

Learning and Skills Council
Corporate Plan to 2005
Championing the Power of Learning



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Foreword by the Chairman

I am delighted to present the Learning and Skills Council's second Corporate Plan, which builds on, and takes forward, much of what was set out in the Strategic Framework to 2004. It sets out the Council's position in the context of a developing policy framework and an exciting and evolving agenda for education and skills.

Our mission, to raise levels of skills, knowledge and understanding for all adults and young people, to world-class standards, is at the heart of all we do. We have an ambitious programme to change our national learning culture and drive up the quality and relevance of the learning we fund.

We are at a key stage in the Council's development. We have had many successes in our first year, not least in ensuring a smooth transition to a new organisation, and I want to record my gratitude for the tremendous efforts and commitment of national and local Council members, our staff and partners in a host of different roles. There is still much to do, as we all know.

I am encouraged by the Government's growing confidence in the Council. We will play a major part in developing the strategy for skills and learning *Success for All – Reforming Further Education and Training* announced in June 2002. We are also crucial to the delivery of two of the Government's key targets – reducing the number of adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties, and increasing participation of those aged 18-30 in

higher education. We have been given new responsibilities for sixth forms; aspects of 14-16 education; workforce development; area reviews and equality.

I am sure we have the foundations in place for delivering our vision for 2010. We will be a nation where every citizen has the opportunity to acquire the world-class skills and qualities needed for successful careers, sustained employment and active participation in their local communities. We are convinced that this is essential and our objectives are to raise the participation and achievements of young people and adults. Engaging employers in learning and improving the quality and user satisfaction with funded learning underpins everything we do. We have begun to form a unified learning and skills community focused on achieving our vision for 2010.

The LSC is committed to becoming an exemplary learning organisation driven by the strategic needs of learners and employers. Our unique organisation with a strong national office and powerful local Councils gives us the strength and flexibility to deliver nationally by responding to local economic and social

priorities. The local strategic plans and targets approved earlier in the year, which have informed the preparation of this plan, give us clear accountability lines for delivering our targets to 2004.

The strategies in this plan set the course well beyond the 2004 targets. Once the Government has announced in detail its budgetary priorities for the next three years, we will issue a supplement with our spending plans and national targets beyond 2004. This Corporate Plan and the new targets will be the starting points for updating local strategies.

This plan challenges individuals, employers and local communities to transform the prospects of all 50 million people living in England. We welcome your support in meeting this challenge.

Bryan K Sanderson
Chairman, January 2003

Section One

Introduction

The Corporate Plan is divided into five sections. In this Section One, we set out our mission, vision, key objectives and current interim targets in the context of economic and social developments and the growing importance of the Government's regional agenda. We review progress towards the achievement of our targets, and consider how our future targets will contribute to the Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets set by the Treasury for the DfES this summer.

In Section Two, we describe the learning and skills community we need to develop to support the delivery of our mission, and examine how we can bring such a community into being using our strategic levers.

Section Three focuses on important issues relating to equal opportunities and the removal of barriers to learning.

In Section Four, we conclude our analysis and review by making firm commitments to learners, employers, communities, colleges and providers.

Section Five details the structure and membership of the national Council and its main committees; outlines the functions of national office; lists our national and executive directors, and describes the respective roles of the national and local councils. It also reaffirms our intention to work closely with key partners.

In the foreword to the 1998 White Paper *The Learning Age*, David Blunkett articulated the power of learning:

'As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. Learning enables people to play a full part in their community. It strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation. It helps us fulfil our potential and opens the doors to a love of music, art and literature. That is why we value learning for its own sake as well as the equality of opportunity it brings.'

The LSC shares this passionate belief that learning changes lives. It will take time to achieve everything to which the Council aspires. Much has been achieved in our first year, and much still remains to be done. This plan sets out our most urgent priorities for 2004 and our strategy for delivering the goals that we must achieve by the end of the decade.

Our first Corporate Plan set the national framework within which each local Council has developed its own strategic plan, tailored to its own individual circumstances and priorities. Local Councils have consulted extensively with partners and stakeholders and, as a result, their plans enjoy the full support of their local and regional partners. These plans have played an important role in helping to shape this Corporate Plan, and this flow of information and influence

is critical to the organisation's ability to deliver. The plans have also provided a sound basis for taking forward regional, local and neighbourhood work with key partners such as Regional Development Agencies, local authorities, Connexions and Neighbourhood Renewal local strategic partnerships.

We have taken forward important work on workforce development, modern apprenticeships, widening participation, quality and equality. We have also made stronger links with Higher Education (HE) in order to contribute to the Government's target for 2010 of 50% participation in HE for 18 to 30 year olds. This Corporate Plan reflects this work and concentrates on how we are going to reach the vision for 2010 set out last year.

Our strategy strives to capture the imagination, energy and commitment of learners, prospective learners, employers and communities across England. Our focus is on changing the learning and skills community so employers no longer face skill gaps and shortages, and individuals are motivated to learn and to develop the generic and technical skills they need for success.

In the next Corporate Plan we will set out our view of the mix and levels of skills needed to become world-class by 2010.

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Context

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.

The LSC, which was set up in response to these issues, recognises that alongside this challenge there is also real opportunity. New technology can help us to stimulate greater demand for learning among those who do not currently participate at all, and then to meet that demand. It can be used to open up access to learning, improve quality and reduce costs. Alongside excellent teaching, e-learning can facilitate the fundamental revolution we seek; the development of a learning and skills community.

In such a community, individuals, their employers and the state will all contribute towards, and benefit from, much higher levels of engagement in learning, matching the best in the world. We are performing well in certain areas, for example, we have many more adults participating in full or part-time education than many of our competitors. In other areas, we fall far below the average of OECD countries. For example, only Mexico and Turkey have fewer 16-18 year olds in education and training than we do (see Annex A). Improving our relative position will make us a more prosperous society, but there are wider dimensions too.

While there has been a sharp improvement in recent years against our own previous best, the available evidence suggests that qualification and skills levels here still lag behind those of key comparators such as the United States, Germany and Japan. If, by 2010, this

country is to be among the top ten world leaders in education, training and lifelong learning, we must measure best practice elsewhere, benchmark it against our own current performance and establish the framework to deliver excellence consistently and over a sustained period.

One of our major challenges remains to convince that large group of adults who have barely participated in learning since leaving school of the return that an investment in their own skills would bring. Likewise to convince those 25% of young people, who give up on learning at age 16-18, that learning pays. We need to encourage these people to believe that the attainment of the right knowledge and skills really does lead to employment and progression, as well as personal fulfilment. If we can do this, we will achieve our aspiration of world-class levels of knowledge and skills by the end of the decade, enhancing our national competitiveness.

One of our specific tasks has been to update the analysis set out in the reports of the National Skills Task Force between 1998 and 2000. Towards the end of 2001 the first update was published as *Skills in England*. This confirmed that the Task Force's analysis continues to provide the best starting point for our strategy. (Annex B summarises the main conclusions from *Skills in England*.)

Skills in England stressed that regional and local differences were important, and the LSC shares this view. The strength of

Case Study:**Neighbourhood Renewal in Greater Merseyside**

Greater Merseyside LSC covers six local authority districts. All six are in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal funding, and approximately 50% of the sub-regional population live in wards falling into the 10% most deprived in England. As part of its Local Strategic Plan, Greater Merseyside LSC has committed to targets for the participation in learning of young people and adults from these wards. To deliver on this commitment, Greater Merseyside LSC is putting in place a comprehensive range of action at community level.

Empowering the Community

In April 2003, Greater Merseyside LSC in partnership with up to 38 of Merseyside's most deprived neighbourhoods, will establish a ground-breaking programme of community-led procurement. This multi-million European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed programme for lifelong learning and social inclusion will put purchasing power directly into the hands of neighbourhood level partnerships.

Developing the Provider Base

In August 2002, Greater Merseyside LSC launched a major programme of supplier development targeting the voluntary and community sectors. The programme works with providers from these sectors to equip them with the capacity to deliver high quality learning in the area's most deprived communities.

Linking Need to Opportunity

Merseyside has six 'Strategic Investment Areas'. These areas are in receipt of significant levels of support from the North West Development Agency and the European Objective 1 programme. Development in these areas will lead to major employment growth in key sectors. In April 2003, Greater Merseyside LSC will launch a programme of Adult Apprenticeships. This programme will equip people from the most deprived neighbourhoods to access these new employment opportunities.

Supporting Community-led Initiatives

The Toxteth Community College was established to further the advancement of education and skills for post-16 youths and adults from socially deprived ethnic minority groups in the inner city areas of Liverpool and Merseyside as a whole. The college attracts local young people into learning opportunities that they may not have otherwise accessed. The college particularly provides skills and confidence in information and communication technologies for post-16 year olds from local ethnic minority communities.

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our local Council network lies in its diversity and its ability to respond to local, sub-regional and regional needs. Labour market needs vary greatly across the country, and the network of local Councils must remain flexible and responsive to local challenges and priorities.

The Government has asked regional development agencies to lead on drawing up and implementing Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA), in close collaboration with local LSCs and other partners. We are keen to play our part in this work, which allows us to focus sharply on local and sub-regional needs, as part of a collaborative effort.

As much as employers' and learners' needs vary from one local Council area to another, so do the needs of employers and learners within the Council areas. The Government has asked the LSC to work with the local strategic partnerships set up under the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative. This will allow us to work closely with others to respond to the particular needs of wards or neighbourhoods, and to help overcome the detrimental effects on individuals and communities arising from social exclusion. Effective action on these fronts adds up to an ambitious programme to change our whole national approach to learning. The creation of a learning nation is a key challenge for individuals, employers and for everyone in the learning and skills community.

Remit

The White Paper *Learning to Succeed*, together with the subsequent Prospectus, set out the background and rationale for the creation of the Learning and Skills Council. The Secretary of State's remit letter of November 2000 gave us a focus for our work in our first few years of existence and set out our key tasks. These are to:

- raise participation and achievement in young people;
- increase demand for learning by adults and equalise opportunities through better access to learning;
- engage employers in improving skills for employability and national competitiveness;
- raise the quality of education and training delivery; and
- improve effectiveness and efficiency.

This wide remit enables us to provide effective co-ordination and strategic planning at national, regional, sectoral and local levels. Our statutory duty to encourage participation in education and training places the individual learner, for the first time, at the heart of the system. At the same time, our statutory duty to encourage employer participation in the provision of that education and training ensures that the skill needs of the economy and society will be fully met.

Mission, Vision and Key Objectives

Our mission and vision, which lies at the heart of everything we do, is reaffirmed below.

- **Our mission is to raise participation and attainment through high-quality education and training that puts learners first.**
- **Our vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.**

Our key objectives remain to:

- **extend participation in education, learning and training;**
- **increase the engagement of employers in workforce development;**
- **raise the achievement of young people;**
- **raise the achievement of adults; and**
- **raise quality and learner satisfaction.**

Targets

Review of the five current interim targets to 2004

To help us make a reality of our vision, last year we identified some clearly defined targets to serve as the principal benchmarks for progress to 2004. These are published in the 2001-04 Corporate Plan as interim targets, and are:

- 80% of 16 to 18 year olds to be in structured learning (2000: 75%);
- 85% at level 2 by age 19 (2000: 75%);
- 55% at level 3 by age 19 (2000: 51%);
- raise the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults; and
- 52% of adults at level 3 (2000: 47%).

We also identified areas where additional targets should be developed, including employer engagement in workforce development and quality of provision. We have made further progress in these areas, which are discussed in more detail at the end of this section. Meanwhile the existing interim targets for 2004 have been disaggregated down to local level, to help shape the local targets within each local Council's strategic plan. The local targets were the subject of wide consultation at local level, both in relation to their contribution to the national targets and their impact on local and regional needs and priorities. The position for each local LSC is very different, as is illustrated by the chart in Annex C.

The setting and measurement of targets at a local level has never been attempted before on such a scale and has not been without its problems. For example, there are different systems for measuring success at national and local level which draw on different data sources. Local data is not always compatible with data from national sources, and vice versa.

We are developing our own performance measurement system to be applied uniformly across the organisation. We aim to move towards a system predominantly based on our own administrative data sources complemented, for example, by more appropriate LSC-sponsored surveys. We are developing, with the DfES, the inspectorates and other key partners, consistent measures of success for learners across different types of provision.

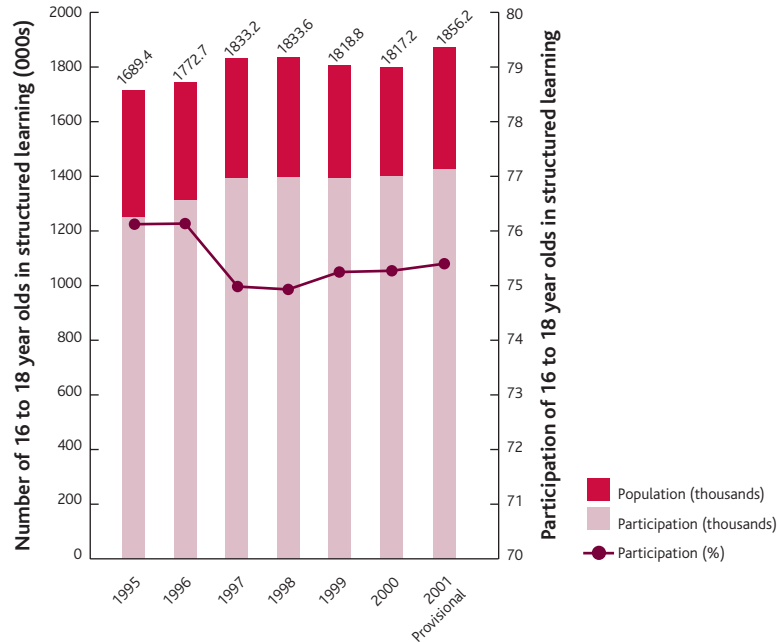


Chart 1:
Percentage of 16 to 18 year olds in structured learning – target 80%
 Source: Statistical First Release 16/2002

Participation by young people

Our first task, which is a statutory duty, is to drive up participation, especially by young people, since this is so closely linked to the skills of each cohort and hence of the whole population.

For young people, our measure is the whole 16-18 age group because, while staying-on rates at 16 have improved very sharply over the last 15 years, the engagement of 17 and 18 year olds in education and training remains below that of comparable countries. In 2000 about 75% of those aged 16-18 were in structured learning; at school or college, in work based learning or other training. The LSC has set a target of 80% for 2004. This is challenging, but as a nation we will need to do even better in later years if we are to match the best in the world. The LSC’s progress towards this target is shown in Chart 1.

The number of 16 to 18 year olds in learning increased by 51,500 from 1,368,400 in 2000/01 to 1,419,900 in 2001/02, a significant rise of 3.76%. However, when participation is expressed as a percentage of the cohort, the increase is less pronounced because of the growth in the size of the cohort itself. Participation as a percentage of the total cohort rose from 75.3% in 2000/01 to 75.5% in 2001/02. This is below our projections for 2001/02, and the target remains stretching, especially as the 16 to 18 cohort is due to grow in absolute numbers in each of the years to 2005.

The LSC clearly has much work to do to improve the participation by young people. The local strategic plans set out a variety of ways in which this issue is being tackled over the next few years (see case study below). In the short term, the LSC is funding providers in full for any additional participation of young

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Case Study:

Somerset Rural Youth Project

This project aims to engage and support young people living in rural areas in a range of social, economic, educational and recreational opportunities designed to encourage social inclusion and lifelong learning. The purpose of the project is to increase the take-up of training and learning opportunities by young people and to address issues of rural exclusion, isolation and disadvantage. The project has demonstrated a willingness to take risks and to be innovative: a moped loan scheme allows a significant number of young people to enter and stay in work, training or a rural skills workshop.

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people and has instituted an Autumn Campaign focused on driving up participation. There is some heartening news in that data from the latest statistical first release shows that there were more young people involved in work based learning at the end of March 2002 than at any other time in the last decade. This is despite a fall in starts of 6,000 during 2001/02 compared with 2000/01. This may indicate that longer, framework-based training is proving more effective in retaining young people in structured learning within the work based route.

Early indications this autumn are that participation has increased by 0.6% to 76.1%.

The number of young people starting on Foundation Modern Apprenticeships in 2001-02 was 8% higher than in 2000-01.

The proportion of young people in employment six months after completing their Modern Apprenticeship is also rising, with the most rapid growth occurring among those completing Foundation Modern Apprenticeships.

We need to understand better why many young people do not perceive that

there are benefits from participating in structured learning. The Green Paper, 14-19: *Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards* provides opportunities for new approaches to make learning more relevant and interesting for certain groups of young people. The LSC will work closely with the DfES, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and others to take forward new and innovative work.

Many local LSCs are looking at novel and different ways of engaging young people in learning who would not otherwise take part.

**Case study:
Level 2 Project**

The Connexions service in Somerset has contacted 1,000 young people aged 16-21 who are in employment without a level 2 qualification to research why these young people have not progressed their education and training beyond 16 and why their employers do not offer workplace training. This work will form a basis on which the local council can tailor its activities to encourage greater participation by such young people, with the greater engagement of their employers.

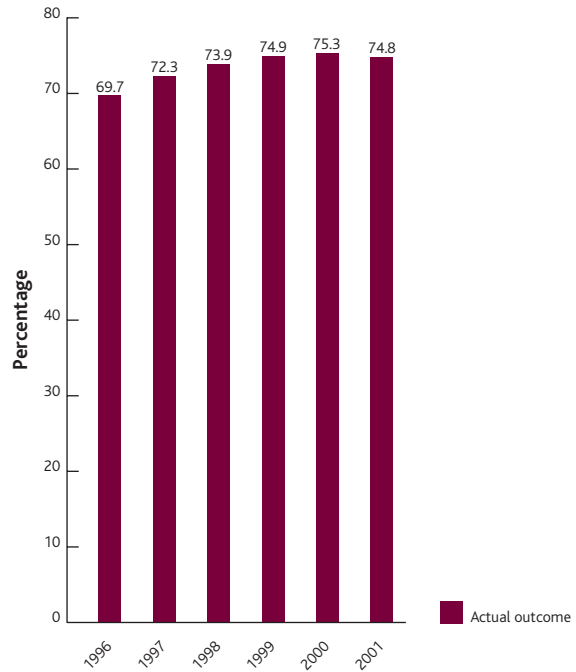


Chart 2:
Percentage of 19 year olds at or above level 2 – target 85%
Source: Autumn Labour Force Survey

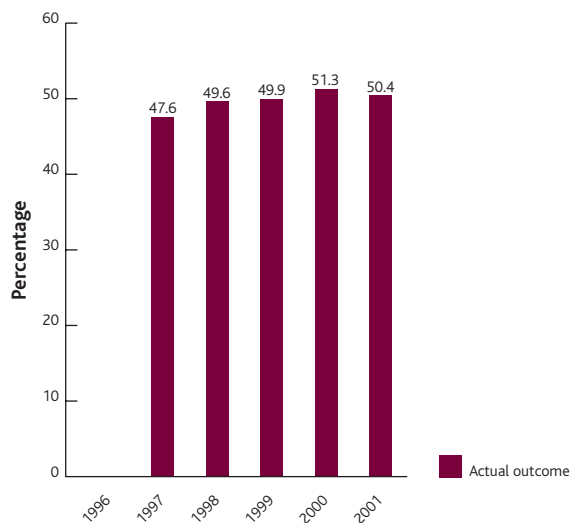


Chart 3: Percentage of 19 year olds at or above level 3 – target 55%
Source: Autumn Labour Force Survey

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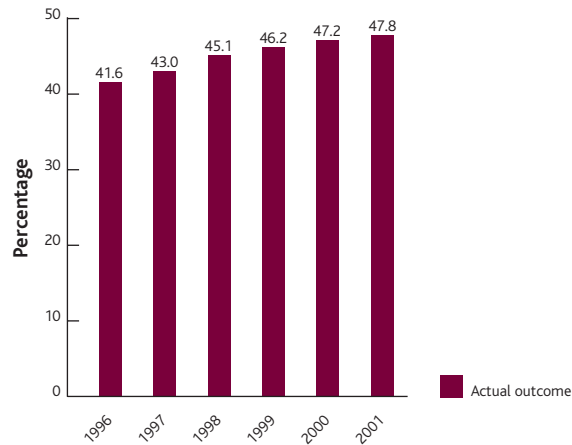


Chart 4: Percentage of adults at or above level 3 – target 52%

Source: Autumn Labour Force Survey

Achievement by young people and adults

For young people, the LSC's target of 85% of 19 year olds reaching level 2 requires a sharp increase in achievement from the baseline of 75% in 2000. The absolute number of 19 year olds reaching level 2 has grown. However, when the new number of achievements is expressed as a percentage of the cohort, (which itself has grown in numbers and will continue to do so until at least 2005) recent progress appears disappointing, and highlights the challenge of this target. Chart 2 shows these percentages.

The most recent data from the autumn Labour Force Survey, published in February 2002, shows 74.8% of 19 year olds had reached level 2 in autumn 2001, a slight reduction compared with the figure of 75.3% in the previous year.

Significant additional resource has been made available to local Councils to help focus on the achievement of this target. £60 million has been allocated via local LSCs for the programme year 2002/03 to support attainment at level 2 and level 3. A further 23,000 additional achievements are forecast from the 2002/03 programme. Local feedback from 2001/02 has been positive, particularly in retention. Impact on the

targets will be published in January 2003. Good practice is being collected and disseminated to drive up progress still further.

Progress against our target for level 3 at age 19 is shown in Chart 3.

The most recent data from the Labour Force Survey, published in February 2002, shows 50.4% of 19 year olds had reached level 3 or above in autumn 2001. The targeted action on level 2 has been broadened to encompass level 3. Over the next few years, we shall see the impact of Curriculum 2000 and the contribution of A/AS-level options to level 3 achievement by 19 year olds.

Progress towards our target that 52% of the adult population should reach level 3 or above is given in Chart 4.

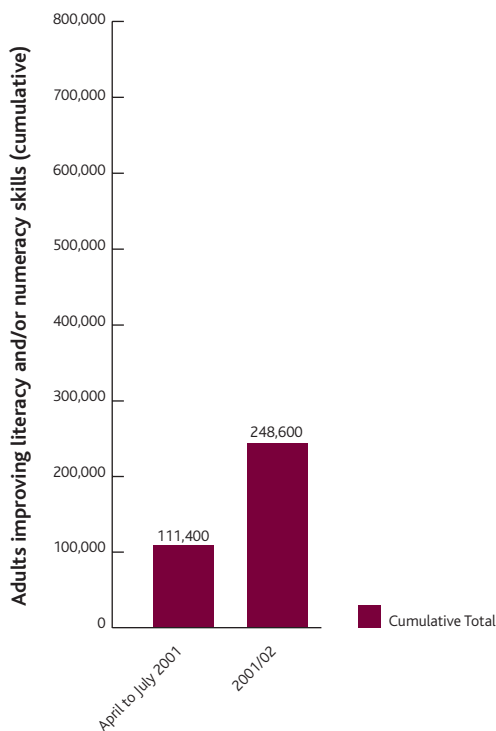
The most recent published data from the Labour Force Survey shows that 47.8% of economically active adults were qualified to level 3 in autumn 2001. This is an increase of 0.6% on the 2000 outturn, but slightly below the projection for that year.

For the wider adult population, we adopted the Government's public expenditure target of improving the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000

Case Study: Basic Skills

Having identified that a shortfall of basic skills tutors could pose an impediment to the successful achievement of its local target, Hertfordshire LSC is using LSC funding for capacity building. Local Initiative Funding (LIF) and co-financing to set up The Basic Skills Professional Development and Resource Centre to train and develop people to work with adults with low levels of numeracy and literacy.

Tees Valley LSC has identified the 12 largest employers in the area and has invited them to put forward proposals to raise the basic skills of their workforce. 1,256 people who work for these 12 employers have already received help in raising their numeracy and literacy skills. One local Council has worked with a large local manufacturing company that had recognised the need to improve basic skills within its workforce. The company has now incorporated literacy and numeracy at level 2 into its team leader training, and has plans to offer this provision to other staff.

**Chart 5:****Improving the basic skills of 750,000 adults**

Note: Adults includes all persons aged 16 and over
Includes achievements by Prison Service and Job Centre Plus

adults by 2004. The lack of basic skills is closely correlated with social exclusion and limited employability, and is therefore a key target for us.

Progress towards this target is very encouraging, as demonstrated in Chart 5, and local Councils have put much thought and effort into creating a healthy momentum that promises well for the future.

The LSC continues to take a close interest in learning not leading to formal qualifications and is working closely with the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to develop suitable approaches that will be tested in 2003-04.

There is also a range of employer-supported training which is not currently certified, but which may meet important skill needs. The Council is not limited, in the education and training it supports, to courses leading to a full-certificated qualification. In allocating funds we will consider on their merits the opportunities offered by a range of providers – formal and informal, fixed and distance learning – which meet individual needs. However, the Council will continue to place a

premium on transferable qualifications, which guarantee consistency and (in the case of vocational qualifications) meet employer-defined occupational standards. We will work with the DfES and the QCA to encourage unit accreditation and accumulation to meet employer and individual needs.

Similarly, the Council has taken a close interest in achievement up to age 16, and by those who progress into higher education. The LSC has warmly welcomed the Government's 14-19 Green Paper. In particular, we support the development of academic, vocational and work based routes into a high quality and effective post-16 education and training system. We also support the development of an overarching award that has credibility and currency with employers and higher education providers. We endorse the development of assessment regimes that motivate more young people to participate and remain in structured learning, and to progress to the attainment of higher level qualifications. We are working towards a more integrated and coherent post-16 education and training system with a

level playing field in terms of funding across the post-16 sector. We acknowledge our role in helping the Connexions service to develop as a source of high-quality impartial advice and guidance, free from institutional bias.

The LSC has a clear interest in the performance of schools, not least because we have taken on responsibility for post-16 school funding this year. We also consider that we have a strong role to play in achieving the Government's target for participation in HE. We need to facilitate individuals' progression to higher education, and we have strong links at national level with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and at regional and local level with individual universities. These links are key to our contribution to the Government's target, for which we share responsibility. By the end of the decade half of those aged 18-30 should be able to access HE. We have developed proposals jointly with the HEFCE for enhanced partnerships between Further Education (FE) and HE to improve progression, quality and investment in workforce development.

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DfES Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets

In July, the Treasury agreed new PSA targets for the DfES. Those that relate specifically to the LSC's remit are:

- 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;
- by 2004, at least 28% of young people to start a Modern Apprenticeship by age 22;
- improve the basic skills levels of 1.5 million adults between the launch of Skills for Life in 2001 and 2007, with a milestone of 750,000 by 2004;
- 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
- 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*.

The LSC's longer-term targets

As a result of the Government's Spending Review and the publication of the new PSA targets, the LSC is reviewing its current targets framework. Work is in hand to identify the longer-term targets that will best support the achievement of our mission, vision and key objectives, and the LSC is discussing with the DfES our associated funding needs. The outcomes of these discussions will be published in a supplement to this plan in early 2003. Our current position is set out below for information.

Performance measures and targets in four new areas to 2004

The LSC made a commitment in the Strategic Framework to 2004 to set performance measures, and later targets, in four new areas:

- adult participation in learning;
- employer engagement in workforce development;
- adult achievement at level 2; and
- quality and learner satisfaction.

The LSC has made significant progress towards defining the new measures. It would be inappropriate to set firm targets against them until we have measured the baselines, and then identified in discussion with the DfES the level of public funding available to support our action to deliver them. The supplement to this plan will contain more definitive information on these targets.

Adult participation

Central to the LSC's mission is raising participation and attainment in education, learning and training. Indeed, the Learning and Skills Act 2000 lays a duty on the Council to encourage:

- individuals to undergo post-16 education and training;
- employers to participate in the provision of post-16 education and training; and
- employers to contribute to the costs of post-16 education and training.

Work to establish a target for adult participation in education, learning and training began in late 2001 and was significantly influenced by the outputs of an expert seminar involving

representatives from local LSCs, the LSC national office and DfES officials. Representatives from major national advisory bodies included: NIACE, the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Basic Skills Agency and academic specialists in participation studies and lifelong learning.

The scope of the construction of the adult participation measure needs to include all learning and not learning simply funded by the LSC. To restrict the measure to that only funded by the LSC would be to exclude significant areas of education, learning and training not funded by the LSC but which the LSC plays a significant part in promoting.

Adult participation can be measured through a modified English Local Labour Force Survey (ELLFS). Utilising 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.

While an adult participation measure should have no upper age limit, the adult participation target, in practice, should have an upper age limit of 70 to reflect a focus on the more economically active.

The target will be supported by a National Strategy for Widening Participation in Learning that the LSC expects to publish next spring.

We are undertaking significant pilot activities with employers to produce effective new models for engaging employers, particularly on a sectoral basis. In addition we have developed and are managing the Government's new programme of Employer Training Pilots. Finally, in April 2003 we will undertake a further radical experiment through pilots in four areas which will pool our adult

learning budgets with those of the relevant Regional Development Agency.

These pilots should be seen in the context of the Spending Review and the study on workforce development by the Strategy Unit. They will support the implementation of the LSC's Workforce Development Strategy and employer engagement target.

Employer engagement in workforce development

It is a statutory duty of the LSC to engage employers in all aspects of learning and training for adults in the workforce. Employer engagement, in the Council's view, goes beyond simply securing greater financial contributions towards training their own employees. We aim to encourage employers to engage actively in identifying training needs relevant to the employer's business, and beyond that to engage through Sector Skills Councils and other representative bodies in identifying occupational standards and shaping a structure of transferable qualifications which meets those standards.

There is no single, straightforward measure of this, such as employer investment of cash or employee time. Any single measure would miss the complexity of the contribution which different employers make or could make. Instead, we need an index which identifies different types of employer engagement and draws together a baseline and a performance measure which will be the benchmark for further progress.

The LSC has developed such an index and has consulted widely on it. It is now being piloted, and next year the LSC will carry out a large scale survey which will mesh closely with other data already available to us. By next year the LSC expects to be in a position to set a baseline and thence to draw up a national target which could be disaggregated by sector and by regional and local LSC area.

Adult attainment at level 2

The LSC has committed itself to setting a target for adults achieving level 2 qualifications or above. Our current expectation is that we will reflect the Government's PSA target for 2006 in any target we set, relative to the position at the end of 2002. We will not, however, be able to confirm this target until the publication of the supplement to this Plan in early 2003. The comparative position of local Councils in respect of this attainment level are shown in Annex C.

Quality and learner satisfaction

High-quality provision gives learners the best chance of gaining world-class knowledge and skills enabling them to meet their ambitions. Consistent high quality creates virtuous circles of participation and achievement across a lifetime of learning. Poor quality provision creates cycles of low participation and under achievement.

In its first year the LSC put into place a coherent approach to improving quality across post-16 learning in partnership with the inspectorates and the Government. In this, the LSC combines recognition and support for excellence

with high challenge where provision or providers fail to offer good learning experiences and results for learners.

The central feature of the strategy is to give support to providers to help them fulfil their direct responsibility for the quality of their provision. This is demonstrated through annual provider self-assessment and development planning, backed by regular performance reviews with LSC staff. These are key sources of evidence for decisions concerning funding and contracting with colleges and providers, and provide support to build capacity and share good practice. Quality improvement is also informed by the outcomes of OFSTED four-yearly cycle of inspections. Our clear and rigorous policy on interventions where there are serious failings should leave no one in any doubt about our commitment to excellence for learners.

The LSC inherited provision of uneven quality, ranging from excellent, world-class provision, through to that of unacceptably poor quality. The LSC is determined to assist providers in improving their performance, and to increase the proportion of provision that is of good or better quality. The LSC has five high-level quality measures set out in the Council's Quality Improvement Strategy 2002-03:

- an improvement in learner retention and achievement rates;
- an improvement in the inspection and re-inspection grades awarded to providers by Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI);
- a reduction in the proportion of providers placed in the **serious concerns** category during performance review;

- an increase in the proportion of providers that are placed in the **excellent** category during performance review; and
- the development and maintenance of high-level learner satisfaction.

Challenging but realistic targets will be set, drawing on the baseline position in 2001-02 and progress reported against these measures. The supplement to this Corporate Plan will contain further details.

We will improve quality and raise standards through our Quality Improvement Strategy. The main levers for change are:

- recognising and rewarding effective colleges and other providers;
- performance review;
- interventions in inverse proportion to the success of our providers;
- self-assessment and development plans;
- improving teaching and learning;
- identifying and disseminating good practice;
- building capacity in colleges and providers; and
- the national learner satisfaction survey.

Section Two

The Learning and Skills Community for the Future

The LSC knows that it cannot make a reality of its vision by small changes to existing approaches. We are developing a radical new approach. At its heart lies the creation of a single unified learning and skills community, which will be characterised by:

- a strong learning culture;
- actively engaged employers;
- consistent high-quality learning;
- an integrated learning and skills community; and
- an excellently-managed LSC.

Each of these features is discussed below.

A strong learning culture

Within a strong learning culture:

- the key messages about the benefits of learning will be widely understood and acted on by individuals and employers;

- learning and skills will be a key feature of local, regional and national policy-making, particularly in local and regional economic and social development strategies;
- the LSC would be regarded as an authoritative voice of post-16 learning and skills needs; and
- there will be close productive partnerships based on shared objectives. Effective purposeful collaboration will replace the negative effects of competition and duplication of effort.

Actively engaged employers

The LSC would expect:

- employers to be actively engaged partners in the learning and skills community and the LSC funds to be geared to employers' skill priorities. Many employers would recognise, and

- act on, the economic benefits of learning in the knowledge economy;
- many providers to have forged strong strategic relationships with employers to drive up the skills and productivity of the workforce. Employers would want to work with the learning and skills community to respond to the human resource and skills needs identified in their long-term business plans. In achieving this, we will have contributed significantly to Government's economic and social goals;
- the workplace to be the main classroom for many adults and the source of their motivation to learn throughout their working lives; and
- e-learning to be an integral part of business and individual development.

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Consistent high-quality learning

The learning and skills community would offer:

- high-quality learning and excellent value for money in support of LSC local strategies. Providers would adopt nationally recognised good practice, and offer the specialist range of provision needed locally, regionally or nationally. New and existing providers, many from the voluntary and private sectors, would fill gaps in provision and replace poorly performing provision.
- the opportunity for learners to be at the heart of decisions taken in the learning and skills community. Learning, though worthwhile in its own right, would be valued for helping people, employers and communities meet their wider ambitions. The learning and skills community would be renowned for understanding these ambitions and responding flexibly to realise them. Decisions across the learning and skills community would be based on robust evidence from collaborative research into skills and best practice both here and abroad.

An integrated learning and skills community

In an integrated learning and skills community:

- outdated and artificial boundaries within and surrounding post-16 learning would disappear. Work based learning, FE, sixth forms and adult and community learning would be part of an integrated and vibrant learning and skills community, closely linked to the agenda for 14-19 education and progression to HE;
- each provider would have a clear mission, widely understood by learners and employers. The learning and skills community would offer a wide choice of providers and provision to learners

and employers. There would be robust links with schools and universities offering clear progression through to high-level skills and opportunities, mixing vocational and academic approaches to meet individual needs; and

- providers would have taken up new opportunities, for example, in combining vocational and academic learning needed to make a reality of the Government's vision for 14-19 education.

An excellently-managed LSC

To achieve these features, the LSC needs to play a leading role. Within the learning and skills community for the future:

- the LSC itself would be an exemplar of the best practice in workforce development in providing equality and diversity;
- the notion that one-size-fits-all solutions devised centrally and rigid rules would be a thing of the past. Success would come from understanding and responding rapidly to the diverse learning cultures and priorities of each industry and locality. It would also come from keeping a clear strategic focus on where each provider and the learning and skills community as a whole can make an effective contribution; and
- the LSC will target its energies on the key objectives that have a lasting impact on the lives and prospects of the 50 million people living in England.

The LSC's strategy for delivering its mission, vision, objectives and targets has two main arms – changing the learning culture and transforming the quality of funded learning. In both areas the LSC has responsibilities for delivery, supporting the work of others with shared objectives and

offering clear leadership to the learning and skills community.

Strategic Levers for Change in Post-16 Learning

The LSC has identified the main levers for strategic change available to foster the development of the learning and skills community it needs to support the delivery of its mission.

The LSC's delivery strategy gives priority to:

- changing learning cultures;
- engaging employers;
- improving quality;
- reshaping local provision;
- funding learning; and
- excellent management of the LSC.

Changing learning cultures

Individuals and employers in England tend to take a different view of learning from many of their counterparts in competitor countries. Compared with Europe, North America and the Far East we undervalue formal learning and qualifications, yet we stress academic studies at the expense of vocational and community based learning. Too often we regard access to the best quality learning as being only for the favoured few. As a result, too many young people and adults set their sights too low.

Often the public image of learning falls well short of the reality, and the benefits gained by learners are not widely recognised. Over the years we have failed to convince enough employers of the benefits of carefully planned investments in learning for product quality, customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

Case Study: Birmingham and Solihull Skills Register

Birmingham and Solihull LSC has adopted a sector-based structure to take forward its work with a wide range of employers in a large conurbation. The local Council and its partners work with a number of employer-based sector consortia to gather information on employer needs and to actively engage local employers in the process. This information is then used to ensure that provision made by local FE colleges and other providers is relevant to employers' needs and those of individuals in work or seeking work. Earlier outcomes from this work suggests that whilst much local provision is in skill areas relevant to employers needs much of it is at too low a level, for example, at level 2, when level 3 skills are required.

The benefits for companies are not well understood nor presented accurately or forcefully enough.

Success in delivering our vision depends on changing this culture, but change on the scale needed is neither easy nor quick to achieve.

Professional promotion of learning

The LSC is segmenting learners into common interest groups, which allow it to target each in a way that maximises the potential impact. Utilising existing learner research the LSC is building on the work pioneered by the Ufl and some of the local LSCs, for example, Sussex, to make sure that the segments developed are robust.

The LSC is developing targeted campaigns at specific segments or related to specific industrial skill needs. The approach is to work in a pilot mode with individual local LSCs to test the robustness of each campaign, and then to widen into a regional or national marketing strategy.

The LSC is continuing to support UK Skills in its work to promote excellence through skills competitions and national training awards, and working with Investors in People UK to promote excellent corporate development arrangements.

In promoting learning the LSC is uniquely placed to gain maximum impact by coupling national media coverage with sensitive locally based responses to initial interest from learners and employers. Our aim is to convert early, often tentative, interest into enthusiastic regular participation in learning.

Success in turning people with a flicker of interest into committed learners depends on having good-quality information, advice and guidance; learner-focused provision; and the right recognition and rewards for learning achievements. The Connexions service has a significant role to play here.

Engaging employers

In November, the LSC published its Workforce Development Strategy.

The LSC seeks to engage employers as:

- members of local LSCs; and
- people whose decisions shape future skills needs locally and in different sectors and industries.

And in:

- promoting learning;
- implementing the LSC's workforce development strategy;
- education-business partnerships working on the planning and delivery of the new vocational emphasis in 14-16 learning in schools;
- revitalising Modern Apprenticeships;
- extending Centres of Vocational Excellence;
- launching New Technology Institutes;
- collaborative projects with other employers and the learning and skills community to tackle skills shortages and gaps;
- national training awards and skills competitions; and
- joint initiatives with trade unions and union learning representatives.

Through:

- strategic alliances with the learning and skills community to take a systematic approach to their workforce's development;
- planning and delivery partnerships with Sector Skills Councils; and
- the Small Business Service and Regional Development Agencies.

Improving quality

Quality improvement strategy 2003-06

The LSC is developing its quality improvement strategy initially for the period 2003 to 06, in discussion with partners and stakeholders. The strategy will include a number of generic elements that can be adapted to address the diverse parts of the learning and skills community, together with strategies that are specific to component parts of the community.

The LSC will continue to intervene in inverse proportion to the success of providers. Particular areas for attention will be providers that are performing relatively poorly, and improving quality in providers in the middle band of performance.

The LSC promotes excellence by supporting the new DfES post-16 Learning and Skills Beacons to disseminate and transfer their excellent practice to colleges and other providers to meet known priority areas. The LSC will also develop complementary arrangements for the LSC to recognise its high quality providers.

By 2004, half of general FE colleges will have at least one Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). Pathfinder Centres of Vocational Excellence have also been established in work based learning. Centres will help to raise standards in specialist vocational provision at level 3, and make provision highly responsive to employers' needs. The good practice in CoVEs will be disseminated to help others strengthen their vocational provision. The LSC is developing specific strategies for quality improvement focusing on programmes offering NVQs and will also develop ways of recognising learners' achievements in learning that is not accredited, supporting the providers of adult and community learning to improve the quality of this provision.

Performance review is a key lever to help drive up quality, through assessing performance and identifying priorities for quality improvement. Local LSCs provide on-going support to providers and regularly review progress. The LSC has refined the performance review process

and formal reporting now takes place twice a year, with a clear emphasis on learners' experience and performance.

The LSC will bring more of its providers within the scope of performance review by 2004.

The LSC will build capacity in colleges and other providers by strengthening networks to share effective practice, investing in appropriate research projects, and by selecting and developing consultants and interim managers to provide support.

The LSC will continue to make sure that providers offer learning in a safe and healthy learning environment, and to encourage learners to become safe learners and safe workers. The LSC's policy on learner health and safety will be implemented.

Capital investment

The LSC will continue to give priority to its programme of supporting capital investment by providers in support of its main targets. In particular, the Council will target capital investment to:

- drive up the quality of vocational training facilities for adults and younger learners to help achieve the level 2 targets;
- help to develop and improve 14-19 provision;
- focus on labour market needs;
- support learners' progression from FE to HE; and
- support the CoVE programme to help improve the flow of skilled workers to the workplace at level 3.

Capital investment will be targeted, in particular, to support the follow up to inspections by ALI and OFSTED of individual providers, OFSTED area inspections, and the Council's area review programme for both the reorganisation of 16-19 provision and in targeting improvements in the distribution and quality of vocational training facilities.

Delivering Success for All

The LSC supports strongly the Government's commitment to raising standards in post-16 learning set out in *Success for All* published in June 2002, particularly in respect of further

education and training. The LSC looks forward to playing the leading role envisaged for us in achieving the four goals it contains, and taking forward the Strategic Area Reviews which are discussed below.

The LSC endorses the move towards a highly professional provider workforce in the learning and skills community with excellent leaders and is already implementing the Teachers Pay Initiative. We will encourage our providers to employ fully qualified teachers and trainers, to provide opportunities for unqualified teachers and trainers to achieve qualifications and to develop and extend their continuing professional development.

The LSC is committed to making full and effective use of e-learning in strengthening the quality, accessibility and relevance of the learning we fund. This will contribute much to the Government's goal of increasing the share of public services delivered electronically. Our partnership with Ufi/learnirect is critical, as is our role in implementing effective practice in teaching and training.

Learner and employer satisfaction

Last year the LSC identified the need for robust methods for listening to learner and employer views about their experience of post-16 learning.

The LSC has made good progress in listening to learners. The first two waves of the national learner satisfaction survey were completed in Summer 2002, and the results recently reported in *Seeking the Views of Learners: Findings from the LSC's first national satisfaction survey 2001/02*. Each year 24,000 learners will be interviewed and the results used to celebrate success in the post-16 sector and to shape policy and develop post-16 learning.

As well as regularly seeking the views of learners, we will gauge the views of employers about the learning and skills community and the usefulness of the services offered for their employees, as well as new entrants to the labour market. The LSC has carried out a feasibility study and held discussions with the Government and other partners about a survey of employer views.

Case Study:
Brooke House

One of the very first Joint Area Inspections was carried out in Hackney and Islington in autumn 1999. The key findings of the Inspection were that:

- 43% of Year 11 school leavers in Hackney were opting to continue their education outside the borough;
- student retention and achievement rates within Hackney were significantly below the national average; and
- that a wider range of post-16 options needed to be available to young people within the borough.

The recommendations included the setting up of a new sixth form college in Hackney as an appropriate local solution to local problems.

The project started 18 months ago, and was deemed 'impossible to achieve' by some commentators.

In September 2002, The Sixth Form College: Brooke House opened for business, following concerted work by London East LSC and its partners. The college will welcome up to 500 students in its first term, and offers an exciting range of courses, to reflect the diverse demands of young people in Hackney. Thirty different A-level subjects are available as well as a choice of intermediate courses for students who want to start in a new direction. There is an equally strong selection of vocational programmes and the opportunity to marry vocational study with an academic course alongside. The college is committed to working in partnership with local schools in Hackney and has already started on this.

Mary Conneely, Executive Director London East LSC, said: 'This is an exciting new relationship between leaders in education for Hackney. The borough can now boast two strong and sizeable colleges, offering fantastic new opportunities in the area

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Over the next three years, the LSC will have, for the first time, good consistent evidence of learner and employer views to inform decision making about post-16 learning. We will also seek the views of providers, including the very important front-line teaching and training staff, about ways in which the quality of learning and learners' success rates can be driven up further.

The LSC has also started to use the views of young people in developing targeted policies and initiatives. We will build on the success of this approach as part of our commitment to putting learners first and a contribution to the Government's approach to customer focused public services. The LSC will publish the outcomes from these surveys.

Reshaping local provision

Local strategic plans are in place and substantial progress has been made with the harmonisation of funding streams. The next step, which forms part of implementing the Government's proposals in *Success for All*, is to review the shape of the learning and skills community in each area to make sure it can meet local needs, priorities and targets. The LSC will undertake a thorough strategic assessment of local provision in partnership with local stakeholders and will consult locally on the future pattern of services.

This is a complex and sensitive programme which will build on the excellent start already made by many local LSCs. We will review the adequacy of provision in every area, through an assessment of the potential of the mix of providers and provision to meet fully the ambitions of local people, employers and communities. The assessment will draw on the local strategic plans already in place, learner and employer views, and the outcomes of area 16-19 inspections, provider inspections and regular performance reviews with providers.

Where gaps or persistently poor provision exists the LSC will encourage new providers while recognising the costs and risks involved in setting up new high-quality provision. Some providers will extend their coverage to new areas. Many from the voluntary or community sectors will bring new expertise in reaching excluded people. Providers will receive active support to help develop the skills needed to run successful high-quality learning programmes. Other providers will refine and focus their missions to concentrate on what they do best. Collaborative and innovative provision will be crucial to the success of the strategy.

By 2005 the LSC will have made significant progress towards its vision of a fully integrated post-16 learning community.

Partnerships with providers

The LSC depends on productive partnerships with providers to deliver our vision. We believe consistent values and behaviours across the country are essential for effective partnerships. Within this the LSC is committed to adopting best practices in working with the voluntary sector. We will make a strong contribution to delivering the key principles of the Government's initiative *Getting the Best from Each Other*. Our approach to this is summarised below.

The Council is a strategic planning and funding body which funds or contracts with other organisations to undertake the direct delivery of learning. Our relationship with employers, colleges, schools, Higher Educational Institutions, Local Government and other private, public and voluntary sector providers is crucial to the delivery of our local and national strategic plans and targets and to meeting the needs of learners.

The LSC has therefore committed itself to *Getting the Best from Each Other*, a government wide drive led by the DFES. Widespread consultation has led to the adoption of the following principles, which the LSC fully subscribes to:

- focus on outcomes;
- adopt a needs-led approach;
- raise standards;
- modernise funding and contracting; and
- ensure continuous improvement in shared learning.

While the principles will apply to our relationships with all organisations we work with and fund, the details of the relationship with each individual

Case Study: Herefordshire Learning and Skills Academy

Herefordshire and Worcestershire LSC plans to establish a Learning and Skills Academy to meet the needs of learners living in one of the most sparsely populated areas in the country where, because of geography, many people are disenfranchised or have a more limited choice of learning routes and subject matter.

The new academy will be based on a federal arrangement involving four FE colleges, four rural sixth forms, the LEA Adult and Community Education Service, the Marches Consortium and two or three of the best private sector training providers.

All FE college provision will be reviewed and any duplication will be eliminated, and Outreach Centres will be based in the four rural sixth forms to take provision to the learner and to widen choice and opportunity.

The key objective is to achieve much greater and wider participation and to provide greater choice for learners, whilst at the same time creating a single point of contact for employers.

organisation will inevitably be different. For example, many colleges have an acknowledged wider role in their communities beyond the simple provision of learning in their area and may deliver more than half of all provision in some localities. Other private, public and voluntary sector providers also play a critical role in work related and remedial provision and promoting participation in their immediate vicinity.

It is against this backdrop that the LSC will modernise its approach towards those whom it funds, developing the five principles in *Getting the Best from Each Other* thereby driving up and diversifying both supply and demand.

While most provision is planned locally for local people the LSC will continue to work nationally with providers in three areas

- Through the National Contracts Service. This provides a service for large multi-sited national employers, specialist sector providers and national Ufl sector hubs;
- In planning the delivery of highly specialised services for learners with special learning needs requiring residential provision; and
- In planning specialist provision, for example, Centres of Vocational Excellence that meet a national need in smaller strategically important occupations.

Funding learning

The adequate funding and the right financial environment are important factors in widening participation and raising achievement levels. The right payment structure for providers is critical but must be seen in the context of learner support and balancing the costs falling on individual learners, employers and the state. The level of funds available to support the achievement of our targets is crucial. The Government has completed its Spending Review, and the LSC is currently discussing with the DfES the long-term funding that will be available to the LSC.

Provider funding

In line with Government and DfES policy, the Council has committed itself to reducing bureaucracy. The Bureaucracy Task Force, chaired by Sir George Sweeney, was set up in November 2001

by the LSC and includes College Principals, Ofsted, ALI, the DfES, work based learning and other partner and sector organisations.

Following the publication of its report and recommendations in November 2002, we have produced a formal response. The Task Force recognised that we inherited highly bureaucratic processes from our predecessor bodies. As a planning authority we are uniquely placed to adopt a plan led funding approach which will have at its core the objective of reducing bureaucracy.

The LSC is therefore bringing together the previously diverse funding streams for work based learning, colleges, school sixth forms and adult and community education. This is an essential first stage in creating a coherent post-16 learning community.

The emerging arrangements should reflect a fair balance between the costs of different types of provision, the needs of different types of learners, incentives for participation and achievement and the previous experiences of the different parts of the learning and skills community. Harmonisation also removes some of the unintended and perverse incentives for providers created by separate funding systems.

The LSC expects to have an integrated funding system by 2004/05 that is much simpler for individuals, employers and providers. It will remove unnecessary bureaucracy for providers working across the former sector boundaries.

The LSC wants to move in the longer term to provider funding linked directly to its mission, vision and objectives. We will build on the Government's work on funding learning, especially adult learning, and our new workforce development pilots.

The new system will offer significant scope for local accountability and flexibility and diversity while safeguarding large sums of public money. Equally we need flexibility to vary the contribution made towards the costs of collaborative action to meet employers' skills priorities in different industries. The essence is to find a new equilibrium between commercial approaches to risk management, securing value for money and ensuring probity in spending large amounts of public money.

The LSC will keep a commonality of approach with Jobcentre Plus to

ensure clarity, coherence and to minimise bureaucracy.

Fees for employers and individuals

Under the arrangements we inherited, the majority of LSC-supported learning is either free to the learner or heavily subsidised. Learners aged 19 or under pay no fees, and many adults are entitled to full fee remission because they are in receipt of relevant state benefits. Other adults pay fees which are typically around 25% of the full cost refundable to the provider by the LSC, except that employers purchasing training specific to their own needs typically pay 50%. In total only a very small proportion of the income of LSC-funded providers derives from fees of any kind. In The Further Education Funding Council's (FEFC) final year the fee income of FE colleges as a whole was estimated at under 7% of total income; the remainder derived from public funds.

While heavy subsidy for adult learning clearly increases opportunity, especially for those least able to pay, there are also risks from a lack of perceived customer purchasing power. This is most evident in the case of employers. Overall UK employers spend something between £15 and £23 billion per annum on training in the broadest sense, yet despite the subsidised fees available they spend only a small proportion of this with colleges or other LSC-funded providers. It is a key objective of the Government's *Success for All* strategy, and of the LSC's Workforce Development Strategy, to increase the crossover between employer and public purchasing. The Strategy Unit's two reports (November 2001 and November 2002) both emphasised the need to bring the two systems into closer alignment, by the transfer of public subsidy progressively away from provider support (through fee remission), towards direct purchasing power in the hands of individual adults and their employers.

The Government is currently conducting a review of the funding of adult learning which is taking a radical look at the issue of fees within FE and other publicly supported learning. It is expected to publish the outcome within the context of the Skills Strategy in June 2003. The LSC expects to be closely involved in that review which may well lead to new developments in our own approaches. Meanwhile we are actively engaged in piloting a range of different

fee models for funding learning which meets employer needs, through the sectoral and other pilots being carried forward through our Workforce Development Strategy.

As the LSC harmonises its approach to funding learning, clear consistent policies are needed on charging for learning undertaken by individuals or provided to employers.

The workforce development pilots will offer important lessons about fees charged to employers and the impact on their engagement with learning. In devising its new fees policies the LSC will take account of the lessons from Education Maintenance Allowance pilots, the impact of tax credits, new Learning Account arrangements and training loans.

Excellent management of the LSC

The LSC has made excellent progress from a standing start. We have made a successful transition from the existing organisations and created a strong unitary organisation within which 47 local LSCs are able to respond flexibly to local needs. Each local LSC, in consultation with partners, has developed a local strategic plan setting out its priorities to 2005. Though the local plans have common themes, the detail varies to reflect local traditions, cultures and needs. Building on this diversity of experience and needs is at the heart of our approach to delivering our strategy.

The LSC has evaluated the first round of strategic planning and the scope for rationalising the number of plans and strategies that local LSCs have to produce. Our aim is a coherent simple approach with a minimum of bureaucracy consistent with keeping clear lines of accountability for delivering our vision, objectives and targets with imagination

and creativity. We are moving towards an LSC that is a plan-led, rather than programme-led, organisation to make sure that we maximise our effectiveness and responsiveness.

The LSC is developing as a network of interdependent resources, skills, experiences and individuals supported by fast and effective communications. We value greatly the commitment and active involvement of local LSC members and staff. Our business model and culture are geared to increasing their impact, effectiveness and responsiveness to national, regional and local priorities and targets, while displaying high levels of honesty, public accountability and economies of scale.

Developing excellent skills and extensive knowledge is central to the success of LSC staff in working with the complex rapidly changing learning and skills community. Our commitment is to become an exemplar learning organisation with a first-rate workforce development policy.

The LSC recognises the need for a common culture locally and nationally embodying the values we need for success. We are developing a unique LSC culture through a set of values, principles and ways of working; sharing these with all employees in a series of carefully structured locally held workshops. The LSC's principles are that we:

- are learner focused;
- work in a spirit of partnership;
- work to the highest standards;
- are innovative; and
- make a difference.

Case Study: Investors in People

Cumbria LSC was the first local Council to achieve recognition as an Investor in People. Nine other local Councils have also met the standard and been recognised as Investors in People.

They are:

- Bedford and Luton;
- Berkshire;
- Birmingham and Solihull;
- Coventry and Warwickshire;
- Devon and Cornwall;
- Norfolk;
- North Yorkshire;
- Shropshire; and
- Tees Valley.

Jay Mercer, the Executive Director of Berkshire LSC said: 'We are delighted to be recognised as an Investor in People. We are the first LSC in the south to receive the award and it demonstrates our commitment to our team and our mission to encourage people to improve their skill levels, opportunities and quality of life through learning.'

Work continues on absorbing these values and ways of working into our performance management process and creating an innovative management and leadership development programme covering 1,000 managers across the LSC. Further work is being undertaken to make sure these factors are integrated fully into our recruitment and induction processes.

Ten local LSCs have been recognised as Investors in People. The national office directorates and all other local LSCs have made firm commitments to achieve the Investors in People standard in the early years of this plan.

The LSC is investing heavily in modern information technologies to support our objectives and the Government's commitment to e-Government. Our immediate IT priorities support the funding harmonisation and simplifying data gathering in the learning and skills learning community.

The LSC is mindful of its responsibility to manage its estate in ways that protect the environment. The new Cheylesmore House extension is highly energy efficient and, over the next three years, we will relocate a number of local LSCs to more energy-efficient accommodation. We are upgrading our video-conferencing facilities to cut the need for travel and also reduce pollution caused by cars and other forms of transport.

Section Three

The LSC's new learning culture will be inclusive. Our vision is of a learning and skills community free from discrimination and prejudice. It will encourage and help all learners reach their full potential.

Equality of Opportunity

Our specific equality objectives are to develop the LSC as a champion of equality, embed equality and diversity into all our policies, programmes and actions, and to develop the LSC as a model equality and diversity organisation. We will report progress annually to the Government. Details are in the LSC's National Equality and Diversity Strategy *Widening Participation and Promoting Inclusion, 2001 to 2004*.

The LSC will work with the equality commissions, other organisations committed to countering discrimination and providers to reduce the inequalities in access to learning and narrow differences in success rates for people from different parts of the population. We will do this by promoting the economic case for diversity and equality, providing good information on exemplar employers and delivering equality and diversity strategies. These include plans for targeted work to reduce urban deprivation, rural isolation and encourage older learners.

We welcome our role in supporting providers who have new responsibilities for ensuring reasonable adjustments for learners with particular needs under the *Disability Discrimination Act*, part 4. We also welcome our role under the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*. Our detailed plans are set out in our Race

Equality Scheme. We also welcome the Report of the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education and will work with other partners to support the implementation of the recommendations.

Removing barriers to access and outreach

Good quality provision is inclusive. It is sensitive to individual needs and circumstances.

The LSC knows many learners find it difficult to fit structured learning into busy schedules alongside work, family and community commitments. Others, many with poor experiences of formal education or training, need encouragement to consider learning that goes well beyond generic promotional campaigns. We also know that half of young people outside education, employment or training have been in post-16 learning but have dropped out for some reason.

Potential learners face many barriers and the LSC will continue to deepen its understanding of how these affect participation and achievement and develop appropriate initiatives. We will continue to offer financial support to learners in further education whose access or continued participation is threatened by financial considerations. In addition we will continue to support the

creation of new childcare places, and work with local authorities on the impact of transport plans.

The LSC will reach out to potential learners across the country, especially those living in poorer communities. Many local LSCs have outreach initiatives and details of these are in their local plans. We will sustain our work on Neighbourhood Renewal and partnerships with local authorities, voluntary organisations and community groups.

Engaging with potential learners is a core priority for adult and community learning. The LSC will keep this in focus as it becomes part of the integrated learning and skills community.

Inclusive Learning

We recognise that re-engaging learners is only part of the process. Their subsequent success will require provision that is learner centred. In our work to counter discrimination and ensure all learners have the support they need to participate, achieve and progress we will develop our understanding of the principles of inclusive learning. We will apply this knowledge to developing effective practice in teaching, learning, management and leadership at the point of delivery.

Case Study:
the IT Learning Bus, Staffordshire

Staffordshire LSC and other partners are supporting a scheme run by Cannock Chase Technical College that uses a converted double-decker bus to provide a mobile IT training facility for people living in remote rural communities. The bus also provides a crèche facility that allows parents, particularly lone parents, to learn whilst their children are being cared for. Training covers a wide range from IT tasters up to qualifications in specific IT skills, such as word processing and Internet use, up to level 2. The bus is part of the Staffordshire UK On-Line Centre network.

Information, advice and guidance

There is strong evidence that access to good quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) about the benefits of learning and how to access learning opportunities improves participation and achievement rates. For young people between 13 and 19 this comes through our emerging partnership in each area with the Connexions service.

The LSC is responsible for securing the provision of information, advice and guidance for adults. Currently, the LSC funds information and advice for all adults aged 20 and over free of charge. As the number of adult learners increases the demand for good quality, comprehensive and impartial information and advice will grow rapidly. Proposals are currently being developed for an integrated national and local IAG strategy, working closely with the DfES and Ufi/learndirect.

In developing services the LSC will give particular importance to support for people with basic literacy, numeracy or ESOL needs, aiming to improve their skill levels in line with the national test/qualifications framework; enter or leave HE; or gain employment.

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Section Four

Commitments to Learners, Employers, Communities, Colleges and Providers

What do the LSC's vision, objectives, targets, strategic levers and targeted initiatives mean for learners, employers, colleges and providers and key partners in local communities?

Our central commitments to learners, employers, communities, colleges and providers are summarised below.

Our commitment to learners:

- listen to and take appropriate action on your ideas;
- offer a choice of high-quality, attractive and easily accessible learning;
- use best practice – with e-learning options;
- encourage diversity and secure equal opportunities;
- root out poor quality and unsuccessful learning programmes;
- gear learning provided to your needs and those of employers;
- provide opportunities to help you move forward; and
- make opportunities available for over 6 million learners a year backed by independent information, advice and guidance.

Our commitment to employers:

- listen to and take appropriate action on your skills and learning priorities;
- recognise the diverse needs of employers in different industries and of different sizes;
- actively promote the benefits of learning to the profitability of business;
- be a positive and flexible partner in employer-led skills initiatives;
- work purposefully with Sector Skills Councils, the Small Business Service and Jobcentre Plus in coordinated and targeted skills measures;
- help employers play a full part in the planning and delivery of post-16 learning;
- ensure learning offered to young people and adults without work equips them for their future employment and a lifetime of learning; and
- boost the overall consistency, quality, relevance and performance of post-16 learning.

Our commitment to communities:

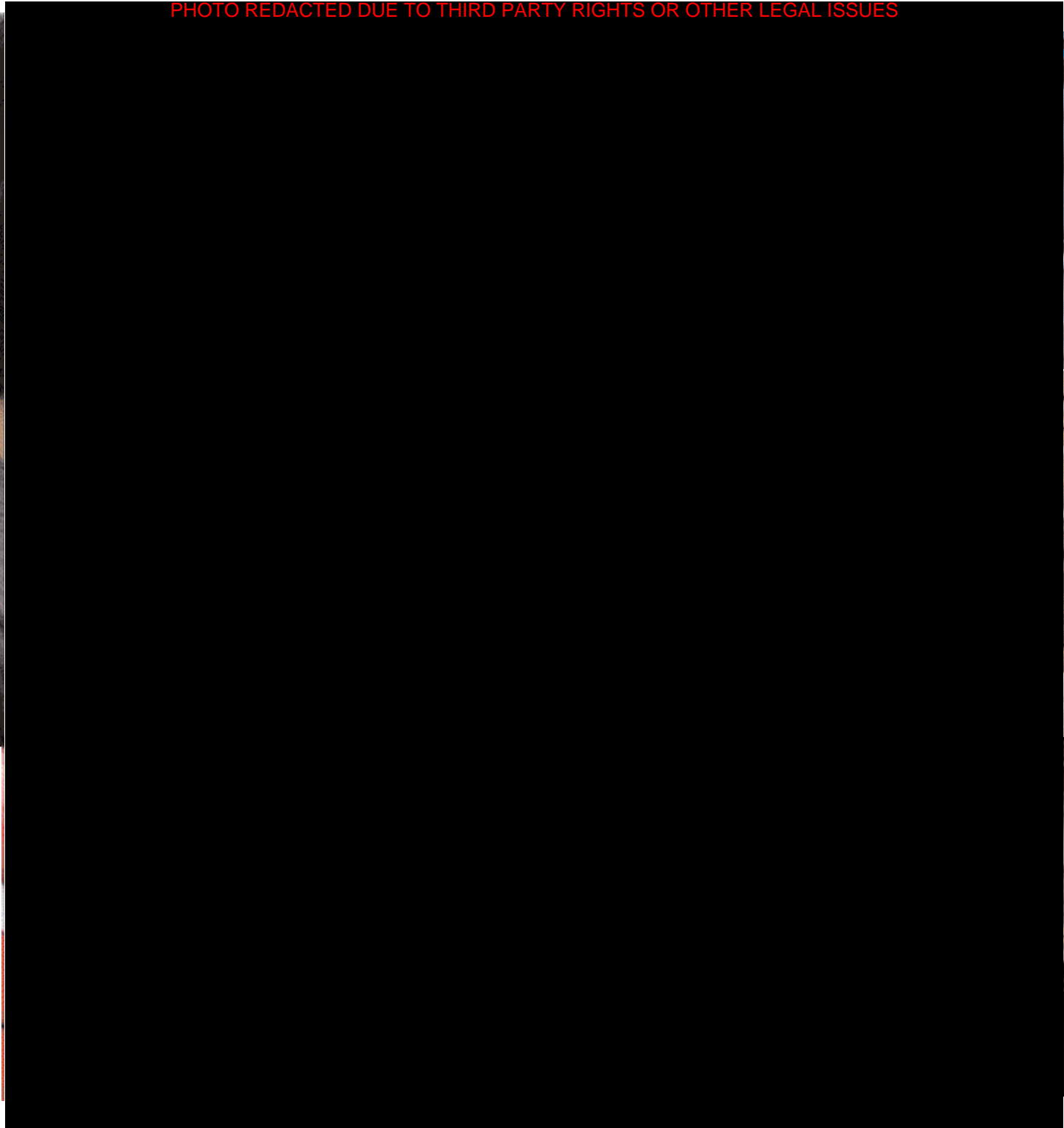
- listen to and take appropriate action on your ideas;
- make strong contributions to community and neighbourhood renewal initiatives, and local strategic partnerships;
- work to build social cohesion and diversity;
- work with others in Government to respond to inward investment, closures and redundancies;

- meet fully our commitments to Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA);
- work with local education authorities on 16-19 area inspections and emerging plans for 14–19 education; and
- encourage the continued contribution of local learning partnerships.

Our commitment to colleges and providers:

- listen to and take appropriate action on views from colleges and providers and representative organisations;
- ensure clear timely communications;
- develop high trust/high support links with colleges and providers achieving consistently high-quality and excellent results;
- act rigorously and rapidly with partners to address poor-quality low-achieving provision that undermines the reputation of all post-16 learning;
- reduce the administrative burden to the minimum consistent with cost-effective high-quality services for learners; and
- recognise and reward excellence.

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Section Five

The LSC is a national organisation that combines the advantages of a national programme and national resourcing with local flexibility and initiative. The highest statutory forum is the national Council, and the 47 local Councils have the status of committees which act for the Council within their areas.

Organisation

Local Councils have considerable local flexibility and opportunity to analyse their local challenges and then deploy resources to meet those challenges. Our organisational model allows central and local priorities to be kept in close alignment, balancing national leadership and co-ordination; and local knowledge,

planning, flexibility and delivery. There is regular feedback, outwards to the local arms, inwards to the national office and between local arms, so that all parts of the organisation are contributing to a cycle of continuous review and improvement of processes.

The national Learning and Skills Council

The **national Council** has the following members:

Bryan Sanderson (Chair)	Learning and Skills Council, formerly Managing Director British Petroleum; Chairman, BUPA
Chris Banks	Chief Executive, Big Thoughts Ltd
Alexandra Burslem	Vice-Chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University
Giles Clarke (from December 2002)	Chairman, ATL Telecom
Shirley Cramer (from December 2002)	Chief Executive, The Dyslexia Institute
Jane Drabble	Formerly Director of Education, BBC
Helen Edwards (until December 2001)	Chief Executive, NACRO
Imtiaz Farookhi	Chief Executive, National House Building Council (NHBC)
Professor Robert Fryer	Chief Executive and Vice Chancellor designate of NHSU (university for the Health Service)
Leisha Fullick (until September 2002)	Formerly Chief Executive, Islington Council
John Harwood	Chief Executive, Learning and Skills Council
Chris Humphries (until October 2002)	Director General, City & Guilds of London Institute
Dr DeAnne Julius (until June 2002)	Former member, Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England
Digby Jones	Director General, CBI
Sir Michael Lickiss (until December 2002)	Chairman, South West of England Regional Development Agency
John Merry	Local Councillor and Deputy Leader, Salford City Council
John Monks	General Secretary, Trades Union Congress
Lynne Morris	Principal, Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College, Birmingham
Sir George Sweeney	Principal, Knowsley Community College, Merseyside
Vincent Watts (from December 2002)	Chairman, East of England Development Agency

The national Council plays a strong leadership role in steering the whole organisation so that it meets nationally agreed priorities. It consists of 16 members, representing all the major partner organisations involved in the planning and delivery of post-16 learning and skills.

Two statutory committees advise the national Council: the Young People's Learning Committee and the Adult Learning Committee.

The **Young People's Learning Committee** has the following members:

Chris Banks (Chair)	Chief Executive, Big Thoughts Ltd (Council member)
Rosalie Clayton	Director of Education and Children, Peterborough City Council
Dr Kevin Conway	Chief Executive, Alkemygold Ltd
Imtiaz Farookhi	Chief Executive, National House Building Council (NHBC)(Council member)
Ian Ferguson	Chairman, Data Connection Ltd
Maggie Galliers	Principal, Leicester College
Ian Gartshore	Principal, City Ely Community College
Kim Parish	Human Resources Director, Scottish & Newcastle Retail (S&N plc)
Sue Peacock	Associate Policy Advisor, NTO for Engineering Manufacture
John Rourke	Formerly Principal, St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College, London
Alex Williams	Director of Community Affairs, Manchester City Football Club

The Young People's Learning Committee advises on achievement of national targets for young people aged 16-21, including strategies for increasing participation and attainment levels. It has advised the LSC on its response to the 14-19 Green Paper and the Cassels' report *Modern Apprenticeships: The Way to Work*. It works closely with the Connexions service, schools, colleges, local authorities and others.

The **Adult Learning Committee** advises the Council on achievement of national targets for adults and for organisations (including Investors in People). This includes advice on widening participation, raising attainment levels and improving basic skills among adults. The committee has advised on the workforce development strategy and on relationships with national and regional agencies, sectoral, economic and business bodies and other key partners.

The Adult Learning Committee has the following members:

John Monks (Chair)	General Secretary, Trades Union Congress (Council member)
Judith Armit	Chief Executive, Medway Council
Michael Brunson	Freelance Writer and Broadcaster
Alexandra Burslem	Vice-Chancellor Manchester Metropolitan University (Council member)
Tony Chandler	Head of Learning & Organising Services, UNISON
Jane Drabble	Formerly Director of Education, BBC (Council member) (until October 2002)
Chris Humphries	Director General, City & Guilds of London Institute (Council member)
Patrick Passley	Lecturer in Law, Barnet College and Commissioner on the Commission for Racial Equality
Alex Pratt	Managing Director, Sunalex Ltd
Hugh Try	Deputy Chairman, Galliford Try plc and Chairman, Construction Industry Training Board
Alan Tuckett	Director, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)
Adviser: Prof David Robertson	Research Centre Director, Liverpool John Moores University

The Executive

John Harwood, the Chief Executive, heads the national office, based in Coventry. Its functions are to provide the leadership, systems and infrastructure which will underpin the whole organisation; to help develop national policies and procedures and to monitor their implementation; to ensure consistency and quality; and to provide corporate services which are most economically delivered centrally. Below the Chief Executive's office, which is responsible for strategic planning and co-ordination, the national office is organised into **seven directorates** as follows:

Operations

(National Director: Ken Pascoe) – responsible for Support and Performance, Data Collection and Analysis, National Contracts Service, Planning and Budgeting, Provision and Infrastructure, Structural and Learner Funds

Policy and Development

(National Director: Caroline Neville) – responsible for Youth and Adult Learning, Skills/Workforce Development and Funding Policy and Development, Equality and Diversity

Quality and Standards

(National Director: Avril Willis) – responsible for Performance Analysis, Quality Improvement

Strategic Marketing

(National Director: Michael Kesztenbaum) – responsible for development of strategies to encourage non-learners into learning and for the overall research programme

Communications

(National Director: Robin Newton-Syms (currently on long term leave of absence), interim Director of Public Affairs: Jan Davison) – responsible for External and Internal Communications, Marketing, Press and Public Relations, Library and Information Services, E-Communications

Finance

(National Director: Philip Lloyd) – responsible for Financial Policy and Control, Internal Audit and Special Investigation, Financial and Management Accounting, Provider Financial Assurance and Provider Financial Support

Human Resources and Corporate Services

(National Director: David Russell) – responsible for Corporate Property and Facilities Management, HR Operations, Information Systems, Legal, Organisational Development and Performance and Reward Management

Local Councils

Most of the executive staff of the Learning and Skills Council are based in the 47 local Councils, each headed by a local Executive Director. The organisation of our 47 local Councils varies according to local circumstances but contains the range of support needed to discharge the full range of its functions. The local Council has an essential planning role, both locally and regionally and feeding into our national policies, as well as responsibility for delivery. It is at the local Council level that the relationship between learners, employers, training providers and local communities are developed, budgets deployed and contracts managed. Local Councils are critical to the delivery of our objectives.

Annex D has a list of the 47 local Councils and their Executive Directors. Each manages a substantial staff and annual budget. Local Councils' business plans give details of their budget and operations.

Defining specific functions of the national and local Councils

The national and local Councils share a common vision, objectives and targets, within a single framework for the whole organisation. As we evolve, we are establishing national and local accountabilities for specific functions and activities, so that our partners, providers and learners understand how best to engage with us – nationally, locally or, on occasion, both. The LSC is currently

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reviewing the functions and responsibilities of local Councils with a view to widening their role.

John Merry, a national Council member, chairs the Network Liaison Committee, which comprises representatives of the executive and non-executive at national and local level.

The committee has developed a protocol for effective national and local relationships that is being implemented across the LSC. The vision underlying this protocol is set out below.

Vision

All members and employees of the Learning and Skills Council are committed to the achievement of a national strategy and local plans, which will maximise the local contribution to the achievement of national and regional priorities and targets by meeting the needs of learners and the skill needs of the local economy.

The vision would best be achieved by operating the Council as a network of inter-dependent resources, skills, experiences and individuals supported by a fast and effective communications infrastructure.

The Council is establishing an operational framework and organisational culture to maximise the impact, effectiveness and responsiveness of local Councils in meeting national, regional and local learning and skills priorities and targets, whilst demonstrating high levels of probity and accountability and appropriate economies of scale.

Relations with Key Partners

The LSC cannot deliver this challenging agenda and create a new culture on our own. We have formed strong links with others who share our passion for transforming learning in England.

The LSC has entered into a series of national Memoranda of Understanding with key organisations, such as the Small Business Service and Connexions. We will build on in these where our objectives coincide and combining forces creates a much greater impact than the LSC or our partners can achieve alone.

Our wider partnerships extend well beyond direct campaigns to promote learning. All our partnerships create new opportunities for promoting a new learning culture.

Local Councils have formed strong links with Regional Development Agencies, local authorities and Jobcentre Plus. These are helping to develop shared Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) in 2002 and we will make high-quality contributions to delivering agreed action plans.

Local Councils have a rich pattern of partnerships outside government including employers, the voluntary sector and trade unions. They also participate actively in local strategic partnerships and local learning partnerships, whose funding will flow via the LSC from April 2003.

Annex A

International Comparisons

Participation by young people in education and training

Fewer young people aged 16-18 are in education or training (full or part time) than in any OECD country, other than Mexico and Turkey, according to the latest figures available. (See Chart A).

Adult participation in learning

We consistently have more adults participating in education and training (full or part-time) than many of our competitors. With the exception of Australia, we have the highest adult participation rate of people aged over 40. (See Chart B).

Proportion of adults completing level 2 education or training

The latest comparative international data relates to completion of a specified level of education, described here as 'upper secondary education,' for adults aged 25-64. The international standard classification of education is used to define the levels of education, which includes upper secondary education. This is roughly equivalent to UK education/courses leading to level 2 qualifications. Note that the chart relates to completion of such a level but not specifically to attainment at the end of such a course.

The completion rate varies greatly across OECD countries from only 20% in Mexico to 87% in the USA. At 62%, the UK occupies a position in the middle of the range. (See Chart C).

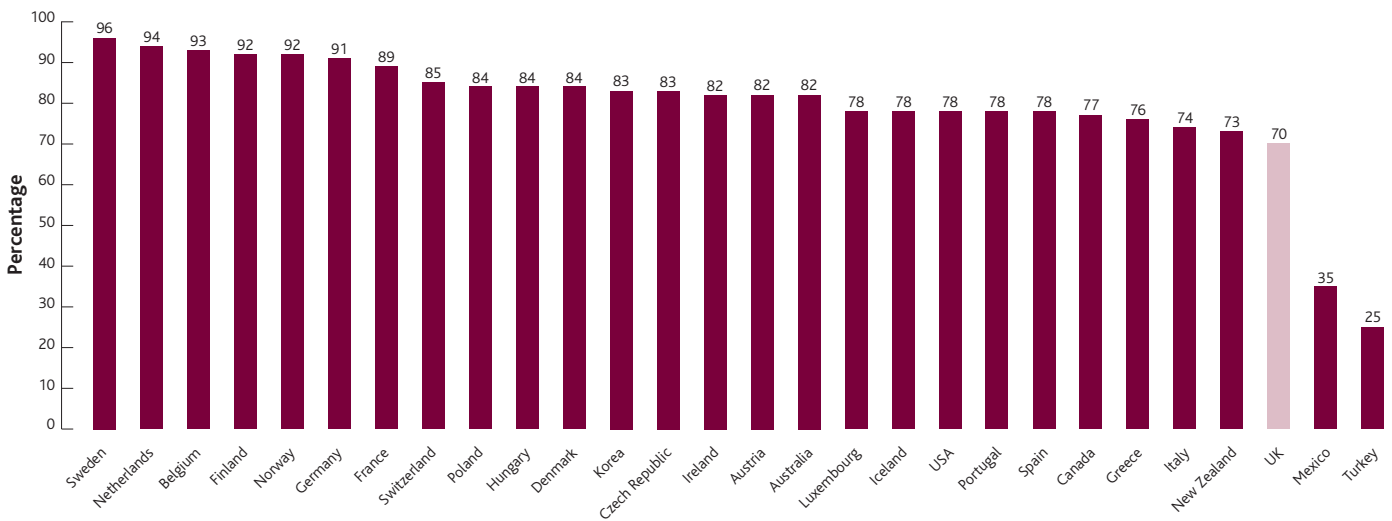


Chart A: Participation in learning at ages 16-18, 1999

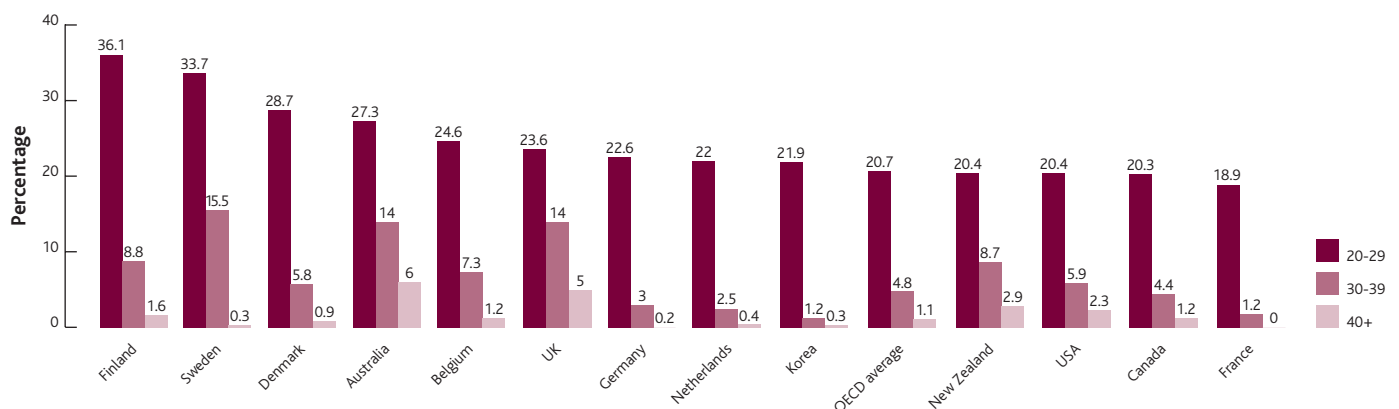


Chart B: Adults participating in education and training, by age group, in the OECD

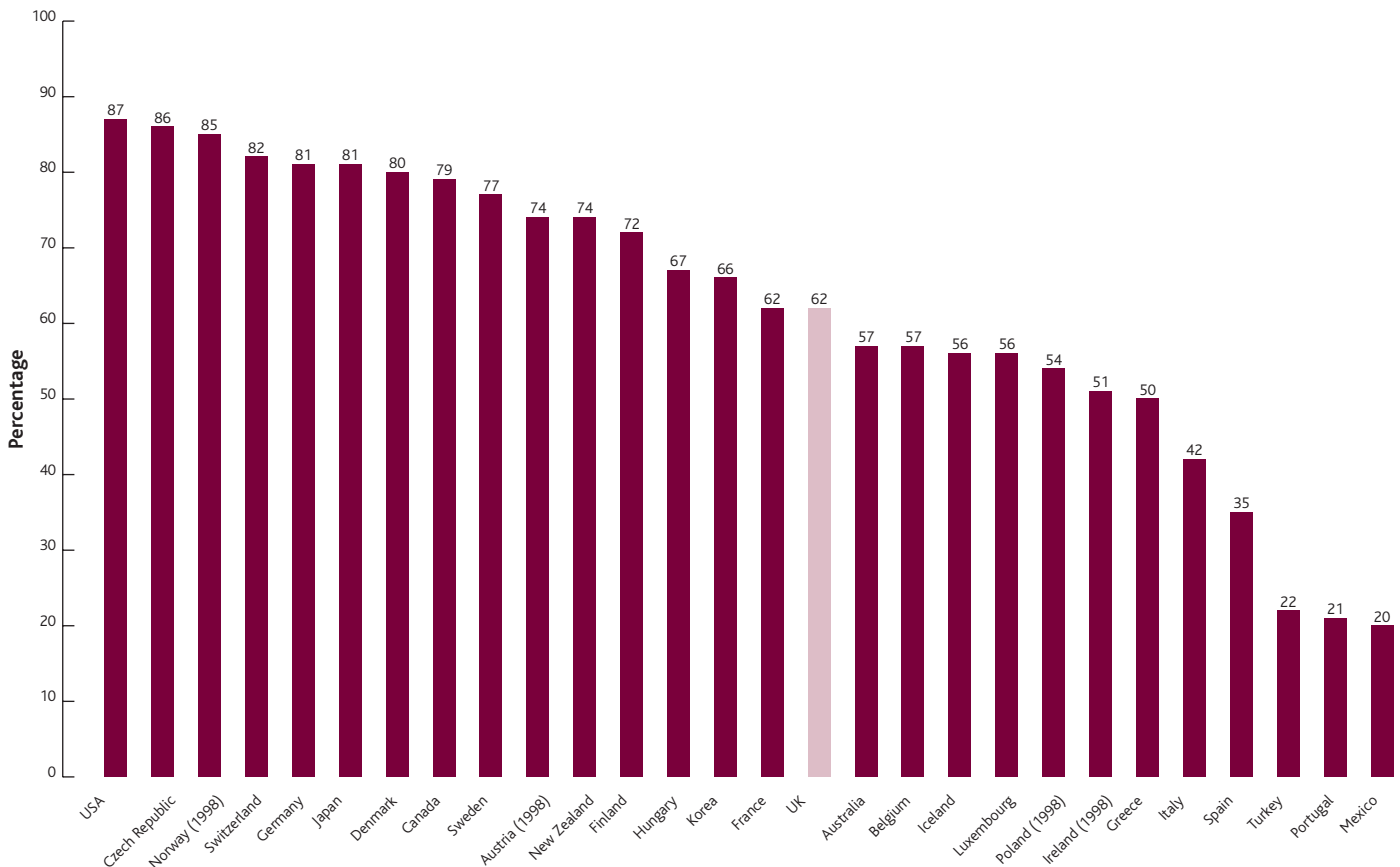


Chart C: Percentage of the population (aged 25-64) that completed at least upper secondary education in 1999

Annex B

Skills in England: 2001

Key messages and data

- **Skills are valuable:** learners, employers and the nation benefit from increased skill levels.
- **The importance of skills is increasing** with the growth in jobs needing higher-level skills and the decline in unskilled work.
- **The need to understand the demand for skills** and the complex factors that motivate learners and employers is at the centre of an effective learning and skills strategy.
Improved international competitiveness demands better skills.
- **Inequalities in participation and attainment should be tackled.**
- **Employers play a vital role as providers**, in enabling individuals to upgrade their skills and in shaping demand.
Skill deficiencies are concentrated in certain sectors of employment.
- **Hotspots** include intermediate skills, information and communication technologies, numeracy and management.
Regional and local differences are important.
- **Using the evidence base properly** will improve policy, planning and delivery.

Adapted from: Skills in England: 2001 The Research Report, DfES (November 2001)

Annex C

Adults qualified to NVQ Level 2 and above

Chart D compares the proportion of adults qualified to level 2 and above across 47 local LSCs presented in descending order. Most LSCs have maintained or improved on their 2000 position in 2001.

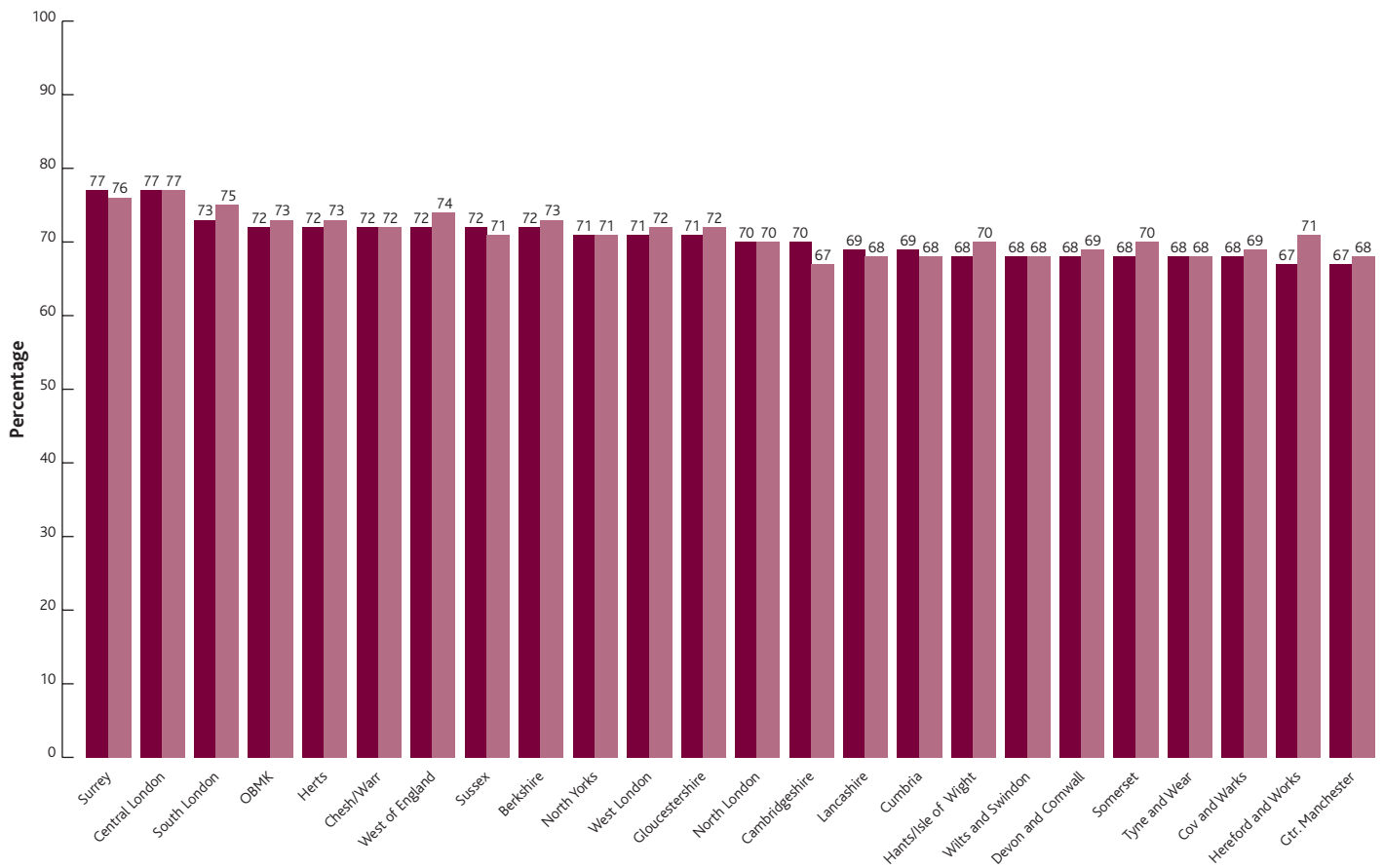
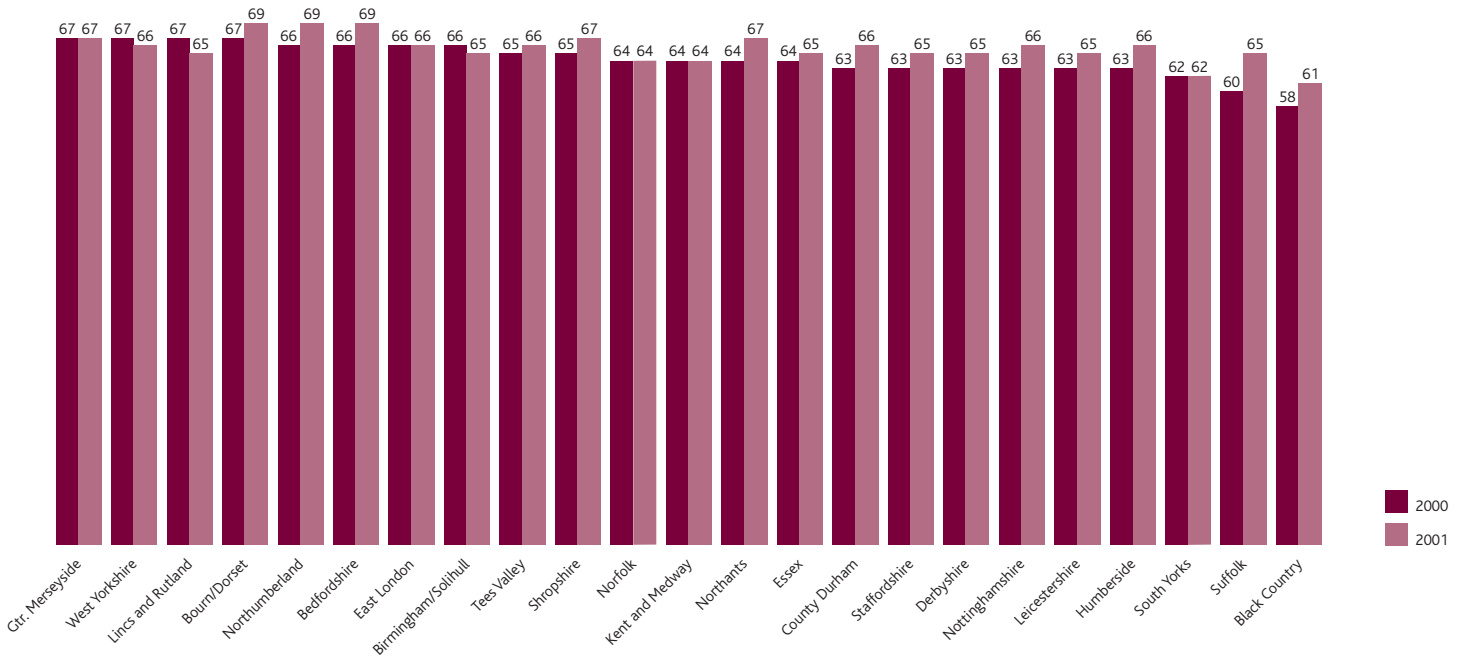


Chart D: Attainment at level 2 and above: Local LSCs

Source: English Local Labour Force Survey (ELLFS): November 2001 and 2002

Note: This data is not directly comparable with the autumn LFS data used to measure the national target position because the data sources relate to different timeframes



Annex D

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