments to encourage widening participation. They are:
- partnership approach, covering local authority, voluntary and community, HE and employer engagement and workforce development issues;

- appropriate provision, covering qualifications and curriculum, and marketing and communications issues;
 - targets and research, covering LSC planning, and current and future research issues;
 - equality and access, covering equality and diversity, quality improvement, provider staff development, and IAG issues; and
 - funding, covering provider and learner support funding issues.

Partnership Approach

Partnerships work best when they are rooted in a community (not necessarily geographical), have a broad (as distinct from narrow) understanding of adult learning, take the time to understand their own rationale....and embody urgency — here are our needs, our problems to be solved.

Judith Summers, Cheshire Learning Partnership (Thompson, 2002)

- 74

This Strategy seeks to link widening adult participation with the broader economic and social inclusion agendas pursued by a range of partners other than the LSC. These include government departments, local authorities, voluntary and community sector agencies, RDAs, Ufi/learn direct, learning partnerships and local strategic partnerships, and providers and their support agencies across all learning sectors.
- 75

Employers are key partners also in widening adult participation. The LSC’s Workforce Development Strategy sets out how the LSC will deliver its statutory responsibility to raise skill levels and the demand for learning, and to engage employers in improving skills for employability and national competitiveness.
- 76

The Workforce Development Strategy has been developed in consultation with the Government and key partners at the national, regional and local level and working closely with the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit. It is underpinned by the principles of equality and diversity and undertakes to develop specific actions to ensure that disadvantaged groups participate in workforce developments. A summary of the Workforce Development Strategy is attached as Annex G.
- 77

It is also important that the LSC works with HEFCE in taking forward widening participation activities to ensure that traditionally under-represented groups are encouraged to progress onto HE. The Government has set a target by 2010 to increase participation in higher education towards 50% of those aged 18-30.
- 78

HEFCE and the LSC are working together to enable FE and HE providers to meet this 50% participation target. The joint focus for this is Partnerships for Progression (PFP), involving a nationwide infrastructure of local partnerships between FE and HE providers, Connexions Services, local education authorities (LEAs) and employers.
- 79

HEFCE and the LSC have highlighted that the real barriers to progress in widening participation in HE centre on six core issues:
 - funding of HE provision, with particular reference to capital funding;
 - data collection and transferability;
 - quality standards;
 - staff pay and rewards;
 - strategic planning; and
 - student support funding.
- It also expects significant progress to be made year-on-year towards fairer access, and to bear down on rates of non-completion.

Important Considerations

- 80 Local authorities have a statutory role to:
- enhance community leadership;
 - improve the well-being of residents;
 - strengthen the local economy; and
 - support neighbourhood renewal.
- 81 The partnership between local LSCs and local authorities is central to widening adult participation. So too is partnership working with the voluntary and community sectors where valuable routes into learning and lessons already exist. Voluntary sector provision is aimed at those potential learners who are most difficult to reach but the provision is 'fragile', perhaps because much provision leads to non-recognised qualifications.
- 82 The Skills for Life Campaign, which seeks to drive up the levels of basic skills amongst adults, provides a huge opportunity for people to progress onto other learning opportunities, with newly developed skills in literacy, numeracy and language. The Widening Adult Participation Strategy must be closely allied to Skills for Life. The proposed activities need also to complement and be consistent with the activities proposed in the LSC's revised Adult Literacy and Numeracy Delivery Plan (LSC, 2003a).
- 83 The Department of Health initiative Valuing People will give access to education, employment and housing for adults with learning disabilities. The role of education is crucial in supporting this initiative.
- 84 The National Health Service University (NHSU) will seek to attract into all kinds of learning many NHS employees who have not previously engaged in formal learning. The NHSU is currently developing foundation degrees across the entire health sector in partnership with FE and HE providers.

- 85 Employers do need help and support if they are to become more involved with workforce development in general and helping disadvantaged groups in particular. It is not sufficient to initially engage employers – they have then to be retained.
- 86 Employers are not a homogenous group, and a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate. The many different objectives detailed in the Workforce Development Strategy (see Annex G) offer a range of suggestions for tailored activity appropriate for individual companies and groups of potential learners within those companies. Proposals relating to IAG services, learning advisers, union learning representatives, basic skills activity and e-learning may prove particularly fruitful.
- 87 There are differences between the LSC and HEFCE. They have very different:
- remits;
 - statutory roles;
 - working relationships with key providers and stakeholders;
 - funding arrangements; and
 - structures.
- 88 Although collaboration has not been fully exploited, there are growing opportunities to build on key strengths such as widening participation.

Case-Study of Current Practice

Steelite International plc, Stoke-on-Trent

The Steelite Pathway to Lifelong Learning programme is supported by the Union Learning Fund. It has earned the Ceramic and Allied Trade Union (CATU) a Learning in the Workplace award in recognition of its work in helping its members return to learning.

One union learning representative at Steelite, Tommy Dawkins, has tackled his reading and writing difficulties and is helping his colleagues to

do the same by making them aware of the learning opportunities open to them through their Union and the workplace.

'I decided I was going to get this over to the workforce and the company as well, because you need them to be involved too. My plans for the future are to go on more courses, and carry on until I can read, write and spell with more confidence.'

Tommy Dawkins, Steelite employee

Proposed Actions

- 89 The LSC will:
- a show strategic leadership in engaging potential learners by:
 - actively supporting appropriate partners and networks;
 - ensuring synergy between its activities and those who provide innovative learning opportunities;
 - b ensure that we build on the many employer initiatives and projects taking place, seeking to ensure a widening participation focus utilising the existing educational infrastructure whenever appropriate; and
 - c ensure complementary plans and approaches are agreed with HEFCE to include a broad provision of HE, embracing professional qualifications, work-based learning and NVQs at levels 4 and 5.

Consultation Issue 3

Do you consider that the actions proposed for a partnership approach are appropriate and adequate for the issues identified?

Please suggest any further areas for action.

Appropriate Provision

- 90 One of the founding principles of this Strategy is that learning is a process operating on a continuum of provision from the acquisition of basic skills and skills for life through to retraining, vocational training and the acquisition of high-level skills. It is important that this provision should be coherent, progressive and flexible, underpinned at every stage by guidance and support. One of the key issues to support the wider participation of adults in learning is seen to be the availability of a comprehensive curriculum embracing all skill types with clear progression routes.
- 91 Since the 1990s there has been widespread support within the FE sector for 'credit' to become a recognised feature of achievement, funding and qualification frameworks. Credit is a way of describing what a learner knows, understands and can do, and gives these learning outcomes an appropriate 'size' and level within an agreed framework. The Kennedy Report (FEFC, 1997) called for the establishment of a credit system within five years.
- 92 In recognition of the needs of adult learners, the LSC funds unitised programmes, requiring them to have coherence and a clearly stated rationale for an identified learner group. In addition, the LSC continues to recognise and fund 'other' provision. This includes all forms of non-accredited learning, not just that delivered by FE and work-based learning (WBL), but that delivered by ACL providers. This latter provision, as stressed throughout this Strategy, is often a starting-point for potential learners.
- 93 New and innovative approaches to learning and teaching can break down the barriers described at paragraphs 59 to 72. In particular, open and distance learning, e-learning and blends of these with conventional learning all offer the ability to 'take the learning to the learner' as opposed to the difficulties of trying to engage learners, either through traditional methods or environments, that reinforce the reasons why

they have disengaged with learning in the first place.

- 94 It is important to understand and build upon existing areas of success in open and distance learning and e-learning. For example, 60% of those learners engaged in learndirect are new learners, that is, they have not engaged with any type of formal learning for the previous three years. Learner surveys (BMG, 2002) repeatedly reveal that learners are attracted by the flexibility of learndirect, which offers them the opportunity to learn at their own pace, at a time to suit them, either from their home, the workplace or in a non-traditional venue such as their high street or local library.
- 95 The LSC will seek to develop a national marketing and communication strategy to promote post-16 education and training across the full range of its providers. This national programme will need to be backed by local initiatives, providing a comprehensive promotional strategy.
- 96 Focused marketing action will need to be developed and targeted at each key adult segment so as to impact on their involvement with the skills agenda.

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- 97 Whilst recognising that the BiteSize campaign is just one initiative among several national learning campaigns, its success provides the LSC with the opportunity to implement targeted local campaigns to attract new learners into taster learning, within a national framework to ensure participation amongst those groups less likely to engage in learning.

Important considerations

- 98 The LSC's view on credit is that while it is appropriate to continue to support and encourage local credit developments, there is now an urgent need to accelerate progress in developing a national system of credit.
- 99 The concept of an 'entitlement platform' for adult learners, embracing basic and key skills, is worthy of further consideration and development. It is essential that the LSC also acknowledges the role played by private, voluntary and community sector providers, including those offering open and distance learning and e-learning opportunities.
- 100 The LSC must ensure that the value placed on activities to widen adult participation is shared by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) so that providers are not penalised by prioritising this area of work. The LSC's own provider performance reviews must also acknowledge provider activity to widen adult participation.
- 101 Some providers have combated the isolation of open and distance learning and e-learning by the development of a range of learner support mechanisms including peer and tutor support within learning centres and through the use of online message boards and group discussion. This practice suggests a case for the wider adoption of new and innovative approaches to learning and teaching as a means of widening adult participation.

- 102 Any campaign to widen adult participation must be based on an understanding of the motivations of its target groups. For adults who have previously not participated in education, or who have had negative experiences, it will be essential that they experience a range of sympathetic and persuasive messages which are backed up at the point of delivery.

- 103 The marketing process will have at least two strands:

- an inclusive approach to the promotion of all learning opportunities; and
- targeted campaigns at specific groups and/or specific programmes and linking to other national campaigns.

Case-study of current practice

Learndirect, Sparkbrook/Sparkhill, Birmingham

The 524 Centre in Sparkbrook/Sparkhill (an inner-city ward) is a cyber café that provides local people with quick and free access to information and communications technology (ICT) facilities and learndirect training. Users are encouraged to visit the centre regardless of age, level of experience or language ability. Opening hours include daytime, evening and Saturday openings to ensure maximum opportunities for people to visit.

Those who particularly benefit are local people, especially the young and people who speak English as their second language. Children have free access to the Internet and the Saturday opening time enables parents to benefit along with their children. Frequent visitors to the centre include young people using the Internet to search for jobs, older people who wish to learn about computers, returners to work who wish to upskill and international visitors who wish to keep informed about developments in their home country.

Proposed actions

- 104 The LSC will:
- a conduct a consultation on the application of credits, the proposed principles, the uses and values of credit systems and issues and risks associated with implementation;

b explore steps to facilitate the access of external candidates to examination centres;

c develop a comprehensive curriculum offer both within and outside of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to address the needs of all adult learners;

d ensure that open and distance learning, e-learning and blended learning are fully embraced across all learning sectors to offer increased opportunities for engaging potential learners;

e build on the success of the BiteSize campaign, focusing the concept in future years in particular on widening adult participation; and

f ensure that the new BiteSize campaign is linked to an accessible programme of IAG to encourage progression beyond the taster.

Consultation issue 4

Do you consider that the actions proposed for appropriate provision are appropriate and adequate?

Please suggest any further areas for action.

Target and Research

‘Learning is for everyone, but it will never be simple or easy to make sure that all get the chance to fulfil their potential. That is why it is so important to have the best evidence, based on high quality research.’

Ivan Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Adult Learning and Skills, 2002

- 105 As a result of the Government’s Spending Review and the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets, (detailed in Annex A), the LSC is reviewing its current targets framework. Work is in hand to identify the longer-term targets that best support the achievement of our mission, vision and high-level objectives. This work will take place in the context of the DfES Review of the funding of adult learning due to be completed in June 2003.

106 The LSC has made a commitment to set a target for adult participation. It will use the definition of learning used in the ELLFS (Annex D). Using the ELLFS to measure participation will allow the LSC to adopt a broad, inclusive construction of adult participation and also to provide a breakdown of participation within local LSC areas.

107 If the LSC is to succeed in promoting widening adult participation, it needs an accurate means of determining who is not participating in learning, what constitutes ‘under-representation’, and what strategies work best to widen participation. Without this information, the LSC cannot be sure that its efforts to widen participation for different groups of people are as appropriate and effective as they could be.

108 Existing research already offers significant information relating to widening participation. This includes barriers to participation, under-represented groups and initiatives to address barriers to learning, including ways to reach and engage potential learners.
- 109 Less is known about other relevant areas such as the impact of different teaching and learning styles on widening participation, which policies and interventions yield the greatest benefits, and which engagement activities are most effective for different groups. We do know though that not all providers have been equally effective at widening participation. Good practice exists, but it needs to become more universally applied.

Important considerations

110 There is no general consensus among policy makers on an exact list of ‘hard-to-reach’ groups. The 1990s saw a number of attempts at a definition. The Kennedy Report, Learning Works, identified as target groups for widening participation:
 - older workers and other older people;
 - unskilled/semi skilled socio-economic groups;
 - people with poor basic skills; and
 - people with no or low qualifications.

111 A further report by the FEFC (FEFC, 2000) identified the following adult groups as having low levels of participation:
 - ex-offenders and probation clients;
 - lone parents;
 - people who are unemployed in the long term;
 - people working in small and medium-sized enterprises;

- people with low levels of literacy and numeracy;
- some ethnic minority groups;
- refugees and asylum seekers;
- travellers;
- people recovering from mental illness;
- people with disabilities;
- people with severe learning difficulties;
- people with drug or alcohol dependency or recovering from dependency; and
- people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

112 Much research evidence (post-Kennedy) exists, but it has not yet been synthesised, so we do not always 'know what we know.' Locally based studies tend to be variable and not consistent with each other, limiting their use when developing a national strategy.

113 National research on under-representation and 'priority groups' will therefore be key in determining national priorities and providing benchmarks for local LSC performance. Local LSC priorities and plans will also need to draw upon sound evidence on local participation patterns and on strategies appropriate to local under-representation.

114 It is important to research the extent to which the narrowness of providers with a stereotypical understanding of potential learners acts as a barrier to participation and achievement by many diverse groups of people. The experience of the ACL Fund demonstrates that many voluntary and community sector agencies have a keen awareness of the diversity of potential clients and client learning needs and, in the light of that, try to offer provision which is designed in recognition of this and in negotiation with potential learners rather than imposing a pre-determined menu of programmes.

Research could usefully take the form of funded action research which will allow providers across all learning sectors to take risks, and to learn from that.

115 A start has been made to improve the provider base delivery of diversity through the implementation in 2003/04 of the Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs). The framework for EDIMs will allow local LSCs to set targeted measures for increasing participation, retention and achievement for men and women, learners from different racial groups, learners with a disability, and learners in different age groups where analysis shows that people from these groups are under-represented or underachieving in learning. The EDIMs will set out how the local LSC will seek to impact on underparticipation and underachievement over the life of its strategic plan.

116 EDIMs were introduced in Equality and Diversity Guidance (LSC, 2002) and the system piloted with six pathfinder local LSCs during 2002. The key areas of focus were FE college and WBL provision involving young people and adults. The most common EDIMs were to increase representation of men and women in occupational and learning sectors where they were under-represented or underachieving. Progress on the EDIMs set will be measured on a regular basis and used to inform and refine activities and to develop the EDIMs framework over time.

Case-study of current practice

Action research on rural isolation in Shrivenham, Oxfordshire

A partnership involving the FE college, the LEA, community education and outreach services, targeted non-participating adults with few qualifications in an isolated rural area. With support from employers, contact with the client group was made through leaflets and messages in wage packets.

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Following guidance interviews, 12% of the workforce took up IT and basic skills provision.

Findings from the research emphasised the value of local reliable provision, face-to-face guidance and information and provision with tailor-made opportunities for progression and accreditation.

Proposed actions

117 The LSC will:

- a commission a systematic review and synthesis of recent research and statistical evidence on under-representation and on 'what works' in order to provide a solid foundation for future research on participation and strategies for widening it;

b ensure that a national framework and methodology for research on under-representation and priority groups is developed;

c develop a sound evidence base at local level linked to the national framework and to national benchmarks for participation, so that local priorities can reflect local needs and realities; and

d put in place a longer-term, ongoing research programme on participation, underpinned by (b), including strategies to support local LSCs and providers in applying research results.

- 118 Following the research actions proposed above, the LSC will set widening adult participation targets at national and local level.
- 119 The LSC will ensure that the information held on providers is used to assess the extent to which such providers have the local capacity to widen adult participation.
- 120 All of the proposed actions will need to be clearly linked to the development of the new planning, funding and accountability framework proposed in Success for All (DfES, 2002).

Consultation issue 5

Do you consider that the actions proposed for targets and research are appropriate and adequate?

[illegible]

Please suggest any further areas for action.

[illegible]

Equality and Access

Outreach and development work is often the vital prelude to eventually wider participation. The precise outcomes may be difficult to calibrate but the general benefits are not at all to be doubted.

In inner city areas only very local centres can help make education accessible to individuals and communities otherwise excluded by distance, transport or cultural barriers.

Learning for the 21st Century, (NAGCELL, 1997)

- 121 The LSC has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in learning for the whole community. It recognises the diversity of local communities, giving rise to a rich variety in the demand for learning. Local LSCs are working on the development of EDIMs which will seek to address specific examples of under-representation.
- 122 The LSC has accepted the principles set out in Inclusive Learning (FEFC, 1996) and has established the Forum on Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, which is chaired by Professor John Tomlinson. As outlined in 'Motivating Learners' (paragraphs 44ff) of this Strategy, Inclusive Learning identified that participation and achievement were likely to be maximised in situations where provision is matched to the needs, aspirations and starting points of learners and potential learners. The Inclusive Learning Quality Initiative gave providers the opportunity to implement the details of the recommendations.
- 123 Some of the recent powerful levers to promote equality include:
- the Disability Discrimination Act (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001); and
 - the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.
- 124 All providers are required to respond to the requirements of these new pieces of legislation.
- 125 The LSC is committed to raising participation and attainment through high-quality education and training which puts learners first. The LSC inherited provision of uneven quality, ranging from excellent, world-class provision through to that of unacceptably poor quality. We are determined to tackle poor performance where it exists and to increase the proportion of provision that is of good or better quality. The central feature of our Quality Improvement Strategy for 2003 to 2006 is to give support to providers to help them to deliver their responsibilities for continuous improvement and for the quality of their provision, with a strong focus on improving provision that falls below acceptable standards.
- 126 There is evidence of existing good-quality provision and good practice in widening adult participation. The evaluation of the non-schedule 2 pilots pointed to the rich experience in LEAs. Evaluation of the joint Basic Skills Agency, NIACE and ACL Learning Fund projects cited examples of good-quality provision. Several early DfES and FEFC widening participation evaluations exist, and much good-quality widening adult participation practice has been identified in the HE sector through many HE widening participation studies.

- 127 The research conducted by the LSDA on behalf of the LSC mentioned in the Background to this Strategy identifies current features of good practice in widening participation in FE colleges and makes recommendations for a national Quality Improvement and Development Strategy. The Summary LSDA Report is contained in Annex H.
- 128 However, good practice needs to become more widespread among all providers, and the means by which it is achieved made accessible to all. Dissemination activities alone will not be enough. Any programme developed as a result of this Strategy will need to focus on the management of institutional change and needs to be integrated into the strategic area review process.
- 129 IAG for adults is provided by local IAG partnerships under contract to the local LSC. The partnerships are charged with co-ordinating IAG services in the local area to deliver to a wide range of national and locally determined target groups. Achievement of the Matrix quality standard for IAG services by organisations delivering IAG is a means of demonstrating the quality of the IAG provision being delivered.

Important considerations

- 130 A central aspect of individuals electing to participate in education is that they are able to recognise the relevance of the curriculum, to feel comfortable with their co-learners and appreciate the methods of delivery.
- 131 It is important that the culture and life experience of individuals are reflected in their learning, and that preferences for styles of delivery and methods of communication are respected.

- 132 The LSC has supported the work of the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (CBSFE) and has, along with the DfES, committed to the implementation of the CBSFE recommendations contained in its report (CBSFE, 2002).
- 133 These recommendations include that colleges make efforts to enrich their staff by ensuring appropriate representation from all racial groups. Similarly, the report recommends that steps are taken in an effort to improve retention rates and progression, arguing that providing more ethnic minority role models will help increase participation rates by ethnic minority learners.
- 134 In order to stimulate rapid, managed growth in widening participation for adults, it will be important to target any proposed development programme on those providers with a significant role in widening adult participation and with capacity for further growth and improvement, rather than opting for comprehensive coverage across all providers, regardless of their current level of involvement or experience with adult learners. This growth should be considered, agreed, and implemented as part of the fundamental assessment of provision during the strategic area review process.

- 135 The LSDA research confirms that the factor which makes a difference to a provider's capacity to cater for adults relates to the development of an institutional ethos favouring widening adult participation. 'Bolt-on' strategies alone are not sufficient to make the difference.

Case-study of current practice

Cumbria Deaf Association

LSC Cumbria funds three members of staff, all of whom are profoundly deaf, within Cumbria Deaf Association (CDA), a voluntary sector organisation. The purpose of the scheme is to identify and work with Deaf people who want to develop their skills or employment.

'When I tried to learn in the past without interpreters I didn't understand but now CDA has provided an interpreter and I am really enjoying IT. We are all Deaf in the group although the teacher is hearing. It's really good as we support each other. We have the interpreter there to tell us what the teacher is saying.

The IT helps me on the farm - all the milk records and the animal ear tags. It's enabled me to set up databases and spreadsheets for the farm.

I would really like to learn at the next level up now in graphics. I would like the same set-up, a Deaf group, an interpreter; I think I will be able to go on to that, that's what I would like to do.'

Andrew, farmer, a British Sign Language user who is profoundly Deaf and who attends CDA

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Proposed actions

- 136 The LSC will:
- a ensure a mutually supportive approach is adopted by the LSC’s Widening Adult Participation Strategy and its Equality and Diversity Strategy;

b use the EDIMs to help monitor progress in widening adult participation;

c within its Quality Improvement Strategy, develop a quality improvement and development (QID) strand for providers to develop good practice in widening adult participation. This will be:

• consistent with the LSC’s Quality Improvement Strategy;

• based on a mediated quality improvement model, using consultants to help managers introduce and sustain beneficial changes; and

• encompassing of the relevant recommendations of Inclusive Learning (FEFC, 1996);

d ensure that IAG is at the heart of all LSC-funded provision, developing proposals for a coherent and integrated national IAG service by 2003.

• developed on an area basis, involving providers with expertise or capacity in this area;

Consultation issue 6

Do you consider that the actions proposed for equality and access are appropriate and adequate?

Please suggest any further areas for action.

Funding

Funding is the most important lever for change.

Learning Works (FEFC, 1997)

- 137 Although extra costs are often incurred by all types of providers in catering for disadvantaged learners, the widest range of funding mechanisms to widen participation amongst learners applies to FE colleges.

138 In colleges, a disadvantage uplift is one element of the funding methodology. Other elements of the methodology include learner support funds (LSF), which are paid to the student, programme weights (including that for basic skills), area weights, and additional learning support funds (ALSF), which are paid to the college.

139 In work-based learning, the disadvantage uplift is restricted to learner postcode. In school sixth forms, the disadvantage uplift is based on eligibility for school meals.

140 Approximately 25% of learners in colleges receive a disadvantage uplift through location (ignoring area weighting), with a further 8% from other categories (mainly basic skills).

141 The present uplifts for disadvantage relating to location are linked to levels of deprivation based on data from 1992. This will be replaced in 2003/04 by the Index of Multiple Deprivation introduced in 2000. Using this more up-to-date data source for identifying the most disadvantaged communities will ensure resources are redirected to reflect changes in the pattern of disadvantage.
- sending a signal from Government about the fact that it is a policy priority; and

• providing support for institutions to widen participation.
- 143 The LSF are a group of discretionary funds available to FE institutions to support individuals who are at risk of not participating in, nor completing their learning due to financial constraints. They are paid directly to the student and are available to help students meet the additional costs of studying, such as books, equipment, and transport (FE access funds), the costs of residential study (residential bursaries) or childcare (FE childcare support fund).

144 Evaluation evidence (Dewson et al, 2002) indicates that FE access funds are reaching the main target groups, which are those with a low household income (defined by benefits), lone parents and learners from disadvantaged areas. Lone parents and learners with childcare needs are targeted by the FE childcare support fund. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those with high-cost travel needs and ethnic minority learners are also more likely to receive support.

145 Evaluation evidence shows that publicly funded FE providers appreciate the LSF structure of national criteria and the ability to apply locally determined priorities. However, the evidence also shows that learners with low household incomes (not benefits) and those studying part-time (particularly at outreach centres) are not as well supported as other groups.
- Important considerations
- 142 Any decision to alter the level of the disadvantage uplift to relate funding more closely to cost should take into account two other purposes of the uplift:
- 32

146 Retention rates are higher among recipients of FE LSF when compared to those not in receipt of support. Among the student population as a whole, the retention rate was just over 81%, compared with significantly higher rates for FE access fund recipients (87%), childcare support recipients (88%) and those receiving residential bursaries (90%).

147 Some providers are reluctant to market FE LSF directly to potential learners for fear of stimulating demand that they could not meet or because they were unaware of their LSF allocation. Learners on low incomes rather than benefits and part-time learners, who may be less likely to be informed about LSF, may lose out. Once in learning, around half of all learners, with some prior knowledge of FE LSF, secure further information from providers' publications and tutors.

Case-study of current practice

Basingstoke College of Technology, Winner of 2002 TES/AoC Beacon award for widening participation

The Context programme delivers essential basic skills in the workplace. At its heart is a mutual partnership with employers that recognises the need to balance the pressing demands of current business conditions with the longer-term requirement for a more flexible workforce, in which craft, shop floor and manual employees are able to respond positively to change and take on more responsible roles. The programme also aims to progress trainees to more challenging courses and to courses offering qualifications.

Proposed actions

148 The LSC will:

- a increase the level of funding allocated for the disadvantage element of the funding formula in 2003/04;

- b focus funding on learners from the most disadvantaged areas as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2000) data;
- c increase the funding uplift for learners undertaking basic skills programmes (literacy, language, and numeracy provision up to level 2) in 2003/04;
- d apply disadvantage funding arrangements for work-based learning at the provider level in 2003/04;
- e introduce the disadvantage element into ACL provision as this is progressively brought into formula funding;
- f develop its allocations policy and consider changes in eligibility criteria to target FE LSF more effectively; and
- g continue the development of the FE LSF 'level playing-field' for adults across all learning sectors and types of providers.

- 149 We will also seek to use our funding in pursuit of 'winning hearts and minds'.
- 150 Specifically the LSC will:
- use market segmentation techniques to make sure that the funding arrangements for each segment are both cost-effective and designed to encourage adults to join and benefit from learning programmes; and
 - involve all key partners in the educational chain in developing both consistent and focused programmes targeting each segment appropriately.

Consultation issue 7

Do you consider that the actions proposed for funding are appropriate and adequate?

Please suggest any further areas for action.

Consultation issue 8

Do you consider any of the proposed actions (or sets of actions) listed under the five main headings to be a higher priority than the others?

Strategy Implementation

- 151 In seeking to stimulate new developments in widening participation as well as strengthening existing efforts by learning providers and other partners, this Strategy identifies important issues and proposes a set of specific actions. Further work will be done on the detailed design and delivery of these actions and how they inter-relate with other learning and skills policy developments, existing and proposed.

152 We also need to prioritise the proposed actions, identifying which key players will be responsible for their delivery, from when, and over what period.

153 Before we can do that, we need to ensure that the Strategy accurately reflects the key issues affecting participation by under-represented groups and that the actions proposed are appropriate. We can best achieve this by consulting with the full range of stakeholders involved with, affected by, or having an interest in, widening adult participation. We value responses to the questions asked in this document from:

 - individual learners and potential learners;
 - employers, both directly and through employer support agencies;
 - community groups, including representatives from the voluntary sector;
 - providers, including general FE colleges, sixth form colleges, HE institutions, specialist colleges, local authority adult education institutions, voluntary sector and community-based providers, private sector providers and employers;
 - RDAs;
 - Ufi/learndirect;
 - local authorities and LEAs;
 - Job Centre Plus;
 - Connexions;
 - local strategic partnerships and subregional strategic partnerships;
 - learning partnerships;
 - IAG partnerships;
 - student/learner representative groups;
 - trade unions and employee associations; and
 - local LSCs.

Summary of Consultation Issues

- Consultation issue 1: Motivating learners**

Please comment on the extent to which the Strategy identifies the key motivating factors for widening adult participation.

Do you regard any of these factors as being more significant than others?

Consultation issue 2: Barriers to participation

Please comment on the extent to which the Strategy identifies the key barriers to widening adult participation.

Do you regard any of these barriers as being more significant than others?

Consultation issues 3 – 7

Do you consider that the actions proposed for:

 - partnership approach;
 - appropriate provision;
 - targets and research;
 - equality and access; and
 - funding

are appropriate and adequate?

Please suggest any further areas for action.

Consultation Issue 8: Priorities

Do you consider any of the proposed actions (or sets of actions) listed under the five main headings to be a higher priority than the others?

Do you have any other comments?
- 154 Responses can be sent by post, fax or e-mail. A form is provided at Annex I. To respond to the consultation, please complete the form and return it by 9 May 2003 to:

Lynn Macqueen
Adult Learning Division
Learning and Skills Council
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT
Fax: 024 7682 3285
E-mail: lynn.macqueen@lsc.gov.uk

155 Under the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on written consultation, any responses may be made public unless confidentiality is specifically asked for.

156 We will agree and publish the Widening Adult Participation Strategy with detailed actions and milestones after analysing your feedback. We will then begin immediate implementation across all areas of the Strategy. We also intend that the Strategy will enable local LSCs to begin developing and, in some cases, enhancing their widening adult participation programmes and activities for inclusion in their 2004/05 strategic plans.

Annex A: DfES Public Service Agreement Targets

- 1 In July 2002, the Treasury agreed new Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets for the DfES. Those that relate specifically to the LSC's remit are:
 - a to raise the standards in schools and colleges so that the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve a level 2 qualification rises by 3 percentage points between 2002 and 2004, with a further increase of 3 percentage points by 2006;
 - b by 2004, at least 28% of young people to start a Modern Apprenticeship by the age of 22;
 - c improve the basic skills levels of 1.5 million adults between the launch of Skills for Life in 2001 and 2007 with a target of 750,000 by 2004;
 - d reduce by at least 40% the number of economically active adults in the workforce who lack level 2 or equivalent qualifications, by 2010. Working towards this, one million adults already in the workforce to achieve level 2 between 2003 and 2006; and
 - e challenging targets for minimum performance and value for money in FE colleges and other providers to be set by the Government and the LSC in the context of Success for All.

Annex B: Key Recommendations for the LSC – March 2002

National

- 1 The LSC will develop a national strategy to widen participation.
- 2 This will include specific targets on widening participation in the new corporate plan.
- 3 The LSC will look to make changes to the disadvantage factor and to increases in funding through the formula for those providers already embracing the widening participation agenda.
- 4 The LSC will publish a version of the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) report on good practice in widening adult participation in colleges.
- 5 A director will be nominated to take the LSC lead in widening participation and to ensure that it is at the heart of all policy discussions and changes to the LSC's strategic drivers.

- 6 The LSC will commission a programme of further research and do further work on assessing prospects for future growth in FE and training.

Local

- 7 Each local LSC will set out a widening participation plan for its area identifying target groups and specific support for providers to deliver the plan (including standards and project funding).
- 8 Local LSCs will be responsible for monitoring participation patterns and will respond to changes in those patterns.

Annex C: Steering Group

Membership

Tony Belmega (Chair)	National LSC, Policy and Development
Alan Birks	South Birmingham College
Nicky Brunker	National LSC, External Communications
Sue Cara	National Institute of Continuing Adult Education
Geoff Daniels	National LSC, Funding Policy and Development
Christine Doubleday	LSC Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire
Anthony Evans	DfES, FE Partnerships Division
Mick Fletcher	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Graham Hoyle	Association of Learning Providers
Bev Hunt	LSC Derbyshire
Caroline Kempner	National LSC, Data Collection and Analysis
Paul Litchfield	Sector Skills Development Agency
Lynne Morris	Joseph Chamberlain College
Caroline Neville	National LSC, Policy and Development
Judith Norrington	Association of Colleges
Donald Rae	Derbyshire County Council, Lifelong Learning Division
Kit Roberts	National LSC, Equality and Diversity
Sue Taylor	Learning and Skills Development Agency
Sarah Turpin	Ufi/learn direct
Dr Sheila Watt	Higher Education Funding Council for England

Terms of Reference

- 1 The steering group will advise and support the LSC on the production of a national strategy to increase and widen adult participation in all post-16 education and training.
- 2 In providing such advice, the group will ensure that the strategy is consistent with the strategic objectives of both the LSC and the DfES.
- 3 The group will ensure that a range of key partners and organisations involved in post-16 delivery, policy development, inspection, funding and support are consulted.
- 4 The issues suggested by Ministers when approving the strategy development will be addressed by:
 - undertaking analysis nationally on priority groups and providing support to local LSCs and providers on how to reach them; and
- developing the analysis and views on which forms of learning, as well as client groups, offer the most scope for future expansion in participation.
- 5 The final strategy will include an analysis of all relevant issues contained in the project plan, together with guidance on how local LSCs and post-16 providers can widen adult participation.
- 6 The agreed strategy will result in the production of a national delivery plan. This will take responsibility for advising on:
 - direction and leadership;
 - monitoring process;
 - identifying risk; and
 - successful delivery of the strategy and plan.

Annex D: English Local Labour Force Survey 2001 – Adult Participation in Learning

Introduction

1 For the second year running, the English Local Labour Force Survey (ELLFS) measured adult participation in all forms of learning using the same questions as the National Adult Learning Surveys (NALS). Administrative sources on education underestimate the amount of learning taking place because a great deal of useful learning goes on outside the formal education system. The NALS questions are designed to capture this type of deliberate learning. A respondent is identified as a learner if he or she has done at least one of the activities described below over the last three years. The questions were only asked of those who had left continuous full-time (CFT) education.

Types of Learning Recognised by NALS and ELLFS

2 There are two recognised types of learning; taught learning and non-taught learning.

Taught learning

- taught courses leading to a qualification;
- taught courses designed to help develop skills used in a job;
- any courses, instructions or tuition in driving, any practical skill, art or craft, sport or playing a musical instrument;
- evening classes;
- learning involving an individual working on his/her own from a package of materials provided by an employer, college, commercial organisation or other training provider; and
- any other taught course, instruction or tuition.

Non-taught learning

- studying for qualifications without taking part in a taught course;
- supervised training while doing a job;
- time spent keeping up to date with developments in one’s work or profession, for example, by reading books or attending seminars; and
- deliberately trying to improve one’s knowledge about anything or teach oneself a skill without taking part in a taught course.

Overall Adult Participation in Learning

- 3 The Government set a target of increasing adult participation in learning (as measured by the NALS series) from 74% in 1997 to 76% by 2002.
- 4 The ELLFS results confirm the NALS findings that the target has been met.
- 5 The ELLFS 2001/02 survey found that overall adult participation in learning was 76.0%, which is consistent with the NALS 2001 and NALS 2002 surveys. Table 1 summarises the findings from recent surveys of learning which used the NALS definition.

Table 1: Comparison of ELLFS and NALS estimates of adult learning participation rates

Survey	Dates of fieldwork	Learning participation rate (%)
NALS	Mar 1997–April 1997	73.8
ELLFS 2000-01	Mar 2000–Feb 2001	74.2
NALS 2001	Jan 2001–May 2001	75.6
ELLFS 2001-02	Mar 2001–Feb 2002	76.0
NALS 2002	Jan 2002–June 2002	76.4

- 6 Even though every effort was taken to replicate the NALS questions in the ELLFS, the nature of the two surveys makes differences inevitable. These include:
- a proxy responses were accepted in the ELLFS but not in NALS;
 - b NALS were conducted entirely by face-to-face interviews whereas a mixture of face-to-face and telephone interviews was used for the ELLFS;

- c the response rate was higher in the ELLFS;
- d to avoid asking ELLFS respondents too many similar questions, those who had done job-related training in the last four weeks were not asked the equivalent but slightly different NALS questions on learning at work; and
- e although both surveys excluded people who were still in CFT education from the participation measure, the ELLFS allowed recent CFT education to be counted as participation in adult learning whereas NALS did not. This accounts for the apparently higher participation among 16–17 year olds in the ELLFS.

Participation and gender

- 7 Participation in any kind of learning among women (73.4%) was less than that of men (78.5%). This is consistent with the previous ELLFS results and NALS data.
- 8 The difference is probably explained by women’s lower participation in the labour market, as this is the main driver for adult learning.
- 9 In terms of taught learning, there is barely any difference in participation between men and women. Table 2 gives adult participation rates by gender.

Table 2: Adult learning percentage participation rates by gender

Any type of learning				Taught learning only		
	2000/01	2001/02	Change	2000/01	2001/02	Change
Male	76.9	78.5	1.6	58.6	59.2	0.6
Female	71.4	73.4	2.0	58.5	59.8	1.3
Total	74.2	76.0	1.8	58.5	59.5	1.0

Participation and age

- 10

As was also found in the previous ELLFS and NALS surveys, overall participation in learning decreased with age.
- 11

The decline was gradual at first: from 92.7% of 16–17 year olds to 76.1% of 50–54 year olds. It then became much steeper: only 68.6% of 55–59 year olds, 54.2% of 60–64 year olds and 42.9% of 65–69 year olds participated in learning.
- 12

This pattern is again probably largely due to the decreased participation of the older groups in the labour market. Compared with the previous year, learning among older age groups increased slightly more than for younger groups.
- 13

Taught learning showed a similar pattern of decline with age to overall learning, but the decline was steeper (Table 3).

Table 3: Adult percentage participation in learning by age group

Any type of learning				Taught learning only		
	2000-01	2001-02	Change	2000-01	2001-02	Change
16–17	91.6	92.7	1.1	87.0	89.1	2.1
18–24	85.9	87.3	1.4	77.4	78.2	0.8
25–29	82.3	83.8	1.5	69.6	70.6	1.0
30–34	81.0	82.3	1.3	66.4	66.9	0.5
35–39	80.2	81.9	1.7	65.3	65.4	0.1
40–44	79.2	80.5	1.3	63.4	64.1	0.7
45–49	77.3	79.4	2.1	60.9	62.5	1.6
50–54	74.5	76.1	1.6	55.8	56.8	1.0
55–59	65.8	68.6	2.8	45.7	47.3	1.6
60–64	51.8	54.2	2.4	31.3	32.9	1.6
65–69	39.7	42.9	3.2	21.3	22.9	1.6
Overall	74.2	76.0	1.8	58.5	59.5	1.0

Annex E: Adult Learning and Social Division: A Persistent Pattern.
The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2002

Measuring Participation

- 1

For over a decade, NIACE has undertaken a series of surveys to measure adult participation in learning. These surveys have not only provided information on the proportion of adults participating in learning and a detailed breakdown of who participates and who does not, but also the comparison of results within the series enables the examination of how patterns of participation change over time.
- 2

Previous surveys were carried out in 1990, 1996 and 1999 and the same introductory question has been used since 1996. This question has been drafted as broadly as possible to include all types of learning in any mode. It is a question asked of individuals themselves, not in terms of levels or providers, and it asks the respondents to answer the question 'which of the following statements most applies to you?'
- 3

The question is:

I would now like to talk about the sort of learning that people do. Learning can mean practising, studying or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full-time or part-time, done at home, at work, or in another place like a college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished.

Which of the following statements most applies to you?

☐ I am currently doing some learning activity;

☐ I have done some learning activity in the last three years;

☐ I have studied or learned but it was over three years ago;

- ☐ I have not studied or learned since I left full-time education; or
- ☐ don't know.

Selected Key Findings

Introduction

- 4

A sample of 4,896 adults aged 17 and over was interviewed between 13 February and 3 March 2002. The survey shows a high degree of stability with both the 1996 and 1999 surveys, and confirms that the UK still faces an enormous task in involving all its people in the learning society, and that the learning divide between the learning rich and the learning poor continues to exist.

Current and recent participation in learning

- 5

Nearly one in four adults (23%) are currently learning, with 42% of adults having participated in some learning activity during the last three years. Over one-third of adults (36%) have not participated in any learning since leaving full-time education.
- 6

The proportion of current or recent learners (42%) has increased by 2% since the 1996 and 1999 surveys, when 40% of adults said that they were current or recent learners.
- 7

For the first time in 2002, men and women are currently participating in equal numbers (23%), although more women (39%) than men (34%) say that they have not done any learning since leaving full-time education.
- 8

Socio-economic class remains a key determinant of adult participation in learning. Three-fifths of all upper- and middle-class respondents (AB) and 54% of CIs (white collar workers) are current or recent learners, compared with 37% of C2s (skilled manual workers) and only 25% of DEs (unskilled workers and people on limited income).

- 9 Adults in socio-economic groups AB are more than twice as likely to be current or recent learners as those in groups DE. A total of 58% of DEs have not participated in any learning since leaving school compared with just 17% of ABs.
- 10 Since 1996, current participation has remained unchanged for all groups, except ABs where small increases in participation were achieved in both 1999 and 2002.
- 11 The workplace is not only a major location for learning, but also provides adults with information about learning opportunities, as well as the finance and motivation to take them up. Over one-half of both full-time (52%) and part-time workers (51%) are current or recent learners, compared with 46% of the unemployed, 31% of those who are not working and just 19% of retired adults.
- 12 The older people are, the less likely they are to participate in learning. Over 70% of those aged 17–24 are current or recent learners, compared with around a half of those aged 25–54. The decline in participation becomes particularly steep for those aged 55 and over, such that only 20% of adults aged 65–74 and 10% of those aged 75 and over are current or recent learners.
- 13 Terminal age of initial education is a key predictor of participation of learning as an adult. The figures show a divide between those who leave school at the earliest opportunity and those who stay on, even for a short while. Only 30% of those who left school at 16 or earlier are current or recent learners. This compares with more than 45% of current or recent learners who stayed on at school post-16, and 65% of those who stayed on post-20.
- 14 Highest participation levels within the English Government Office regions are reported in the South East (48%) and North East (46%). The North West (39%) and the Eastern region (36%) report the lowest levels of participation.

Future intentions to learn

- 15 The survey indicated that 41% of adults say that they are very or fairly likely to take up learning in the next three years, a slight increase from the 1996 and 1999 figure of 38%.
- 16 A further 57% say that they are very or fairly unlikely to take up any learning in the future, 2% less than in 1999.
- 17 Recent experience of learning continues to be a powerful influence on whether adults expect to learn in the future. A total of 78% of current learners report that they are likely to take up learning in the future, compared with only 13% of those who have not participated since leaving full-time education.
- 18 Employment status also influences future intentions to learn. Only one in eight retired people see themselves as future learners, while around half of those in employment say that they are likely to take up learning in the future. Unemployed adults (54%) see themselves as being most likely to take up learning in the next three years.

Subjects of interest to current learners and to those likely to learn in the future

- 19 Current learners are interested in computer studies (15%), foreign languages (10%), creative arts (9%), other professional and vocational qualifications (5%), nursing/health studies (4%), business/management (3%), history/local history (3%) and other leisure subjects (3%).
- 20 Likely future learners show a similar pattern, but more of them are interested in computer studies (24%). There is a very wide range of other subjects which include foreign languages (9%), creative arts (9%), other professional and vocational qualifications (6%), nursing/health studies (5%), business/management (4%), history/local history (4%), music (4%), social sciences (4%), handicrafts/DIY (3%), cookery/catering (3%), engineering (3%),

social work/care (3%), accountancy (3%), maths/science (3%), other academic subjects (3%), and other leisure subjects (4%).

- 21 While these percentages appear small, it is important to remember that 1% of all likely future learners represents 200,000 adults.

Location of learning

- 22 FE colleges continue to be the most reported location of learning at 21%, increasing 1% from 1999. Universities/HE (16%) have just overtaken the workplace (15%) as the next highest location, though much employer-supported learning will take place in other locations, for example, training centres. FE colleges are still the main place of learning for 17–19 year olds (49%), 20 - 24 year olds (22%), and now also 25 - 34 year olds (21%). Universities are the dominant location for 20 - 24 year olds (50%).
- 23 The proportion learning at home is effectively stable between 1996 and 2002 at 14 - 15%, though how they are learning is changing. In 1996 and 1999, 10% said they were learning informally from a book, with 5% learning from structured open learning and 1% from TV or radio. In 2002, 6% learning from a book, 6% from a computer, CD-Rom or the Internet and 3% from structured open learning.
- 24 The new ICT-equipped local learning centres, such as learndirect, register an encouraging 2% already, with 3% among 35 - 44 year olds.
- 25 In terms of widening participation, it is FE providers that currently reaches more people in the C2 (24%) and DE (31%) classes. They also provide more rural dwellers (24%). The workplace plays a vital role in reaching skilled manual workers, 19% of whom are learning in the workplace. Of the respondents giving work-related reasons for their study, 22% are learning in the workplace.

Qualifications

- 26 Two-thirds of current or recent learners are aiming for a qualification, an increase of 2% since 1999.
- 27 Over 90% of 17–24 year olds are aiming for a qualification. The proportion drops to 75% among 25–34 year olds and then continues to decline steadily, though as many as 40% of 55–64 year olds and 33% of 65–74 year olds are still interested in a qualification.
- 28 Two-thirds of both men and women are aiming for a qualification (66%), although more men than woman report studying for a degree (14% compared with 10%) and for level 4/5 qualifications more generally (30% compared with 28%).
- 29 Finally, 28% of respondents do not have any qualifications at all, roughly the same proportion as in 1996 and 1999.

Motivations for, and attitudes to, learning

- 30 Previous studies have shown that when asked, over 90% of adults say that they believe 'learning is something people do throughout their lives'. Yet this high level of appreciation of learning sits uncomfortably alongside a participation rate which shows that one in four of the population still believe that learning is not for them. Adults are rarely motivated to learn by just a single factor, but will often only begin learning when a range of factors come together. For example, two-thirds of those who identified education or progression reasons for starting learning also cited personal development and work-related reasons.

- 31 When questioned on why they were learning their chosen subject, 62% of respondents cited personal development reasons, 53% work-related reasons, and 27% cited education or progression reasons. Some 6% said that participation in their main learning activity was not really their choice.
- 32 The most frequently cited individual reasons for learning their main subject were: 'I am interested in the subject or for personal interest' (34%), and 'I enjoy learning or it gives me pleasure' (31%). Around a quarter of respondents mentioned 'to help in my current job' (26%), 'to develop myself as a person' (25%), and 'to get a recognised qualification' (24%).
- 33 A majority (81%) of adults believe that aside from the instrumental benefits that it can bring, 'learning is enjoyable for its own sake'.
- 34 Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) say that they are 'confident about learning new skills'. This rises to 92% of current learners but is down to 55% among those who have not engaged in any learning since leaving full-time education.
- 35 The continuing decline in the proportion of adults 'agreeing that there is not enough help and advice available about the different sorts of learning people can do' is encouraging. This figure fell from 47% in 1996, to 40% in 1999 and is now down to 37% in 2002.
- 36 On the negative side, 47% of respondents 'don't see why they should pay for learning that is to do with their job or career', while 32% believe that they 'should not be expected to learn new skills for their careers in their own time'. Adults who have not participated in any learning since leaving full-time education are most likely to hold these views.

Funding of learning

- 37 The proportion of learners who do not have to pay any fees has risen slightly from 26% in 1999 to 28% in 2002. A third of learners pay their own fees, with an additional 6% being helped by family members, twice the figure from 1999.
- 38 Employer support for outside fees is stronger for full-time workers (24%) than for part-time workers (13%), although the gap has been reduced by 5% since 1999.
- 39 Three times as many full-time (12%) as part-time (4%) workers benefit from employer-funded provision of learning.
- 40 One-half of all learners, both men and women, say that their learning has not resulted in any additional costs. This figure represents an increase of seven percentage points since 1999.
- 41 The two most significant additional costs are travel costs (31%) and costs of equipment (28%).

Annex F: Learning Works – Widening Participation in Further Education (Kennedy Report, 1997)

Agenda for Change

- Launch government campaign 'Learning into the New Millennium: The Creation of a Learning Nation'.
- Dedicate lottery funding to launch the 'Learning into the New Millennium' initiative.
- Prioritise widening participation in the post-16 education agenda.
- Redistribute public resources towards those with less success in earlier learning, moving towards equity of funding in post-16 education.
- Establish a lifetime entitlement to education up to level 3, which is free for young people and those who are socially and economically deprived.
- Create a national network of strategic partnerships to identify local need, stimulate demand, respond creatively and promote learning.
- Encourage employers to provide learning centres linked to the University for Industry, large firms would have to have their own, small firms would need to work together or with larger firms.
- Reform the [FEFC's] funding mechanism to recognise levels of previous achievement and social and economic deprivation.
- Create an expanded [FEFC] 'Access and Childcare Fund'.
- Harness new technology for learning.
- Launch a credit accumulation system, to be operative within five years.
- Create new 'Pathways to Learning' – a unitised system for recognised achievement.
- Take learning to the learner.
- Reform financial support to students, including the benefit system in the interests of equity and promoting 'Welfare to Work through Learning'.
- Launch a 'Charter for Learning'.
- Create a 'Learning Regeneration Fund' at regional and sub-regional level.
- Establish a legal duty upon television to educate.
- Set new national learning targets and local targets for participation.

Annex G: LSC Strategic Objectives for Workforce Development

LSC Vision

- 1 The LSC's vision is that by 2010, young people and adults will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.
- 2 Our corporate objectives to 2004 are to:
 - extend participation in education, learning and training;
 - increase engagement of employers in workforce development;
 - raise achievement of young people and adults; and
 - raise the quality of education and training and user satisfaction.
- 3 Workforce development is at the heart of this vision. It must be a key driver for all LSC-funded provision and activity if we are to achieve our vision, objectives and targets. The LSC intends to be bold and radical in thinking about workforce development, recognising within this the importance of consistent delivery across all the key public agencies contributing to workforce development, and the need to target resources where they have most impact.
- 4 The LSC's strategic objectives for workforce development are to:
 - raise informed demand for employment-related skills among individuals and employers;
 - support improvements to the responsiveness and flexibility of the supply side; and
 - contribute to the development of an underpinning framework of better skills and labour market intelligence, responsive vocational qualifications and improved links to the wider educational agenda.

Measuring Progress

- 5 As well as contributing towards its corporate targets, it is important that the LSC develops an outcomes-based approach to measuring progress in workforce development. This strategy will adopt a range of measures of success, based on the following:
 - contribution to the LSC's targets for adult participation, basic skills, attainment at levels 2 and 3, as set out in the LSC Corporate Plan for 2001, and taking into account the Government's further commitments in the Spending Review;
 - interim measures of success to support local planning and evaluation for 2002 to 2005;
 - a new measure, and ultimately a target, for the level of engagement in workforce development amongst employers – as part of work to develop an outcomes-based approach to measuring success;
 - evaluation of work across our programme of sectoral and structural pilot activity; and
 - contribution to the success of Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESAs), and evaluation of the Spending Review regional pilots pooling LSC and RDA funds for adult learning.
- 6 The LSC Workforce Development Strategy will be reviewed annually and rolled forward, in line with the LSC Corporate Plan. In reviewing the strategy, the LSC will take account of progress in line with its measures of success, but also emerging government policy and local delivery models, integrating innovation and best practice.

Objective 1

- 7 The LSC's first objective is to raise informed demand for employment-related skills among individuals and employers.

- 8 In order to stimulate employer demand for workforce development, the LSC will:
 - promote investment in skills as a business solution and 'meet employers in their world';
 - maximise the role of management and leadership in creating demand for workforce development in line with the Government's strategy for management and leadership;
 - co-ordinate messages about workforce development to employers working with government agencies and key stakeholders;
 - support the provision of relevant information and advice to employers;
 - build the capacity of publicly funded workforce development advisors to work with employers;
 - promote best practice and support the development of local, regional and sectoral employer networks;
 - promote business and organisational effectiveness, particularly in small and medium-sized organisations, working with frameworks such as the Investor in People standard, supported by Laurel Online, and the offer available to employers through the Small Firms Initiative;
 - support entrepreneurship, particularly in deprived areas, by building on successful initiatives such as the New Entrepreneur Scholarship fund; and
 - support the development of mechanisms designed to overcome financial barriers inhibiting employer investment in workforce development, managing employer training pilots and considering mechanisms such as tax credits, transferable training loans and approaches that encourage employers to engage with providers.

- 9 In order to stimulate individual demand for workforce development, the LSC will:
 - develop proposals for a coherent and integrated national information, advice and guidance (IAG) service for adults by 2003, working with Ufi/learn direct and IAG Partnerships;
 - implement a national framework to support local arrangements between Jobcentre Plus, (IAG) Partnerships and local LSCs, and ensure links with the Connexions Service;
 - support the role of Union Learning Representatives and Learning Advisors in the workplace;
 - ensure that IAG Partnerships have access to high-quality labour market and skills intelligence;
 - support the development of employer-provided IAG, working with the DfES, the Guidance Council and IAG Partnerships and, where appropriate, roll out the Matrix quality standard with employers from March 2003;
 - develop inclusion strategies to underpin IAG for individuals in the workplace;
 - increase the purchasing power of individuals by working with the Government to implement the Individual Learning Account successor scheme, and alongside this by testing a variety of real loan account mechanisms to support skills development;
 - develop positive action strategies with disengaged or under-represented groups to ensure equality of opportunity and meet skills shortages; and
 - support access to learning for disadvantaged individuals and/or groups.

Objective 2

10 The LSC's second objective is to support improvements to the responsiveness and flexibility of the supply side.

11 In order to support the development of responsive supply which meets the needs of the demand side, the LSC will support the increased flexibility of funding arrangements by:

- working with the DfES to review the systems of funding for adult learning;
- introducing greater flexibility into local LSC spending, enabling intelligent purchasing;
- piloting regional pooling of LSC and RDA budgets for adult skills; and
- developing and testing mechanisms that promote innovation and incentivise providers to develop a responsive workforce development offer.

12 The LSC will raise the quality of workforce development provision by:

- implementing provider performance indicators and benchmarks for work-based learning;
- disseminating good practice in workforce development provision amongst providers;
- considering mechanisms to present information on quality from the Common Inspection Framework to individuals and employers;
- supporting the skills of teachers and trainers using Standards Funds across all sectors of LSC-funded provision including work-based learning, and implement a standards framework for teachers and trainers;
- supporting the quality of literacy, numeracy and language skills provision delivered in the workplace and for the workforce;
- working with the Government and providers to develop a management and leadership college for the post-16 sector, to open in 2003;

- developing approaches to support the quality of employer-led provision for employees; and
- building on the outcomes of LSC strategic area reviews as a means of engaging new providers where provision does not meet workforce development needs.

13 The LSC will build the capacity, flexibility and relevance of workforce development provision by:

- integrating the delivery of skills and business support for SMEs and entrepreneurs and improving the capacity of publicly funded workforce development advisors to broker access to and deliver a wide workforce development portfolio;
- supporting the development of flexible provision and delivery mechanisms which meet employer needs;
- extending the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) programme beyond the FE college sector to non-FE colleges and vocational training centres in companies;
- maximising the contribution of e-learning to workforce development working with Ufi/learn direct and other key partners;
- implementing the recommendations of Get on with IT, the Post-16 e-Learning Strategy Task Force Report; the LSC's Distributed and Electronic Learning Group Report, and Success for All; and
- facilitating links between employers, teachers and trainers.

Objective 3

14 The LSC's third objective is to contribute to the development of an underpinning framework of better skills and labour market intelligence, responsive vocational qualifications and improved links to the wider educational agenda.

15 In order to support the development of a better framework the LSC will improve the quality and use of skills and labour market intelligence by:

- implementing the LSC research strategy in the context of the Government's partnership agreement on Skills and Economic Intelligence;
- participating in the development and implementation of the skills academy to support the capacity of the skills research community;
- commissioning an annual skills needs assessment to support local, national and partner planning and funding; and
- disseminating key skills research findings and ensuring labour market intelligence is utilised by key stakeholders.

16 The LSC will support the development of a more flexible and responsive qualifications system by:

- working with the DfES, Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) in the context of the QCA Quinquennial Review to develop the vocational qualification system to improve responsiveness to both employer and individual needs;
- working with QCA and SSDA to further develop a comprehensive, flexible, coherent National Qualifications Framework which embraces the best of vendor awards, considering pilot work in sectors where vendor awards have an important role in the qualifications market;
- supporting the QCA in developing a more flexible qualifications framework which enables unit achievement;
- undertaking feasibility work to consider how a national credit-based system could be implemented;

- developing design principles to fund employer training schemes which have been approved by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), rolling out in applicable sectors in 2003;

- piloting and evaluating adult apprenticeship programmes in targeted sectors or localities; and
- undertaking a programme of 18-month sector pilots designed to test key propositions relating to the nature, delivery and funding of the qualifications framework and its fit with the needs of employers.

17 The LSC will improve links to the wider educational policy agenda by:

- supporting links and facilitating collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other training providers;
- leading on the implementation of recommendations of the report of the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee on the new generation of Modern Apprenticeships;
- supporting links between IAG Partnerships and Connexions Partnerships;
- supporting the Government's 50% participation target for HE, implementing Partnership for Progression with HEFCE;
- working with HE institutions to support the increased vocational relevance of HE awards;
- developing links between CoVEs and National Technology Institutes;
- developing collaborative approaches to workforce development policy working with HE institutions and the DfES;
- supporting the Government's Skills for Life agenda by incorporating literacy, language and numeracy skills training up to level 2; and
- producing a national strategy and delivery plan to widen adult participation across all sectors of post-16 education and training.

Annex H: Widening Adult Participation: Ways to Extend Good Practice. Research Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

- 1 The report by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), Widening Adult Participation: Ways to extend good practice summarises research conducted for the LSC in the period October 2001 to March 2002, as part of the LSC's joint review with the DfES, and notes further work in progress. It takes a fresh look at progress in widening adult participation in FE colleges and at what can be done to extend good practice.
- 2 Following the ministerial response to the joint review, steps are being taken to develop a national strategy to renew and increase successful efforts to widen adult participation across the entire learning and skills sector. The LSDA's findings and recommendations will be useful to those engaged in developing and implementing the strategy in the FE college sector.
- 3 The research by the LSDA has two strands:
 - identifying good practice in widening adult participation in FE colleges; and
 - identifying the prospects for increasing participation in the sector in future.
- 4 In addition, the LSDA has worked closely with the LSC to review the arrangements for funding disadvantaged learners.
- 5 This summary deals mainly with the first research strand.
- 6 On the second strand, the LSDA has examined whether significant growth is likely in the FE sector on the basis of current patterns of activity. It concludes that new learners are unlikely to be attracted by 'more of the same' provision. New approaches are needed, and there are good grounds for believing that these approaches will be more costly.

The LSDA is currently working with the LSC and the DfES to develop more accurate estimates of the potential for growth in adult participation.

- 7 The LSC's National Rates Advisory Group (NRAG) has commissioned new research on the extra costs of making appropriate provision for disadvantaged learners. The LSDA is assisting by preparing a synthesis of all relevant research on this topic. An overview of the issues is given under 'A favourable funding environment'.

Features of Success

- 8 Our findings are based on a substantial literature review, statistical analysis and case studies of 17 FE and sixth form colleges. An important criterion for selecting the case-study colleges was that they should show evidence of growth and/or high numbers of adult learners in categories associated with widening participation. We then asked college staff to assist us, based on their experience, to identify the critical features of success.
- 9 Examples of good practice were present in all 17 colleges visited. Several have developed their mission to widen participation for adults with particular energy and commitment, combined with well-embedded and comprehensive procedures. A striking finding is the way that some colleges marry great warmth and enthusiasm for widening participation for adults with a clear business approach that is entrepreneurial when needed. Their approach is well planned and thorough.
- 10 Our findings draw particular attention to seven features.
- 11 The first feature is positioning widening participation as an integral part of the college's business, with commitment at all levels. Key aspects are:
 - setting out goals, objectives and expectations, backed by an implementation plan;
 - securing the right staff and staffing profile through appointments and staff development;
 - creating a staff structure that reflects the importance of widening participation for adults; and
 - ensuring adequate investment.

- 12 The second feature is a sound, business-like approach to seeking and deploying resources for widening participation for adults. Key aspects are:
 - a business plan for growth in widening participation;
 - creativity in securing and deploying resources;
 - the ability to take risks, exploit opportunities and invest appropriately;
 - ensuring that key widening participation staff are in a position to influence budgets;
 - realistic identification of markets; and
 - linking the use of additional funding streams to the main purposes of the college, and using this and other means to encourage transfer of innovation to the 'mainstream'.

- 13 The third feature is the constant search for new ways to widen adult participation and persistence by staff in efforts to reach the 'hard to reach'. Key aspects are:
 - changing the curriculum offer in response to the needs of learners or potential learners; and
 - adapting provision throughout the college (curriculum, staffing, accommodation) in line with expectations for learners' progression.

- 14 The fourth feature is continuous engagement with the community at all levels in the college and in all parts of the community. Key aspects are:
 - integrating community liaison and outreach staff into mainstream staffing structures;
 - active involvement with community organisations and partnerships; energetic networking and 'people to people' contacts;
 - partnership with other local learning providers to develop coherent provision and pathways for learners;
 - community profiling to establish learning needs;
 - negotiation of learning provision through consultation with local groups; and
 - judicious and innovative use of, and collaboration with, resources in the community.

- 15 The fifth feature is a rigorous approach to quality assurance. Key aspects are:
 - applying the same quality-assurance processes to widening participation for adults as to other areas of college provision;
 - learner feedback is regularly sought and acted on; and
 - high expectations of learner achievement: progress in recruitment, retention and achievement for target groups is reviewed systematically and followed by practical action.

- 16 The sixth feature is thoroughness in curriculum design and teaching and learning strategies, ensuring that widening participation objectives are reflected and reinforced throughout the college. Key aspects are:
 - curriculum design and development are kept under continuous review;

- curricula are designed to be attractive, well matched to community needs and likely to recruit: market research plays a key role;
 - learning pathways are well mapped, giving learners an entitlement to progression and support and showing clearly how they can take advantage of this; and
 - all staff are encouraged to apply good inclusive learning strategies.
- 17 The seventh feature is that support for learners is treated as an entitlement, including practical and financial support as well as additional help with learning. Key aspects are:
- initial assessment and initial and continuing guidance for all learners;
 - an individual learning plan for each learner; and
 - strong tutorial systems.
- 18 These seven features represent a new slant on the ingredients needed for effective practice in widening participation for adults. We based our initial assessment of what constitutes good practice on the good practice guide issued following the Kennedy Report and used this as a research tool.
- 19 Although the case-study colleges were broadly in agreement with this assessment, the study did not capture adequately what the colleges believe to be the key ingredients of success. In other words, it reflected good practice in a general way without pinpointing what mattered most of all in widening participation.
- 20 In the five years since the Kennedy Committee reported, it is likely that at least some of the practices it recommended have been widely adopted by colleges, though Inspectorate reports point to variable effectiveness. The Kennedy guidelines therefore remain a valid guide to the processes needed to help widen

participation. Our research evidence suggests that for colleges with a serious mission to widen participation for adults, a fresh definition of successful practice may now be appropriate. What our report offers is therefore not a replacement for the Kennedy characteristics, but a new perspective that builds on the recommended practice and throws some aspects into sharper relief.

21 The LSDA's full research report contains:

- a commentary designed to clarify and illustrate the characteristics of successful practice;
- statistics on the case-study colleges;
- examples of practice drawn from the case-studies;
- a literature review by Deirdre Macleod of Critical Thinking; and
- further details about how the study was conducted.

Extending Good Practice Nationwide: Recommendations

22 The case-study colleges welcomed the recognition that the study has implicitly given to their work. They particularly appreciated the concern to find out about the 'whole picture' rather than investigating discrete elements of a college's widening participation work. The prospect of a higher national profile for widening participation was viewed positively.

A National Strategy for Quality Improvement and Development

23 Based on our findings, we recommend a national strategy for quality improvement and development to improve the capacity of colleges to widen adult participation. Above all, the focus should be on colleges' skills and strategies to improve learners' success. This will, therefore, include not only good practice

in recruiting adult learners, but also creative ways to improve retention, achievement and progression.

24 The proposed strategy goes beyond the dissemination of information about the characteristics of good practice. The suggested approach is to prepare an 'audit and business development tool' based on the seven features of success outlined above. Expert external advisors would use the audit tool as part of a quality improvement and development process, involving visits to FE colleges to help develop their widening participation strategies.

Phases of Development

- 25 Two messages from the study may help shape the way that resources for quality improvement are focused and strategies designed.
- 26 Firstly, colleges' widening participation activities tend to follow an evolutionary pattern, from a largely reactive response to community needs to a much more proactive stance involving the re-shaping of mainstream provision and structures. The stage a college has reached on this journey will influence the nature and extent of external advice and support required.
- 27 The second message is that there is differentiation between colleges in the degree of emphasis given to widening participation for adults in colleges' missions and business focus. For some, widening adult participation constitutes their core business, while for others it is an important activity but not central to their main work.

28 For example, colleges in the first category may have a large amount of provision at or below level 1, but a smaller volume at level 3. In colleges where widening adult participation is important but not core business, this picture may be reversed, with the strongest emphasis placed on work at level 3. In productive local partnerships, colleges in the second group

might see their contribution to widening participation as offering a progression route for adults who have entered further education through partner colleges or other learning providers. In a third group of colleges, such as sixth form colleges with little adult provision, widening adult participation will remain marginal to their business.

Taking a Broad View of Learning Provision

- 29 A variety of factors influence whether widening participation for adults is seen as core business, and may affect the likelihood of successful growth in future.
- 30 Some of these factors may be outside a college's control, such as the presence of other local learning providers already heavily engaged in widening participation for adults. This indicates the need for a broader view, taking account of the activities of a range of providers in a given location and how they collaborate and complement one another in helping adults to progress.
- 31 As part of their concern to close equality gaps in access to learning and employment, local LSCs will wish to treat widening participation for adults as a high priority and ensure that appropriate provision is made across institutions for all learners and potential learners.

Where to Target Effort

32 To achieve rapid progress in meeting government targets for growth, our findings suggest that it may be helpful to focus a national quality improvement strategy, firstly, on colleges for whom widening participation for adults is core business.

- 33 The LSC may wish to consider ways to assist or incentivise such colleges to increase their numbers of adult learners from widening participation groups in a managed way. The DfES and the LSC may also wish to support them to share their practice with other colleges.
- 34 And, secondly, colleges for whom widening adult participation is an important activity, but not core business. Such colleges may be assisted to increase their focus on this type of work, to the extent that this does not divert resources from their core business.
- 35 For colleges that have not yet embraced the widening participation agenda, the seven features of practice offer a useful starting point. In all cases – including those where widening adult participation is viewed as central to the college’s business – the quality improvement advice would be aimed at continuing to improve practice and develop new, imaginative and more effective ways of working.

A Favourable Funding Environment

- 36 Any real growth in learner numbers, beyond the volume of provision already delivered in FE colleges, can be expected to cost significantly more than the current unit price, as additional learners are likely to be harder to reach and more expensive to support. We therefore stress the need for a favourable funding environment to support further widening of adult participation. This includes resources to support the:
- additional costs incurred by colleges in reaching out to engage new learners: this does not always result in a rapid increase in enrolments, so a formula based on learner numbers may not be the most appropriate approach for this element;

- additional costs of financial support for learners from traditionally excluded groups who will have above-average needs for assistance with the costs of childcare and transport;
 - additional costs of learning support to provide extra assistance with basic skills and to help overcome any learning difficulties;
 - development of new provision, which needs to be tailored to the needs of specific groups; and
 - staff development activity to embed a ‘whole college’ approach to widening participation policies and practices.
- 37 Some of the extra costs need to be met on a continuing basis by the funding factor for disadvantage. Some, such as a national programme of staff development activity to help spread good practice, may be shorter term.

Annex I: Response to Consultation

Learning and Skills Council, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT. Fax 024 7682 3250
Email: lynn.macqueen@lsc.gov.uk
(Reference: Consultation on the National Strategy for Widening Adult Participation, Successful Participation for All).
Please photocopy, complete and return this pro forma to the address above for the attention of Lynn Macqueen, Adult Learning Division by **9 May 2003** at the latest. Early responses would be greatly appreciated.

Name of institution (please print) _____

Contact officer for queries _____

Tel _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Local LSC area _____

Comments are invited on the following consultation issues

- 1 Please comment on the extent to which the Strategy identifies the key motivating factors for widening adult participation. Do you regard any of these factors as being more significant than others?

Comments _____

- 2 Please comment on the extent to which the Strategy identifies the key barriers to widening adult participation. Do you regard any of these barriers as being more significant than others?

Comments _____

3 Do you consider that the actions proposed for a Partnership Approach are appropriate and adequate for the issues identified? Please suggest any further areas for action.

Comments _____

4 Do you consider that the actions proposed for Appropriate Provision are appropriate and adequate? Please suggest any further areas for action.

Comments _____

5 Do you consider that the actions proposed for Targets and Research are appropriate and adequate? Please suggest any further areas for action.

Comments _____

6 Do you consider that the actions proposed for Equality and Access are appropriate and adequate? Please suggest any further areas for action.

Comments _____

7 Do you consider that the actions proposed for Funding are appropriate and adequate? Please suggest any further areas for action.

Comments _____

8 Do you consider any of the proposed actions (or sets of actions) listed under the five main headings to be a higher priority than the others?

Comments _____

Other Comments _____

Annex J: Bibliography

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