

Learning and Skills Council

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Local Strategic Plan 2002-05

Wiltshire and Swindon



Learning+Skills Council
Wiltshire and Swindon

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> Chairman's foreword

I am delighted to present the first strategic plan for the Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon. It has been shaped by analysis of all the information available to us and by extensive consultation throughout the local community.

The Learning and Skills Council was formed in April 2001 and brings together for the first time responsibility for all post-16 learning across Wiltshire and Swindon. In this new role we are tasked with securing major changes in post-16 learning and we will do this through local decision making within a national framework of national policies, targets and objectives.

This strategic plan sets out the key learning and skills agenda for Wiltshire and Swindon during the period 2002-2005. Separate business and operational plans will explain the full range of detailed activities that will be funded during 2002-2003 as we make the first significant step towards the changes needed to ensure that the people and communities (business and social) of Wiltshire and Swindon take full advantage of the strong and dynamic local economy.

The Council recognises that it can only achieve the aspirations expressed in this plan through the engagement and commitment of others. From the outset we have committed ourselves to building upon the strong tradition of partnership working that already exists in the area. We have sought to recognise and engage existing partnerships and where appropriate build new partnerships to ensure that all agencies can play a full part in this exciting and challenging agenda.

We look forward to working with you to bring about the much needed changes in the area that will make our vision a reality.

Bryan McGinity - Chairman

Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon



> The Key Agenda

The analysis underpinning this Plan demonstrates that Wiltshire and Swindon is an area of thriving economic activity with all the associated tensions that a tight labour market brings. However, our area is also one of lower than average participation in learning post-16 and Swindon, in particular, has lower than average academic achievement at Level 2 (NVQ 2, GNVQ Intermediate or 5 GCSEs A*-C or equivalent) at age 16.

Set against this background is the Government's commitment to raise participation and achievement across all age groups. All of these factors lead to an extremely challenging set of local targets (to be achieved by 2004) identified as critical to achieving world-class skills by 2010. This inevitably requires a significant expansion of both local provision and, even more significantly, learner demand.

These targets have led our local Council to identify three key themes on which to prioritise and focus our work and resources over the life of the Plan. Our three key themes are: 14-19 learning issues; adult basic skills; and engaging employers in workforce development.

14-19 Learning

To achieve a step change in participation at age 16, we need to work with other organisations to secure improvements in participation and achievement throughout the 14-19 phase. Long standing social and cultural factors, in addition to present constraints in relation to institutions, resources and the curriculum, have all had an impact on performance pre-16 and participation post-16. In addition, individual learner support, continuity in 14-19 learning provision, employment and higher education influences have an impact on 14-19 learning.

The Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon is committed to making a significant contribution to this priority area with a view to securing improvements in the participation and achievement of the 14-19 population across Wiltshire and Swindon. Our areas for action will be to:

- undertake a review of the post 16 learning infrastructure in Wiltshire and Swindon to identify any structural barriers to participation by 16-18 yr olds
- investigate the introduction of targeted individual learner support that would stimulate increased participation and achievement, particularly, by under-represented groups and communities
- work with employers to minimise the number of young people entering the labour market at 16 and 17 without structured learning support
- work with the LEAs, learning providers, the Connexions service, and other partners to identify a range of interventions and enhancements to the current curriculum experience of 14-16 year olds.

Basic Skills

As is the case nationally, approximately one-in-five of the working age population in Wiltshire and Swindon has poor levels of literacy and numeracy skills (approx 78,000). We are committed to developing local capacity and diversifying the range of solutions

needed to reduce this issue substantially. Our areas for action will be to:

- build the capacity of existing and new basic skills providers so that participation by a wider range of learners is achieved
- increase the participation of employed individuals in basic skills provision, by working directly with employers and employer organisations
- stimulate demand for basic skills learning by developing appropriate marketing campaigns and outreach work.

Engaging Employers in Workforce Development

In Wiltshire and Swindon the need to gain employer commitment to tackle the skills deficit may be even more crucial than in other parts of the country. The success of our local economy depends upon the continued availability of skilled employees to match the requirements of local jobs, and also upon employees' ability to acquire new skills as business needs change.

We are committed to channelling resources to support employers engaging in workforce development. Our areas for action will be to:

- establish a better match between the specific skill requirements of employers and local provision
- assist employers to raise workforce skills at all levels but particularly basic skills and identified higher level (level 3 and above) skills
- market and promote the benefits of workforce development to employers
- work with Business Link, sector skills groups and other employer networks to deliver our local Workforce Development Plan.

The remainder of this Plan is structured according to the Learning and Skills Council's five national objectives and the three key local themes we have chosen to highlight are explored within the Plan. While not a comprehensive summary of all our local activities, the following represent some key priorities for action identified by the local consultation and analysis that underpin our first local strategic plan.

> Priorities for Action

> Planning Framework

1. Develop a local action plan for achievement of the national Targets, in conjunction with local partners and learning providers
2. Establish joint strategic planning arrangements with a short-list of key local organisations with shared and similar responsibilities
3. Establish mechanisms for local community consultation, including involvement in local authorities' Tomorrow's Voice and People's Voice panels
4. Establish mechanisms for consulting with local businesses, including involvement with existing business networks, chambers of commerce, etc.

> Resources

1. Where we have local discretion around the allocation of funds, to develop provision better suited to increasing engagement by non-participating individuals and employers
2. Target discretionary funding at areas which complement 'mainstream' funding and where mainstream funding cannot be used
3. Maintain local stability and confidence in post-16 learning provision whilst ensuring effective implementation of the common post 16 funding system
4. Identify and introduce a model for organisational development for the local Council which will incorporate arrangements for staff development

> Evaluation

1. Involve all parts of the local Learning and Skills Council to establish priorities for a local evaluation strategy and work programme.
2. Develop in-house data analysis capacity and evaluation tools to support needs analysis, programme development, contract management, quality improvement and impact evaluation.
3. Develop effective working relationships with a range of organisations that can support our evaluation activities, e.g. Skills and Learning Intelligence Module of the region's Observatory
4. Support development of a Wiltshire and Swindon Intelligence Network, to provide a better evidence base for decision makers in a range of local organisations

> Employer Engagement in Workforce Development

1. Encourage employers to develop the skills of existing employees to meet skills gaps, where appropriate, as an alternative to recruitment in a tight local labour market
2. Following publication of the national LSC Workforce Development Strategy in 2002, develop complementary local action plan – supported by local research activity currently underway
3. Promote work-based learning opportunities to address a number of concerns: shortage of intermediate (level 3) skills; esteem of vocational qualifications; SMEs' ability to release staff for off-the-job training; and problem of 'first job no training'
4. Work jointly with local partners, NTOs, SW RDA, TUC and WSEP to develop local sector workforce development projects to address local skills issues where there is a strong sector identity and commonality of issues
5. Work proactively with local FE colleges to develop their proposals for local Centres of Vocational Excellence, consistent with the needs of the local economy and learners
6. Work with Business Link, other intermediaries and business networks to stimulate demand amongst employers and their workforce

> Participation and Achievement of Young People

1. Implement the Level 2 Targets Action Plan
2. Support targeted development of the provider network, including development of Centres of Vocational Excellence (COVE)
3. Develop effective mechanisms to respond to the needs of learners and non-learners, e.g. through work with the Connexions service
4. Focus discretionary funding on activities for school students aged 14-16 to increase learning participation post-16

> Participation and Achievement of Adults

1. Create positive images and perceptions of learning and the benefits of learning and promote these widely within the community and amongst employers
2. Develop a local basic skills action plan that raises the quantity and quality of provision for different learning needs, drawing upon disparate funding streams
3. Support the development of an adult learning strategy to link advice / guidance and plans for provision
4. Target support at development of the learning provider network
5. Develop effective mechanisms to respond to the needs of learners and non-learners, e.g. through working with the Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership

> Extend Participation in Learning

1. Enable all learners from under represented groups to achieve positive outcomes and make progress through relevant learning routes; set targets for achievement and retention (mainstreaming)
2. Work with others to implement a local basic skills action plan; raise numeracy and literacy levels amongst adults in support of the national strategy 'Skills for Life'
3. Target areas of multiple disadvantage and work with others to regenerate communities
4. Ensure that the needs of both young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can be met by learning providers
5. Work with providers to diversify approaches to delivering learning that engages more new learners, support motivation of learners, that builds on existing good practice and support innovative practice
6. Build the capacity of the voluntary sector to both support individuals taking part in learning and be a direct provider of learning to national standards
7. Work with employers to motivate adults in the workforce to take part in learning, particularly those who often do not benefit from learning activity in the workplace

> Raise Quality of Learning and User Satisfaction

1. Embed a local Provider Performance Review process that supports providers in developing the quality of their provision
2. Target our quality improvement resources on under-performing and coasting providers
3. Use national and local quality assurance arrangements to ensure that learning providers achieve excellence in working with individuals who need extra support if they are to succeed
4. Support providers, as required, to help them introduce robust learner feedback processes
5. Develop effective liaison and working relationships with OFSTED and Adult Learning Inspectorate

> 1. Introduction to the Learning and Skills Council

Planning Framework

The Learning to Succeed White Paper (1999) and Learning and Skills Act (2000) provided the foundations needed for the creation of the Learning and Skills Council in April 2001. The Learning and Skills Council is a national non-departmental public body and replaces the former Training and Enterprise Councils and Further Education Funding Council.

The Learning and Skills Council has unprecedented responsibilities for planning and managing post-16 learning and workforce development. A budget of £7.3 billion is allocated by 47 local Learning and Skills Councils in England and a national office based in Coventry¹. The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for funding and planning:

- further education and sixth forms
- work-based learning for young people
- workforce development
- adult and community learning
- information, advice and guidance for adults
- education business links

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

Our five **key objectives** are to:

1. extend participation in education, learning and training
2. increase engagement of employers in workforce development
3. raise achievement of young people
4. raise achievement of adults
5. raise the quality of education and training and user satisfaction

Following national public consultation in 2001, the Learning and Skills Council published its 2001/04 Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan and national strategies and policies to which it refers will be highly influential in shaping and directing activities in the 47 local arms. There is clear recognition, however, of the need for local responsiveness,

"We want to establish a culture in which there is maximum local freedom and flexibility, within a nationally-determined set of standards for quality and outcomes"

Bryan Sanderson, Chairman, Learning and Skills Council, July 2001

Publication of the 2001/04 Corporate Plan marked the first step in an annual strategic planning process that concludes with publication of local strategic plans; thereafter a new planning cycle begins. As we are a new organisation, our planning process is rapidly being developed and will be reviewed formally at the end of the first cycle.

Each section in the remainder of our Plan is considered as follows:

- summary of the current situation
- assessment of key issues, objectives and priorities for action
- consideration of outcomes, targets and resources

Our Plan has been developed from three key sources of guidance: local consultation and planning events and activities; local and national analyses of needs and opportunities; and national guidance, existing policies and strategies. An analysis of local needs and priorities for development of local provision is contained in the Annex.

The purpose of our local consultation and planning events and activities has been to inform local stakeholders and partners of our challenging agenda and to encourage local involvement in establishing the needs and priorities for our area. We have found the consultation process extremely useful in preparing this Plan. The views and information obtained through these activities have been constructive and influential in the development of our appreciation of local needs and priorities. We hope that we will continue to engage our local partners and stakeholders through consultative arrangements that we intend to develop during 2002.

In summary, some general messages arising from our local consultations include the:

- huge range of needs and opportunities locally
- diversity of local learning activities, organisations and relevant networks
- need to work in partnership with many organisations at local / sector levels
- need to improve access and quality for particular types of local provision
- commitment of local partners and stakeholders to addressing the challenges
- need for independent good quality information and advice
- difficulties presented by existing post-16 arrangements and confusion created by earlier arrangements
- need to simplify arrangements for employers and to develop better communications
- lack of positive messages and exemplars to motivate employers and learners
- need to lessen practical barriers and create more flexible and accessible learning opportunities
- need to ensure funding arrangements are not a barrier to achieving good outcomes
- desire for funding bodies to create more stable, coherent funding to support learners

Joint Strategic Planning

As a local arm of the Learning and Skills Council, we will work within local, regional and national policy frameworks, while maintaining close links with our local communities and businesses. During our first three years, we intend to establish joint strategic planning arrangements with a number of organisations that share similar and related responsibilities. For example, we welcome the opportunity to work with the South West Regional Development Agency in developing its Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action. These arrangements may involve joint identification of needs and priorities, followed by the allocation of resources to achieve shared goals. A joint approach to planning in the public sector locally should result in greater impact and more effective evaluation of publicly funded programmes.

For local employers, learners and learning providers, key benefits of joint strategic planning should be:

- improved information on what is available
- clearer identification of responsibilities for local learning programmes;
- improved and better targeted local learning programmes; and
- more dependable and coherent local learning provision.

The benefits to public sector organisations involved in joint strategic planning should be evident but that is not to say that instituting such arrangements will be easy. For all parties, there may be issues to be overcome, including:

- cultural differences / varying perspectives of needs and priorities;

- concerns about loss of autonomy;
- additional administrative burden, particularly, in the short-term;
- rigid funding regimes – lack of flexibility;
- synchronisation of planning cycles.



Figure 1 - Key influences on the Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon

The diagram above illustrates some of the key influences that we will respond to and some organisations with which we will need to develop effective working relationships. Other public sector organisations represented within the various structures in the diagram may also be subject to similar influences as we are. Good prospects for developing joint strategic planning arrangements may exist where:

- there is clear shared interest, as reflected in organisations' existing goals / targets;
- organisations are subject to consistent external influences;
- there are obvious quick gains to be made through joint working.

We also intend to work with existing partnership structures that share similar broad objectives, including the Connexions Partnership, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, Education Business Plus, Lifelong Learning Partnership and Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership.

Experience has shown that targeted intervention by a range of organisations working together is the most effective means of addressing social and economic needs in local communities. We will therefore work closely with other organisations with the aim of integrating and supporting learning activities in the strategic plans of other organisations and partnerships, e.g. teenage pregnancy strategies, Connexions, etc. by proactive involvement and by identifying relevant activities. Similarly, we will need to work with higher education, e.g. University of Bath in Swindon, so that there are opportunities for local people to make progress in learning and to achieve at the highest levels. It will be important for us to gain commitment and support of organisations playing an intermediary role in the learning process, including Employment Service, trades unions, the network of adult guidance providers and community organisations.

While only an initial short-list, we believe that we should make an early focus of our work towards joint strategic planning with the following organisations:

- Business Link Berkshire and Wiltshire;
- Lifetime Careers Wiltshire;
- South West Regional Development Agency;
- Swindon local education authority; and
- Wiltshire local education authority.

> Priorities for Action – Planning Framework

1. Develop a local action plan for achievement of the national Targets, in conjunction with local partners and learning providers
2. Establish joint strategic planning arrangements with a short-list of key local organisations with shared and similar responsibilities
3. Establish mechanisms for local community consultation, including involvement in local authorities' Tomorrow's Voice and People's Voice panels
4. Establish mechanisms for consulting with local businesses, including involvement with existing business networks, chambers of commerce, etc.

> Priorities for Action – Resources

1. Where we have local discretion around the allocation of funds, to develop provision better suited to increasing engagement by non-participating individuals and employers
2. Target discretionary funding at areas which complement 'mainstream' funding and where mainstream funding cannot be used
3. Maintain local stability and confidence in post-16 learning provision whilst ensuring effective implementation of the common post 16 funding system
4. Identify and introduce a model for organisational development for the local Council which will incorporate arrangements for staff development

Our Local Targets

To guide us towards our vision, we need a small number of targets to serve as the principal benchmarks for progress over the next three years. The Learning and Skills Council has set five national targets and four more targets or measures will be published in the 2002/05 Corporate Plan.

National Target	2000	2004
1. participation of 16-18 year olds in structured learning	75%	80%
2. achievement of 19 year olds at level 2	75%	85%
3. achievement of 19 year olds at level 3	51%	55%
4. literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults to be improved		
5. adult achievement at level 3	47%	52%

We will incorporate the additional targets or measures in our next Strategic Plan when all nine will be rolled forward to 2005. The additional targets or measures will cover: adult participation in learning; employer engagement in workforce development; % of adults at level 2; and raising the quality of education and training and user satisfaction.

Each of the local arms of the Learning and Skills Council is committed to a share of the national targets outlined in this Plan. Our local contribution towards the national targets is summarised in the table on the following page. We believe that achievement of these challenging targets will only be possible within a framework of joint strategic planning and effective local partnerships supported by the availability of adequate resources. Engaging new learners will also be of fundamental importance and a summary of our key actions directed to achievement of our local targets is given in the following sections of this Plan.

The data currently available cannot provide an accurate, detailed and consistent view of participation and achievement in LSC-funded activities. Establishing accurate baselines and monitoring the effectiveness of our activities is consequently problematical. There is also a recognised need to update the interim targets contained in this Plan, following the development of a revised targets methodology. During the coming year we will need to work with colleagues internally, as well as with other organisations, to improve our monitoring and evaluation of participation and achievement. This will be pursued, in the first instance, through the national research network of the Learning and Skills Council and better information should also follow implementation of the national LSC strategy for learner data collection and analysis.

Table 1 - Wiltshire and Swindon Targets for 2004

National Targets for 2004			2004 Target	Indicators of current position	
Key Objectives					
Extend participation in education, learning and training	80% of 16-18 year olds in structured learning		Increase the number of LSC funded students participating in learning by 2,306		16,844 (71%) of the 23,597 local 16-18 population were participating in education and training in 2000 ²
	Target for adults to be set in 2002-05 Corporate Plan				
Increase engagement of employers in workforce development	Measure of employer engagement to be set in 2002-05 Corporate Plan				
	85% of young people to have achieved level 2 by the age of 19		Increase the number of LSC funded students achieving level 2 by 601		5,624 (66%) of the 8,476 19 year old cohort had achieved level 2 by the end of the 1999-00 academic year ³
Raise achievement of young people	55% of young people to have achieved level 3 by the age of 19		Increase the number of LSC funded students achieving level 3 by 489		3,337 (39%) of the 8,476 19 year old cohort had achieved level 3 by the end of the 1999-00 academic year (not including those who achieved level 3 via Government Supported Training) ⁴
	Raise literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults		For 11,104 adults to have improved their basic skills through LSC funded provision		1,918 learners improved their basic skills at Further Education colleges in Wiltshire and Swindon in 2000-01 ⁵
Raise achievement of adults	Target for adults achieving level 2 to be set in 2002-05 Corporate Plan				
	52% of adults to have achieved level 3		Increase the number of LSC funded students achieving level 3 by 24,593		2,117 21+ year olds studying at Further Education colleges in Wiltshire and Swindon reached level 3 in 1999-00 ⁶ Context: the Labour Force Survey shows 151,000 (49.1%) local adults are qualified to level 3
Raise Quality of education and training and user satisfaction	Measure of improved quality to be set in 2002-05 Corporate Plan				

¹Source: Learning and Skills Council national office (includes factor for learner migration) ²Source: Learning and Skills Council national office (includes factor for learner migration)

³Source: Learning and Skills Council national office (includes factor for learner migration) ⁴Source: Learning and Skills Council national office

⁵Source: Summary Statistics for Further Education Institutions England 1999-00

Evaluation

As an organisation responsible for large sums of public money, it is important that we evaluate our activities effectively. By evaluation, we mean the systematic collection and analysis of data to support decisions in relation to:

- the needs of local businesses, learners and potential learners;
- ways to improve delivery of our learning programmes;
- the impact of our programmes and of changes to programmes

Our evaluation will be both formative and summative, covering all stages of development, delivery and review of our learning programmes. We will work collaboratively with other organisations to obtain useful data and intelligence to support our key decisions. Examples of data sources and methods are indicated below.

Organisations	Data
Regional Development Agency	Assessments of capacity in learning provision
Learning Partnership	Results of formal inspections and reviews
Connexions Partnership	Forecasts of skills supply/demand
Learning and Skills Development Agency	Learning participants / non-participants
Local Authorities	Learning achievement / under-achievement
Small Business Service	Local needs assessments
Learning and Skills Council	Performance indicators
Department for Education and Skills	Case studies
National Training Organisation	Surveys of individuals/employers
Learning Providers Network	Management information
Learning and Skills Research Centre	Impact evaluations
Research Institutions	Learner feedback
Adult Learning Inspectorate/OFSTED	Evidence of good practice
Business Associations/Networks	Provider self-assessment
Community Organisations/Networks	
Employment Service	
Office for National Statistics	

As a new organisation, we need to develop effective evaluation methods and a work programme to make sound evidence-based decisions for the allocation of the substantial budget managed by the Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon. Having just prepared our first local skills needs assessment, we are aware of a number of issues that we will need to address. In particular, data availability/consistency and our understanding of data must be improved. We plan to work with colleagues in local and national arms of the Learning and Skills Council during the coming year, to begin addressing such issues. We will also work with other local, regional and national organisations that share this interest.

A number of 'legacy' systems provide a certain amount of data relating to our mainstream funded learning programmes; essentially, the systems provide evidence for their related funding systems. While performance indicators are published for further education colleges, these are rather limited and are not best suited to the national Targets that have been set. There are particular problems concerning the assessment of 'value-added' or 'distance travelled' by learners that will need to be addressed. As mentioned above, in the context of local Targets, we will work with local and national office colleagues to develop new systems and enhanced local and national data analysis capacity. There may be better indicators of performance that we might use but this needs some further consideration. We need a better understanding of the impact/outcomes of learning programmes we are funding and of the contributions made by other organisations / external factors.

We need better evidence of effective programmes to increase participation and achievement, whether obtained through primary research, good practice studies, or well-conducted local field trials/pilots. We look forward to working with a range of organisations including the new national Learning and Skills Research Centre, which may be expected to develop such materials. We intend to involve all parts of the local Learning and Skills Council to establish priorities for a local evaluation strategy and work programme during 2002.

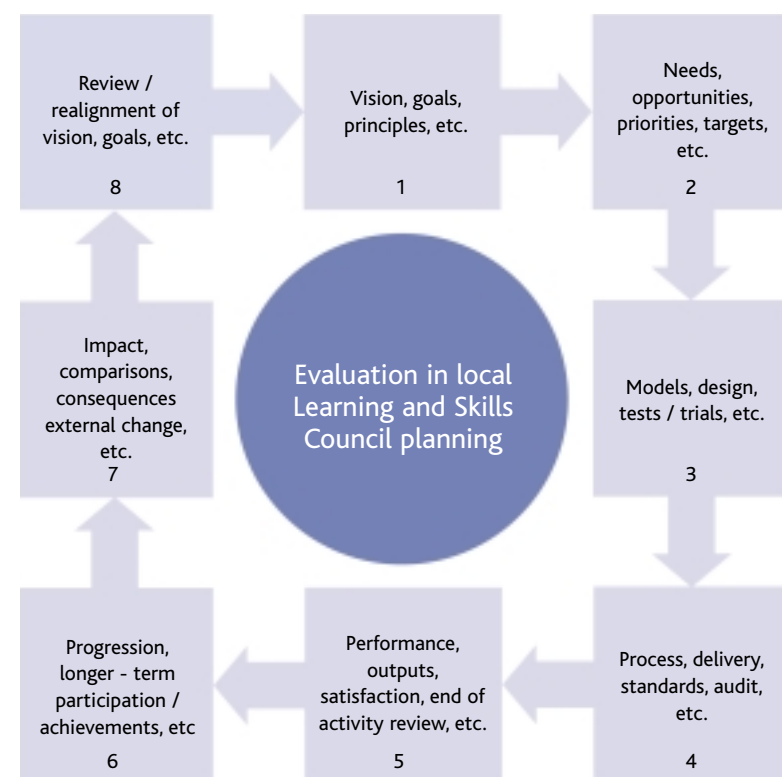


Figure 2 - Evaluation in local LSC planning

> Priorities for Action – Evaluation

1. Involve all parts of local Learning and Skills Council to establish priorities for a local evaluation strategy and work programme.
2. Develop in-house data analysis capacity and evaluation tools to support needs analysis, programme development, contract management, quality improvement and impact evaluation.
3. Develop effective working relationships with a range of organisations that can support our evaluation activities, e.g. Skills and Learning Intelligence Module of the region's Observatory
4. Support development of a Wiltshire and Swindon Intelligence Network, to provide a better evidence base for decision makers in a range of local organisations

> 2. Engaging Employers in Workforce Development

The Learning and Skills Council will develop a new national target or measure for employer engagement in workforce development to be published in the 2002/05 Corporate Plan. Using the definition adopted recently by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) of the Cabinet Office, workforce development⁷:

- is broader than training but narrower than education;
- is part of but not the same as lifelong learning;
- encompasses formal and informal learning; and
- focuses on those in or near the workforce.

This suggests the following definition: "workforce development consists of activities which increase the knowledge, skills, abilities and capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workplace". Consequently, workforce development might cover a large proportion of LSC activities and should make a significant contribution to economic performance. It is widely recognised that employer engagement in workforce development is vital in developing the skills needed for a modern competitive economy. The need to engage individuals in the process is covered later in the Plan.

The following key issues and objectives have arisen from our assessment of local needs and priorities for development in learning provision and from our local consultation activities.

Key Issues

- Local employers report high levels of skills shortage vacancies particularly in manufacturing, construction, business services and health and social care.
- Some local employers experience recruitment and retention problems arising from uncompetitive wage rates; poor image of an occupation or sector; longstanding under-investment in skills development; inadequate information and careers guidance
- Under-investment in workforce skills is long-standing, multi-faceted and deep-rooted.

To make significant progress towards increasing workforce skills requires changes in behaviour by employers, individuals and by Government and its agencies.

- While required skills levels are increasing in almost all occupational areas, workforce development tends to be concentrated amongst higher skilled workers, leaving a potential 'low skills trap' and perpetuating existing low skills levels overall
- While the returns to investment from workforce development are real, they are shared by individuals and employers, are often hard to measure and risks will always apply, particularly for SMEs concerned that skilled workers may leave them
- Workforce development is most likely to be successful if embedded in organisational culture or forming an integral part of business strategies, which are frequently less well-developed in SMEs
- Organisational behaviour tends to vary with size as structures become more complex. The understanding of such behavioural differences is key to understanding workforce development. One size does not fit all.
- Key barriers to workforce development such as cost, time, poaching, management skills, ineffective networks, quality, qualifications and information provision all inhibit participation in workforce development for employers, particularly SMEs, thus leading to weak demand.
- To achieve our challenging local Targets, we will need to engage many more employers in workforce development than are currently involved.

Objectives

- Encourage employer engagement in workforce development through the provision of relevant information and advice systems, the encouragement of improved business performance, the adoption of appropriate business models, and networking and comparison amongst businesses
- Make public support for workforce development more relevant and less confusing and onerous for employers – align workforce development support to business needs. A co-ordinated approach and the independence of advice to employers are priority concerns.
- Promote positive messages about workforce development and demonstrating the rewards, particularly through employers themselves and their networks
- Tackle under-achievement by managers, leading to wider benefits for changing the learning culture, especially in SMEs
- Promote more widely the value of vocational qualifications, while recognising the strength of objections held to the associated 'paperwork'.
- Increase employer involvement in directly influencing learning provision through new local consultative arrangements

> Priorities for Action – Employer Engagement in Workforce Development

1. Encourage employers to develop the skills of existing employees to meet skills gaps, where appropriate, as an alternative to recruitment in a tight local labour market
2. Following publication of the national LSC Workforce Development Strategy in 2002, develop complementary local action plan
3. Promote work-based learning opportunities to address a number of concerns: shortage of intermediate (level 3) skills; esteem of vocational qualifications; SMEs' ability to release staff for off-the-job training; and problem of 'first job no training'
4. Work jointly with local partners, NTOs, SW RDA, TUC and WSEP to develop local sector workforce development projects to address local skills issues where there is a strong sector identity and commonality of issues
5. Work proactively with local FE colleges to develop their proposals for local Centres of Vocational Excellence, consistent with the needs of the local economy and learners
6. Work with Business Link, other intermediaries and business networks to stimulate demand amongst employers and their workforce.

Outcomes, Targets and Resources

Local Targets

Reflecting the national Learning and Skills Council Targets, our local Targets action plan, will encompass:

- Increased employer engagement in workforce development (Target or measure to be set in 2002/05 Corporate Plan)
- Support for other National Targets

Tangible outcomes of our work in this area will include:

- A substantial adult basic skills in the workplace project commencing with 600 adults in 2002/03
- Promotion of updated modern apprenticeships and piloting of advanced modern apprenticeships for adults
- Half of all local colleges to have developed at least one Centre of Vocational Excellence (COVE) by 2003/04.
- New models of local workplace learning delivery during 2002/03 using a sector-based approach and including delivery of level 2 and 3 qualifications for lower skilled adults in Manufacturing, Care, Hospitality & Tourism, Digital & Broadcast Media (COVE), Science (COVE), Retail
- Increased commitment by local employers to the Investor in People standard
- Establishment of a countywide employer network during 2002/03 that will assist

significantly in making LSC-funded learning provision more accessible to local employers.

Key partners include: employers; National Training Organisations / Sector Skills Councils; Connexions Service (including Lifetime Careers Wiltshire); Business Link; Further Education Colleges; and Training Providers.

Resources

Mainstream funding: Investor In People (IiP); Further Education; Work Based Learning; Education Business Link

Discretionary funding: Local Initiative Fund; ESF co-financing

Nationally Targeted LSC Funding: Standards Fund (COVE); Marketing; Ufi/Learndirect

> 3. Raising Participation and Achievement of Young People

The available data indicate that 71% of local 16-18 year olds participated in structured learning in the year 2000⁸. This participation rate ranks the seventh lowest amongst the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils in England and contrasts with a national target rate of 80% by 2004. We are committed to raising participation amongst young people and, given its critical influence on our other local targets, we will be according this target our highest priority.

Achievement rates at levels 2 and 3 at age 19 are below average and reflect the low levels of local learning participation post-16. In 2000, 66% of the 19 year old cohort had achieved level 2 and 39% had achieved level 3 in contrast with national targets of 85% and 55% respectively for 2004. These rates of achievement are lower than might be expected in this local labour market and must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The following key issues and objectives have arisen from our assessment of local needs and priorities for development in learning provision and from our local consultation activities.

Key Issues

- lack of a comprehensive strategy to offer alternatives to the national curriculum pre-16 - a broader range of provision is needed
- lower than national average achievement in Swindon at all Key Stages of the national curriculum, half of local schools below national average achievement at Key Stage 4 (5+ A*-C GCSEs)
- limited provision of balanced and consistent information to young people on post-16 options
- little increase in 'staying on' rates locally in recent years – falling behind other areas
- lack of single coherent funding system nationally for all post-16 provision
- very low local unemployment and widespread employment options for young people in low skilled work

- few short-term incentives to young people for participation in learning post-16
- insufficient support provided by some local employers for young people's structured learning – some structured learning currently outside scope of LSC funding

Objectives

Having established what we think are some of the key issues we can address, we and our partners have identified a range of key activities that will help us achieve our Target for increasing participation in learning for 16-18 year olds.

The Green Paper '14-19: extending opportunities, raising standards', makes proposals to support success for young people during the 14-19 phase. The results of consultation on this set of proposals will provide the wider context for local activity and set future policy direction. Local activity to support the implementation of the findings of Cassel's report, which sets the national framework for developing Modern Apprenticeships, will also contribute to raising participation by local 16-18 year olds.

We are supporting a number of initiatives targeted at young people from age 14, based in the recognition that poor experiences of compulsory education and failure to achieve good examination results at age 16 can have serious effects on future participation in learning. In addition to the national drive to increase flexibility in the curriculum for 14-16 year-olds, and the work of Education Business Plus locally, we have prioritised this area of work for support with our discretionary funding.

In addition to our mainstream activities, we are targeting local discretionary funds to support this key local priority in the following ways.

- Development of local partnerships, led by FE colleges, that will provide enhanced vocational and work-related learning for 14-16 year olds. This reflects the fact that vocational alternatives to the national curriculum. This will result in higher achievement levels and subsequent higher participation post-16.
- A small number of local under-performing schools will be supported in improving attendance, participation and achievement for pupils that might otherwise not achieve good examination results. A range of pupil incentives, additional learner support and improvements to learning infrastructure will be funded.
- An integrated programme of activities will involve Connexions and local providers in raising awareness of the revised Modern Apprenticeships and support the development of provision to deliver the requirements of the new apprenticeships.
- A range of ESF supported activities will assist young people who would otherwise not continue in learning post-16. These activities will be complementary to Connexions, Learning Gateway and other local initiatives targeted at disaffected young people.

We are working closely with the two local LEAs and schools in our area to develop measures that will have a significant impact on schools examinations achievement and subsequent participation in learning post-16. A number of under-performing schools have been identified and proposals sought for activities to be funded by the LSC during 2002/03.

The Connexions Service will become operational during 2002, and we will work closely with its officers and the management board to ensure that young people receive appropriate support, particularly at transition at 16. This will be particularly important to those young people who need extra support, are vulnerable, disengaged or disaffected from learning. The Learning Gateway programme will actively target this group. Additionally, ESF co-financing arrangements will enable support for local projects, which will be complementary to both Connexions services and mainstream learning programmes.

During 2002/03, we will undertake a systematic and comprehensive review of post-16 learning provision across Wiltshire and Swindon (to include a consideration of 14-19 learning issues) in order to identify:

- the quality of current learning provision
- gaps in provision – for example in geography or diversity of offer
- current assets (college, school, provider, community facilities e.g. mobile learning units)
- how the current provision meets the needs of learners

The activity will inform and identify any action that might arise as a result of Ofsted/ ALI 14-19 area inspection if undertaken in this area. The need to expand capacity will be considered so that 2,306 additional 16-18 learners will be accommodated. Where there already exists prima facie evidence of need, we are working with one local school and the relevant LEA to establish the case for creating a new 6th form.

Given that we know a large number of young people opt for employment locally without structured learning, we will work with our providers to engage these young people and their employers in order to stimulate demand. Promotion of the new Modern Apprenticeship framework will be a priority activity to stimulate demand from young people and their employers through work based learning.

A significant increase in local provision will be needed over the next few years to accommodate 2,306 additional learners (equivalent to 10% of the 16-18 cohort). We expect to focus growth funding on this activity over the lifetime of this strategic plan. We will use our 'mainstream' funding allocations process to bring forward a greater number and wider range of learning opportunities for young people. Our growth funding allocation will be targeted particularly at ensuring that every 16-18 year old has the opportunity to pursue further learning, in school, college or work-based provision. FE providers that exceed their growth targets for 16-18 year olds will be able to claim 'responsive growth' funding as an additional incentive to engage more young learners.

As noted above, there are a number of national and local initiatives that should provide a significant contribution to achievement of our Target. Some areas that would be particularly helpful to raise levels of participation from their currently low levels include:

- extension of Educational Maintenance Allowances, particularly in communities where achievement and participation post-16 are low – the available evidence

suggests that this would be particularly effective in addressing the low levels of participation in Swindon;

- tax credits or other measures to be brought forward as part of a national strategy to encourage employer engagement in workforce development would, again, be particularly effective in Wiltshire and Swindon;
- raising of the 'structured learning' leaving age so that all young people had to continue in structured learning until the age of 18. This initiative would ensure that we matched the 'best in the world' in terms of 16-18 participation rates

The activities that will help us to achieve our Target for increasing participation in learning for 16-18 year olds will also have a significant impact on the achievement of young people at levels 2 and 3 at age 19. A number of additional activities are summarised below that will deliver improved achievement by young people at age 19.

Our mainstream provision for young people will have growth funds prioritised for work within nationally targeted areas, whilst specific local action plans will be created to ensure that progress towards targeted achievements is maximised, for example, action plans at Level 2 and Level 3.

The quality of the learning environment is key to improving achievement for learners. Our Quality Improvement Team already provides support to our FE and work-based learning providers and attention will be placed on improving local learner feedback as a means of identifying areas where improved retention and achievement may be secured.

Our focus will remain to enable all learners to achieve positive outcomes and make progress through relevant learning routes. The learning programmes will be subject of a local evaluation strategy and work to analyse data contained within the new Individual Learner Record will be important in continuing to develop post-16 provision in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Using a mix of our mainstream and discretionary funding, during 2002/03 we will pilot appropriate activity with young people who otherwise are at risk of not achieving a level 2 qualification. We will engage Connexions and our learning providers to ensure that all 16-19 year olds are targeted for support to achieve a level 2 or 3 qualification.

We will target young people whose highest qualification is level 2 for support in progressing to level 3 and beyond. A mix of new incentives and improved advice and support will be required, including support for young learners from employers. Achieving this Target will require a range of new and more flexible learning provision to be made available, to accommodate the needs of employers and their young employees.

We will 'open up' the 16-19 FE funding block to Work Based Learning Providers whose performance is consistently good in order to increase their flexibility in delivering Level 2 and 3 qualifications to this cohort.

> **Priorities for Action – Participation and Achievement of Young People**

1. Implement the Level 2 Targets Action Plan
2. Support targeted development of the provider network, including development of Centres of Vocational Excellence (COVE)
3. Develop effective mechanisms to respond to the needs of learners and non-learners, e.g. through work with the Connexions service
4. Focus discretionary funding on activities for schools students aged 14-16 to increase learning participation post-16

Outcomes, Targets and Resources

Local Targets

Reflecting the national Learning and Skills Council Targets, our local Targets action plan, will encompass:

- an additional 2,306 16-18 year olds to participate in LSC-funded learning in 2004
- at age 19, an additional 601 local young people to achieve at level 2 in 2004
- at age 19, an additional 489 local young people to achieve at level 3 in 2004

Key partners include: local education authorities; Connexions Service (including LCW); schools; further education colleges; and training providers.

Resources

Mainstream funding: Further Education; School sixth forms; Work-based Learning; Education Business Link

Discretionary funding: Local Initiative Fund; ESF co-financing

Nationally Targeted LSC Funding: Standards fund; level 2 targets action plan; Marketing

> **4. Raising Participation and Achievement of Adults**

Achievement rates for adults in the Wiltshire and Swindon workforce are above regional and national rates. This is, in part, explained by high rates of inward migration of higher skilled workers servicing the economic needs of the county, particularly in Swindon. This effect is less evident at lower skills levels, for example, local basic skills levels are very similar to the national levels with approximately 78,000-79,000 lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills.

In 2000, 1,918 local learners improved their basic skills through LSC funded provision. We aim to support improved basic skills for 11,104 adults in this area and will be making this task a high priority in the next three years. We will also be tackling the problem of skills shortages and gaps in the local workforce by increasing dramatically

the numbers of local adults achieving levels 2 and 3 qualifications for the first time. The national level 2 target will be set in the 2002/05 Corporate Plan and we will adopt a local target later in 2002. During 1999/00, 2,117 local adults achieved level 3 for the first time through study at local FE colleges. Our target is for 24,593 local adults to achieve level 3 through LSC funded learning by 2004.

The following key issues and objectives have arisen from our assessment of local needs and priorities for development in learning provision and from our local consultation activities.

Key Issues

An assessment of data (comparatively, where available) relating to adults (aged over 19 years) in the county and consideration of national and local infrastructure, funding and policy has led to the identification of the following key issues:

- approximately one-in-five adults has poor basic skills that need to be addressed before other learning needs
- low awareness of the "benefits" of learning and low motivation amongst lowest skilled
- lack of locally based provision and availability of transport / childcare present great challenge in rural areas
- perception of barriers to learning related to different levels of motivation to learn - for less motivated, 'free training' or financial reward may be needed
- need for independent and comprehensive information, advice and guidance for adults wishing to participate in learning
- lack of entitlement to funding for education and training for individuals aged 19+ even at lower qualification levels - a 'trap' for non-participants at ages 16-18
- lack of accessibility / flexibility of existing provision – insufficiently diverse
- much learning provision funded by employers is short duration, job specific and does not lead to formal accreditation
- many low skilled adults in occupations where paid time-off is unavailable
- lack of employer engagement in workforce development, particularly for lower skilled staff and those with least motivation

Objectives

To increase the achievement and qualification levels of adults by tackling issues related to participation in learning, for those unemployed and in the workplace, especially those with no or low existing levels of qualifications, in particular to:

- raise levels of basic skills
- ensure effective provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) through the Steps to Learning IAG partnership
- work with local providers of learning to ensure a comprehensive offer to learners

- work with local providers to raise standards in learning including achievement rates
- work with employers to encourage effective development of their workforce
- listen to learners and non-learners and respond effectively

All of our activities are in support of the national basic skills strategy, Skills for Life, which sets priorities for addressing the literacy, numeracy and language needs of adults in England. In turn this will support our key objective to extend participation in learning and raise achievement of adults.

A local basic skills delivery plan has been completed which sets out our priorities for action and targets for achievement. The emphasis within Wiltshire and Swindon, to achieve these targets, is to work in partnership with others. This includes engaging with agencies, which have also identified basic skills as a priority such as Employment Service, Probation service and Ministry of Defence. Equally important will be working with existing and new basic skills learning providers.

The bulk of delivery of basic skills learning will be funded through mainstream FE funding agreements and we will follow the national lead in treating adult basic skills as a high priority in allocating FE growth funds for 2002/03. Other complementary projects will support this core FE activity. A range of initiatives have been agreed with the LEAs in respect of their Adult and Community Learning Plans. These include family learning, family literacy and numeracy, outreach learning, day and evening classes at various venues. Our local basic skills delivery plan identifies such areas of action that are considered essential elements of taking forward this agenda, as outlined below.

We will bring additional funding to the achievement of the Basic Skills target in the form of ESF Co-financing funds. More than £750,000 of additional funds will be available in 2002/03. This money will be concentrated particularly on building capacity of existing provision and support introduction of new provision, including voluntary sector capacity to support basic skills delivery. We will be investing significant sums of money to build the local provider infrastructure for basic skills delivery during 2002/03. Funds for work through a new voluntary sector contracting consortium will be targeted at basic skills provision and learners with no or low qualifications, thus impacting significantly on widening participation and achievement targets

A range of activities are planned to support the overall promotion of basic skills learning. Promotional and communication plans will be developed to include: radio advertising, developing newspaper interest, adult learners' week activity, publication of the local delivery plan, etc. These will be complementary to the planned outreach activities and awareness raising which will be planned to stimulate demand by individuals. Further developments include neighbourhood learning champions and a volunteers network of mentors to support individuals, particularly focusing on deprived communities.

As appropriate, we will ensure that our learning providers' self-assessments and development plans address basic skills issues and will raise awareness and train workers at different levels, i.e. basic skills teachers, 'front line' workers in Employment Service, Probation Service, etc.

Progress in achieving our 2002-2003 delivery plan will be reviewed by the Wiltshire and Swindon Basic Skills Strategic Forum. The local Basic Skills Practitioners Group will also

support local delivery and will work closely with the Strategic Forum. Our proposal to implement one of the national Employer Training Pilots would enable us to achieve 1,000 basic skills qualifications by subsidising the cost to employers of releasing staff for training.

We have possibly our greatest challenge in raising local adults achievement at level 3; our local Target requires that one-in-five local adults not already qualified at level 3 should become qualified at level 3 by 2004.

A number of the local and national initiatives referred to with respect to our local Target for basic skills, will also contribute towards local adults' level 3 achievement. In particular, we are applying for one of the national pilots (Employment Training) to incentivise employers and their employees to take up basic skills and level 2 learning opportunities.

We will press through the imperative to meet this local target in our planning and funding of adult FE and Adult and Community Learning. The funding available, however, will need to be supplemented by employer and individual contributions, in addition to other public funding sources. We will seek financial support from the South West Regional Development Agency to promote the development of workforce skills at level 3 in regional and sub-regional priority sectors.

Ufl / Learndirect will offer delivery of high quality on-line learning materials through a growing number of learning centres and access points as well as supported home learning and learning on employers premises. This will help to make learning opportunities more suited to the needs of employers and their adult employees. To improve learning access in rural areas, as well as deprived urban communities, we are funding the commissioning of two mobile learning units that will be co-branded by local FE colleges and Ufl / Learndirect.

Services provided by the Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership will also play a key role in bringing forward new adult learners. To achieve our local target will require active involvement and support from many employers in the local area. In this we will work closely with key intermediaries including Business Link Berkshire and Wiltshire, Sector Skills Councils, trades unions, etc. Our Workforce Development Budget, supplemented with Local initiative Fund (LIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) will support a number of key local employer related activities.

Building on LIF activity in 2001/02, we will support a countywide employer-led training network, during 2002/03 to promote effective workforce development through events, publications, company training needs assessments; and developmental activities targeted at senior managers and owner managers. Through these activities, we expect to raise awareness and commitment of senior managers to the value of workforce development and to the Investor in People standard.

We will be piloting Advanced Modern Apprenticeships for adults, particularly in the hospitality industry and promoting the flexibility of local FE colleges in the delivery of training to meet employer skills needs. For 2002/03 this will focus on the priority sectors of: Manufacturing; Care; Hospitality & Tourism; Digital & Broadcast Media (COVE); Science (COVE); and Retail.

To significantly improve learning achievement at level 3 beyond the age of 21 requires a highly responsive high quality learning provider network that is able to address the

very diverse needs of employers and adults. We are in the process of establishing a community learning strategy that will bring together a diverse range of providers to tackle the problem of non-participation in learning.

One of the most critical barriers to achieving this target will be the cost of provision. We look to the introduction of a new Individual Learning Accounts scheme; tax credits; and a range of other measures arising out of the PIU Report to reduce the cost of on-going learning for employers and individuals. We will also bid to participate in the Employer Training Pilots. This would provide an ideal contribution towards the achievement of the adult target.

We will widen the scope of the 19+ FE funding block to engage other providers in targeted Level 3 provision to adults.

> Priorities for Action – Participation and Achievement of Adults

1. Create positive images and perceptions of learning and the benefits of learning and promote these widely within the community and amongst employers
2. Develop a local basic skills action plan that raises the quantity and quality of provision for different learning needs drawing upon disparate funding streams
3. Support the development of an adult learning strategy to link advice / guidance and plans for provision
4. Target support at development of the learning provider network
5. Develop effective mechanisms to respond to the needs of learners and non-learners, e.g. through working with the Information, Advice and Guidance Partnership

Outcomes, Targets and Resources

Local Targets

Reflecting the national Learning and Skills Council Targets, our local targets action plan, will encompass:

- raising participation in learning by local adults (target to be set next year)
- raising literacy and numeracy skills of 11,104 local adults by 2004
- raising the % of local adults with level 2 (target to be set next year)
- raising the number of local adults at level 3 by 24,593 by 2004

Key partners include: local education authorities; IAG Partnership; further education colleges; training providers; Employment Service; Ufi/LearnDirect and employers

Resources

Mainstream funding: Further education; Work-based learning (19+ provision); Adult and community learning; Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults

Discretionary funding: Local Initiative Fund; ESF co-financing

> 5. Extending Participation in Learning

Some of the key issues, objectives and priorities here are very closely allied to priorities highlighted earlier and many of the objectives will be addressed through providing additional support through existing provision ('mainstreaming').

Elsewhere in the Plan, a number of factors have been associated with participation and non-participation in learning. The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for extending participation so that under-represented groups are targeted for support. Some groups referred to earlier as being less likely to participate in learning include: older people; part-time and temporary workers; workers in certain occupations and industrial sectors; workers in smaller organisations; those with no / low qualifications; and the economically inactive.

Key Issues

Our strategy for extending participation in learning recognises that some individuals do not participate in learning because they face practical barriers to access e.g. lack of transport, childcare or funds. Others lack motivation, commitment or external support, or may attribute low value to learning, which may be compounded by practical barriers. Linked problems such as unemployment, poor basic skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown may also be significant factors.

Barriers arising from physical isolation in rural Wiltshire can be addressed through the use of outreach provision, mobile learning units and Ufi/Learndirect provision. There are currently 19 local Learndirect centres with a particular focus on e-learning, basic skills and SMEs. Additional centres are planned and, in partnership with FE, voluntary organisations and the private sector, their contribution to extending participation and achievement may be great.

Equality of Opportunity

The Learning and Skills Council aims to: "create a learning society which is free from discrimination and prejudice and which encourages and helps all learners reach their full potential."⁹

This aim will be achieved by the following national objectives:

- develop the Learning and Skills Council as an equality and diversity employer/organisation;
- develop the Learning and Skills Council as a champion of equality;
- embed equality and diversity into all Learning and Skills Council policies, programmes and actions (i.e. 'mainstreaming'); and
- report to the Secretary of State on progress towards equality.

This final objective takes into account the Learning and Skills Council's statutory obligations with regard to equality of opportunity¹⁰. The Learning and Skills Council must have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between: people from different racial groups; men and women; and people with a disability and people without. These should be regarded as minimum requirements; increasing participation

will involve supporting more diverse groups of individuals.

Equality and diversity will be integrated into all activities supported by the Council. Emphasis will be placed on mainstreaming equal opportunities rather than regarding it as a stand-alone or bolt-on activity. A strategic approach will be developed which:

- ensures that all LSC sponsored provision is accessible and inclusive
- increases participation and achievement of under-represented groups
- addresses barriers to learning
- prioritises the needs of a diversity of learners and seeks solutions to achieve this
- works in partnership with others and draws on their experience and expertise
- is developed and revised in consultation with others, particularly those it seeks to help
- promotes equality and challenges discrimination
- builds the capacity of providers
- builds the capacity of Council staff
- monitors the impact of the strategy and evaluates success.

Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Specific guidance exists relating to learners with special needs¹¹. Key features of the guidance are:

- the impact of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 which, from September 2002 onwards, will place new anti-discrimination duties on the main providers of post 16 education and training
- work experience
- access to good quality provision
- learner feedback
- securing residential placements
- assessment of need and links with Connexions
- inter-agency working arrangements
- transport and mobility

The Council will work to ensure that this group of learners is able to access appropriate, quality, provision that meets their individual learning needs. In particular we will:

- maximise mainstream funding opportunities
- work with providers to ensure that they meet the requirements of relevant legislation and support the needs of individual learners
- enable learners to achieve their individual learning goals and make further progress

- work in partnership with other organisations who provide a service to this group: Careers Service/Connexions, Local Education Authorities, Social Services and Voluntary sector organisations
- build capacity within the Local Council to ensure that the needs of this group are understood and that provision is developed to meet these
- share best practice between providers and other partners

Objectives

The following objectives summarise our local extending participation strategy:

- increase attainment at key stage four by targeting disaffected and disengaged young people
- increase participation in learning post-16 by young people at a disadvantage e.g. teenage parents
- diversify representation of young people in Modern Apprenticeship e.g. reducing ethnic / gender stereotyping and working towards parity of outcomes
- increase numbers of under-represented groups of adults participating in learning, including those who require significant and specialist support e.g. the homeless
- increase number of disadvantaged adults making measurable progress as a result of taking part in learning
- enable improved outcomes for disadvantaged learners taking part in LSC sponsored provision
- persuade and motivate inactive learners in employment and outside of employment that learning is of value
- raise basic literacy and numeracy skills amongst the adult population
- diversify and tailor learning provision to meet individual needs better
- build the capacity of learning provision to ensure that individual needs are met
- diversify the supply of learning provision to optimise the entry of new learners and make the opportunity to learn local
- develop the role of intermediaries in motivating and supporting learners, e.g. voluntary sector workers and adult guidance providers
- ensure that the quality of provision is such that it is accessible by a diversity of learners and does not discriminate against individuals or groups
- equalise access to learning by addressing practical barriers experienced by learners by encouraging providers to make available facilities that support learners e.g. childcare provision for learners
- work in partnership with others to achieve this strategy and maximise resources
- integrate learning, especially for new participants, into a range of local initiatives including those for which the main focus is not adult learning e.g. Sure Start

> Priorities for action – extend participation in learning

1. Enable all learners from under represented groups to achieve positive outcomes and make progress through relevant learning routes; set targets for achievement and retention (mainstreaming)
2. Work with others to implement a local basic skills action plan; raise numeracy and literacy levels amongst adults in support of the national strategy 'Skills for Life'
3. Target areas of multiple disadvantage and work with others to regenerate communities
4. Ensure that the needs of both young people and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can be met by learning providers
5. Work with providers to diversify approaches to delivering learning that engages more new learners, support motivation of learners, that builds on existing good practice and support innovative practice
6. Build the capacity of the voluntary sector to both support individuals taking part in learning and be a direct provider of learning to national standards
7. Work with employers to motivate adults in the workforce to take part in learning, particularly those who often do not benefit from learning activity in the workplace

Outcomes, Targets and Resources

It is intended that the following outcomes will be achieved:

- increased participation by groups currently under-represented in learning
- increased commitment to lifelong learning by under-represented groups
- increased employability and transferable skills
- increased level of basic skills amongst the adult population
- a diversity of accessible and relevant learning provision
- excellent learning provision that is reviewed regularly to ensure that access and support meet the needs of all learners
- development of practice that engages new learners and that can be replicated across providers
- increased involvement by the voluntary sector and employers in motivating and supporting learners
- active partnership arrangements that supports learners and maximises resources

Local Targets

Reflecting the national Learning and Skills Council Targets, our local Targets action plan, will encompass:

- additional adults to participate in learning in 2004 (Target to be set next year)
- sub-targets for participation and achievement by under-represented adults and young people

Key partners include: learning providers; voluntary and community groups; statutory sector organisations; trades unions; local authorities; employers; and employer support organisations.

Resources

The following resources will be used to support the Extending Participation Strategy:

Mainstream funding: Modern Apprenticeships; Further Education; Adult and Community Learning

Discretionary funding: Local Initiative Fund; European Social Fund

Nationally Targeted LSC Funding: marketing; residential placements for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; FE childcare places; Ufl/Learndirect.

> 6. Raising Quality of Learning and User Satisfaction

A key measure of quality in post-16 learning provision is the score achieved by learning providers based on formal inspections by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). A summary of the latest available scores for local further education and work based learning providers appears below. In these inspections, 1 represents excellence while 5 represents serious cause for concern.

FEFC 2000/1 <i>Note: No Wiltshire inspections in 2001</i>	Grades					No of grades awarded
	1	2	3	4	5	
Wiltshire and Swindon grades awarded	9%	45%	46%	0%	0%	11
England grades awarded	11%	51%	35%	3%	0%	336
ALI 2000/1 <i>Note: Year to 19 Oct 2001</i>						
Wiltshire and Swindon	7%	22%	21%	50%	0%	14
England	2%	23%	39%	29%	7%	179

Table 2 - Summary of local curriculum / occupational area inspection

FEFC 2000/1 <i>Note: No Wiltshire inspections in 2001</i>	Grades					No of grades awarded
	1	2	3	4	5	
Wiltshire and Swindon grades awarded	0%	55%	45%	0%	0%	11
England grades awarded	13%	52%	32%	3%	0%	300
ALI 2000/1 <i>Note: Year to 19 Oct 2001</i>						
Wiltshire and Swindon	5%	16%	42%	37%	0%	19
England	1%	11%	36%	42%	10%	333

Table 3 - Summary of cross-college / generic area inspections

Key Issues

- Generally, the issues are about raising the quality of what goes on in the learning environment (wherever it may be) and raising the level of learners' satisfaction with their learning. Baselines and Targets in this field will be set in the 2002/05 Corporate Plan.
- Small work based learning providers are judged with the same rigour as large colleges. Initial investigations suggest that it is now more difficult for learning providers to achieve inspection grades of 3 and above than was once the case
- In order to establish baseline measures we need to be confident in the category judgements resulting from the Provider Performance Review process.
- There should be no surprises arising from inspection reports. Any issues should be already recognised and addressed by both the local Learning and Skills Council and providers through the process of self-assessment/development planning and by Provider Performance Review.
- Although the colleges have robust learner feedback processes, this is not the case with the majority of WBL providers. These are essential for measuring local learner satisfaction.

Objectives

- To support our learning providers in raising standards, we are preparing a Quality Improvement Strategy. Our local Quality Improvement Team will play a major role in driving the Provider Performance Review process by: supporting the review itself (collating data, views etc); feeding back to providers; and supporting providers with their post-review action plans.
- We will support providers by advising them during the production of their self-assessment reports and development plans in line with the Common Inspection Framework and assessing/feeding back to providers on those plans. We will make monitoring visits to providers to carry out ongoing assessment of the quality of their provision. Although all providers will be supported, under-performing and coasting providers will receive additional support. We will work with providers, as required, to help them introduce robust learner feedback processes.
- The team will work with the Inspectorate to raise quality by: participating in inspection planning and feedback; ongoing liaison with the link inspectors from ALI and OFSTED. The team will work with providers both before and after inspection. In particular we will support providers with the production of their post-inspection action plans and will monitor the progress of those plans.

> Priorities for Action – Raise Quality of Learning and User Satisfaction

1. Embed a local Provider Performance Review process that supports providers in developing the quality of their provision
2. Target quality improvement resources on under-performing and coasting providers.
3. Use national and local quality assurance arrangements to ensure that learning providers achieve excellence in working with individuals who need extra support

if they are to succeed

4. Support providers, as required, to help them introduce robust learner feedback processes
5. Develop effective working relationships with OFSTED and the Adult Learning Inspectorate

Outcomes, Targets and Resources

Local Targets

Reflecting the national Learning and Skills Council Targets, our local Targets action plan, will encompass:

- raising quality of education and training and user satisfaction (Target to be set next year)
- more robust Self Assessment Reports and development plans produced by providers.
- improving standards as measured by inspection reports of local providers
- improving levels of learner satisfaction among local providers.

Key partners include: further education colleges; sixth forms; work based learning providers; Adult Learning Inspectorate; and OFSTED

Resources

Learning and Skills Council Standards Fund.

Health and Safety Policy

It is our policy to assure the highest standards of health and safety for learners. We will ask no more of our providers than we expect of ourselves. Our aim is to ensure that the programmes we fund provide a safe and secure environment, which will contribute to maximising the achievement of the learners involved.

The Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon intends to take all reasonable and practicable measures to minimise risk to those whose learning we fund. We are seeking to extend the health and safety awareness of the providers we fund and promote a culture in which health and safety is seen as an integral part of overall quality assurance. Such a culture should encourage commitment at all levels within the provider organisation, with compliance regarded as the minimum standard, and continuous improvement in standards of health and safety for learners being the goal. Our approach to health and safety will:

- ensure that quality assurance procedures are applied consistently to all provision, and operate in proportion to potential risk, recognising differing delivery contexts and varying levels of performance;
- build on past experience and good and effective practice; and
- minimise bureaucracy and administrative burdens on providers, while assuring accountability for public funds.

The operation of the framework will be subject to annual evaluation and review by the Council, to ensure its effectiveness.

> Annex 1 - Local skills needs assessment

Characteristics of our Local Area

Located in the South West Region, the Wiltshire and Swindon sub-region is an attractive location at the heart of southern England. Its land area of 3,500 sq. km (14.5% of the South West region) is predominantly rural with two World Heritage Sites at Avebury and Stonehenge and there are high levels of military and agricultural land use. With good communications links to London and Heathrow, the sub-region has benefited from investment by internationally known brands (Honda, Intel, Motorola, etc.) to become one of the more dynamic sub-regional economies in England.

Further information on the sub-region is available in the Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Assessment; an annual publication of the Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership and available on the Internet at: www.wsep.org.

In summary, the sub-region:

- is located next to the generally prosperous South East region;
- has very good east-west external communications links;
- has been an attractive location for recent business investment;
- has recorded higher than average growth rates for population, employment and output;
- is a large land area with low population density;
- has uneven provision of public transport services, particularly in more remote rural areas;
- has many settlements where access to public services is recognised to be poor;
- is diverse with both affluent and deprived individuals and communities.



Figure 3 - Wiltshire and Swindon in southern England

Local Population and Access to Learning Provision

Between 1981 and 1999, the population of Wiltshire and Swindon grew by 16%, compared with 13% in the South West region and 6% in England as a whole¹². The age profile of the 610,000 local residents in 1999 was similar to that for England and younger than in the rest of the region, which includes popular retirement locations, e.g. Cornwall. Swindon and North Wiltshire district had the lowest proportions of their total populations made up by those of pension age and above. In the former county of Avon, in Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon, 60% of population growth is accounted for by inward migration for employment purposes¹³.

The Wiltshire Structure Plan to 2011 projects population growth of 10% in Wiltshire and Swindon (8.2% for Wiltshire and 17% for Swindon) in the period 2000-2011. Projected rates of population growth at district level are as follows: Kennet 5%; North Wiltshire 7%; Salisbury 5.4%; Swindon 17%; West Wiltshire 14.4%. Net in-migration is expected to account for 78% of the projected 61,600 population increase over that period.

The population density of Wiltshire and Swindon is very low; it has only 46% of the population density for England and 85% of that for the South West region which itself is a low population density region. Low population density and a large number of small settlements have implications for the provision of public services, including learning provision. By local authority district, Kennet, North Wiltshire and Salisbury have the lowest population densities in Wiltshire and Swindon.



Figure 4 - local settlements and major road communications

¹² Regional Trends 36, Office for National Statistics, 2001

¹³ Regional Economic Prospects, Cambridge Econometrics, 2001

In relation to the Access Domain¹⁴, 28 local wards are in the top 10% of deprived wards in England and 17 local wards are in the top 10% of deprived wards in the South West region. For commuters and those with ready access to personal transport, poor access to local services may not be of particular concern. For residents lacking the ability readily to visit larger settlements, however, the continuing reduction in rural services may have a severe impact. It may also be expected that those lacking high levels of learning motivation would be further put-off by a lack of local learning provision.

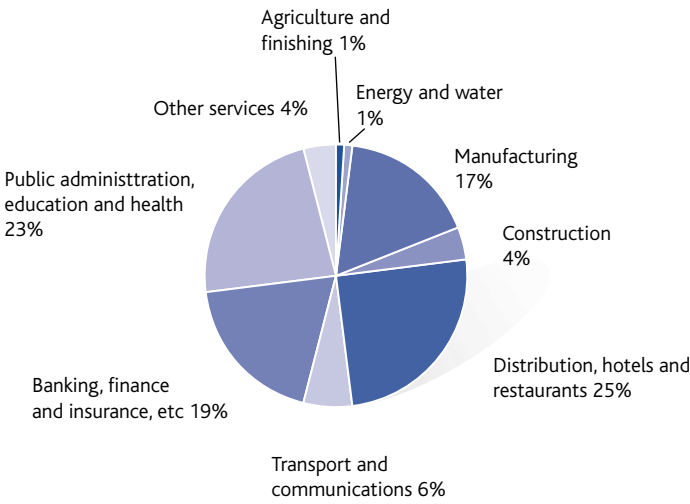
Against the Index of Multiple Deprivation, five local wards are ranked in the most deprived 10% in the South West region and two local wards are ranked in the most deprived 10% in England. In relation to educational attainment, one local ward is ranked in the most deprived 2% in England while another local ward is ranked within the most deprived 10% in England. Given the multiplicity of issues that are reflected in the Indices of Deprivation 2000, it is important that local action to address deprivation is strategic and taken on a multi-agency basis.

Learning provision in the area is very diverse with some 150 local learning providers known to exist, in addition to learning that is taking place within businesses. There are eighteen 11-18 maintained secondary schools in Wiltshire and two in Swindon, where the majority of 'A' levels are completed at the town's two further education (FE) colleges. The Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon funds four FE colleges and one external institution. The colleges operate from many locations ranging from full college sites to village halls and (from 2002) two mobile learning units. The main FE college locations are in Chippenham, Lackham (near Chippenham and principally land-based), Salisbury, Swindon and Trowbridge.

Local Employment Structure

There are approximately 279,000 employee jobs locally, of which 31% are part-time¹⁵. Broadly, the distribution of local employees by industry is similar to that in England. Despite heavy job losses in recent years, manufacturing industry's share of local employee jobs remains a little higher than average - 17% against 15% nationally.

Local economic activity rates are very high, traditionally amongst the highest in England, and unemployment rates tend to be amongst the lowest. This combination makes for a very tight labour market with rates of skills shortages and skills gaps amongst the highest reported in any local Learning and Skills Council area¹⁶. In November 2001, the local unemployment rate (1.3%) was fifth lowest of 47 local Learning and Skills Council areas in England, higher only than in neighbouring South East region areas: Surrey (0.7%); Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes (1.1%); Berkshire (1.2%); and Hertfordshire (1.2%). Within Wiltshire and Swindon, unemployment is lowest in Salisbury (0.9%) and highest in Swindon (1.6%). Males are twice as likely as females to be unemployed and some local groups (e.g. people with disabilities, certain minority ethnic groups, older people) and some local communities experience higher unemployment rates, as is the case nationally.



Source: ABI 2000

Figure 5 - Employees by sector, 2000

More detailed examination of local employment reveals ten industries in which Wiltshire and Swindon has a disproportionately high share of employees. Half of the ten sectors are in manufacturing and, with the exception of Agriculture, these sectors' large share of local employment is accounted for by the presence of a small number of large local enterprises. Overall, the ten sectors account for 16% of employee jobs locally compared with a 9% share in England.

Agriculture, hunting, etc	Manufacture of:
	Electrical machinery / apparatus
	Furniture
	Motor vehicles, trailers, etc.
	Radio, TV / communications equipment
	Rubber and plastic goods
Insurance and pension funding, etc.	
Renting machinery / equipment	
Research and development	
Sale, maintenance / repair of motor vehicles	

Table 4 - Specialist employment sectors in Wiltshire and Swindon, 2000

Local manufacturing industry has suffered significant job losses in the last few years. Between 1998 and 2000, Wiltshire and Swindon lost 11% of its manufacturing employment compared with a 6% reduction in England. Further manufacturing job losses were recorded locally during 2001, reflecting a global downturn in telecommunications and, in other cases, the high costs of UK production relative to competitor economies. In an environment of global competition, manufacturers must continue to demonstrate significantly higher value-added per employee to justify their UK operations. Multi-skilling and absorption of functions such as inspection, supervision and basic maintenance can have a significant effect on productivity in manufacturing companies.

¹⁴ The Access Domain is part of a wider set of area-based deprivation indicators, available from the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) at <http://www.regeneration.dtlr.gov.uk/rs/03100/index.htm>
¹⁵ ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2000
¹⁶ Skills in England 2001, DfES, 2001

Wiltshire and Swindon is similar to England as a whole, in having 12% of total employment derived from self-employment¹⁷. It is noticeable, however, that high levels of self-employment (and of small firms more generally) is a feature of more rural areas.

Kennet, the least densely populated district, has 17% of self-employment compared with Swindon with only 5%. Outside Swindon, Salisbury and the A350 corridor, economic activity is generally on a much smaller scale and more orientated towards land-based and 'lifestyle' business activities. These factors have implications for the design and delivery of learning provision and workforce development support across the local area.

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment

Males account for 76% of the 191,000 full-time employees locally. 95% of local manufacturing jobs are full-time and 28% of male full-time jobs are in manufacturing locally. As nationally, local part-time employment is particularly concentrated in service industries and most notably in Distribution, hotels and restaurants. Females account for 77% of the 87,000 part-time employees locally. Part-time workers tend to be concentrated in lower skilled occupations and participate in less structured employer supported learning.

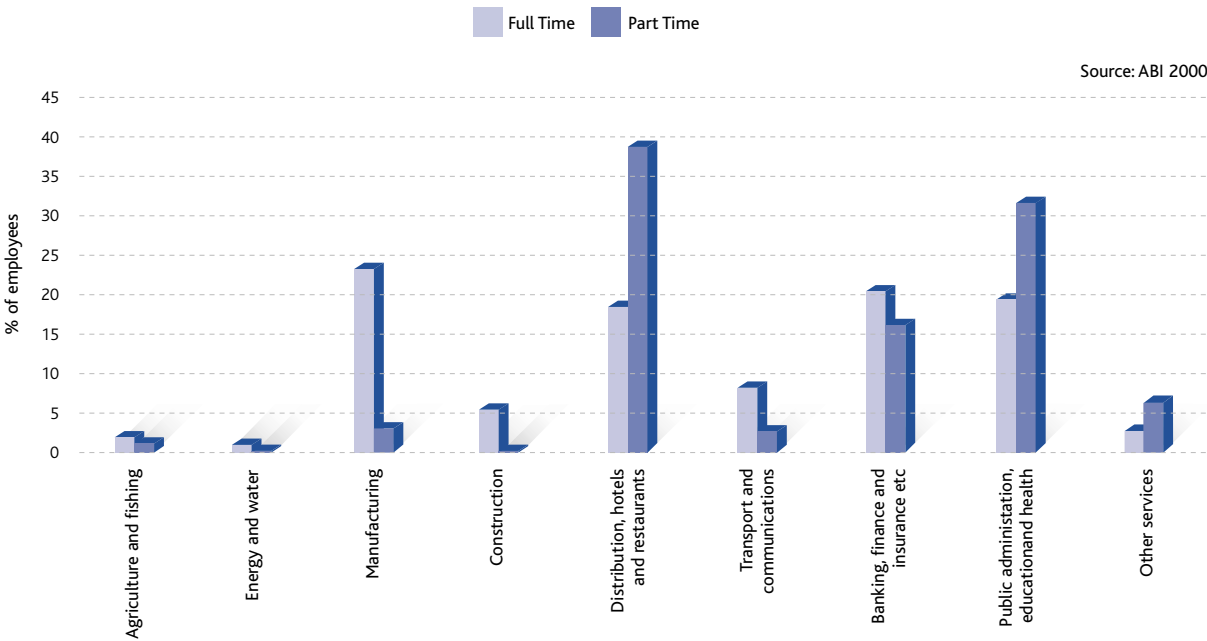


Figure 6 – Distribution of local full-time and part-time jobs by industry sector

Skills Supply and Demand

Despite definitional issues and problems associated with quantification of skills in the labour market, projections and surveys are commonly used to assess skills supply and demand in the economy. As a demand that is derived from the needs of production, skills demand is influenced by a number of inter-related factors including: technological change; market competition; industrial restructuring; changing work practices; regulatory and societal changes.

The actions of a relatively few large employers can be particularly significant in shaping local skills demand. This is because fewer than 200 local employers (0.7% of the total

¹⁷ ONS, Labour Force Survey, Mar 1998-Feb 1999

number) are responsible for 35% of all employee jobs¹⁸. In the short term, large investment projects and expansions can place particular strains on a tight local labour market; similarly, when large employers reduce employee numbers suddenly, there can be short-term surpluses of skills. Evidence of the impact of tight labour market conditions can be seen in results from the Employer Skills Survey and one study using data from the Survey classifies Wiltshire and Swindon as being located in the Greater South East where skill-shortage vacancies are high but a little lower than might be expected given the prevailing local unemployment rate¹⁹. No sector is immune from skill shortage vacancies but skills shortage vacancies are particularly concentrated in manufacturing, construction, business services and health and social care.

If one takes the view that, in the longer-term, skills levels in local populations tend to reflect local labour market needs then Wiltshire and Swindon's labour market is one that is more highly skilled than average²⁰. As mentioned earlier, above average local population growth has been driven by particularly high inward migration for employment purposes; labour market mobility tends to be associated with intermediate and higher skills levels. As one would expect, there are wide variations in skills levels across the workforce, with a general trend for higher qualifications achievement over time:

	1994	2000
None / below Level 1	21	13
Level 1	16	16
Level 2	23	19
Level 3	16	17
Level 4	22	29
Level 5	2	5

Source: Prism Research, Perspectives on Individuals' Learning and Employment in Wiltshire and Swindon 2000

Table 5 - Highest qualification (NVQ equivalents) for Wiltshire and Swindon employees and self-employed in 1994 and 2000

There are instances of labour market failure that can lead to skills demand and supply remaining out of balance over longer periods. Such 'failure' may arise for a number of reasons including: uncompetitive wage rates; poor image of an occupation or sector; longstanding under-investment in skills development; inadequate information and careers guidance. In areas such as Wiltshire and Swindon, with very tight labour market conditions, the former problems are exacerbated by a relative lack of additional skills labour to call upon, making solutions to the latter problems even more significant.

The structure of employment has changed much over recent decades with a number of key results: increased numbers of part-time jobs; fewer manual and unskilled occupations; a reduction in the employment share of manufacturing and production; and increases in the service industries and amongst managerial, professional and associate professional occupations. These net changes are projected to continue and

¹⁸ NOMIS website, Annual Business Inquiry, 2000

¹⁹ Skills, Local Areas and Unemployment, IER - University of Warwick, 2001

²⁰ Skills in England 2001, DfES

need to be considered when planning learning provision and providing information, advice and guidance to learners. Of even greater significance than net employment change, however, is the need to replace workers within all industries and occupational areas, i.e. so-called replacement demand. For example, while construction skilled trades are projected to see a net reduction of 65,000 jobs in the UK between 1999-2010, there will be a requirement for an additional 324,000 new employees in those skilled trades, to cover the loss of workers leaving the industry during that period.

Projected skilled construction and building trades in the UK, 1999-2010²¹

1. expansion demand or decline	-65,000
2. retirement and mortality	339,000
3. net outward occupational mobility	50,000
4. total loss (replacement demand) (2+3)	389,000
5. overall requirement (1+4)	324,000

During the last few years many local employers have reported difficulties in retaining employees. While a degree of outward occupational mobility is desirable and to be expected, where employers consider staff turnover to be excessively high, it can act as a deterrent to investment in workforce development. An alternative viewpoint, however, may be that effective investment in workforce development can actually reduce staff turnover in addition to addressing common skills gaps reported by employers.

Changing Workforce Skills

Survey evidence of trends in skills demanded by employers indicates that employee skills needs are increasing:

- more jobs require some form of qualification;
- fewer jobs require only short (less than 3 months) training;
- more jobs require long (more than 2 years) training.

There has been a reduction in workforce skills inequality both between men and women and across occupations. The highest level of skill increase has in fact been in 'personal and protective services' occupations. However, part-time and temporary workers and those working in 'traditional' organisations, in terms of human resource practices, have seen their skills grow less quickly. There is substantial evidence of a significant increase in skills demand across all major occupational groups.

While 'staying-on' rates and achievement by young people in full-time education have improved in recent years, qualification levels in competitor countries often exceed those in the UK. The implication for the UK is that the workforce post 21 will have a considerable amount of 'catching up' to do as they progress through work.

Training is distributed unevenly among employees. Those with higher skills, employees in large firms and younger people are more likely to participate in training. Almost 30% of employees in 'professional' occupations participate in training, compared to 14% in clerical and secretarial, 12% in craft & related and 7% for plant and machine operatives.

The proportion of employees receiving training increases initially with establishment size, reaching a peak among establishments with 100-499 employees and then decreases for very large establishments.

Percentage of employers providing training		
	1-4 employees %	>100 employees %
On the job training	59	90
Off the job training	33	90

Source: Learning and Training at Work, 2000, DfEE

This highlights the problems of workforce development within small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and particularly micro businesses. Such firms are significantly less likely to provide formalised training, yet a large proportion of the UK workforce is employed by such businesses

Specific groups are disproportionately likely to have low skills including the disabled, certain ethnic minority groups and older age groups. There is conflicting evidence on whether 'atypical workers' (part-time, temporary and agency workers) receive less development or as much development as might be expected considering they work fewer hours and/or might frequently be in transition between jobs. The Government has recognised the importance of opportunity for all and has assigned the LSC a statutory duty to promote equality.

The UK has a lack of lower and intermediate vocational skills particularly amongst the stock of adults in the workforce. This is exacerbated by the large proportion of adults working in SMEs who are less likely to train, and the fact that adults in the workforce with low skills are less likely to be offered further training at work. If the current situation continues, the UK may fall further behind compared to other industrialised countries in relation to intermediate skills qualifications and may also perpetuate some of the current inequalities in training distribution.

Workforce development yields benefits both in productivity and social inclusion. Benefits can be identified for individuals, employers and for the economy and society as a whole.

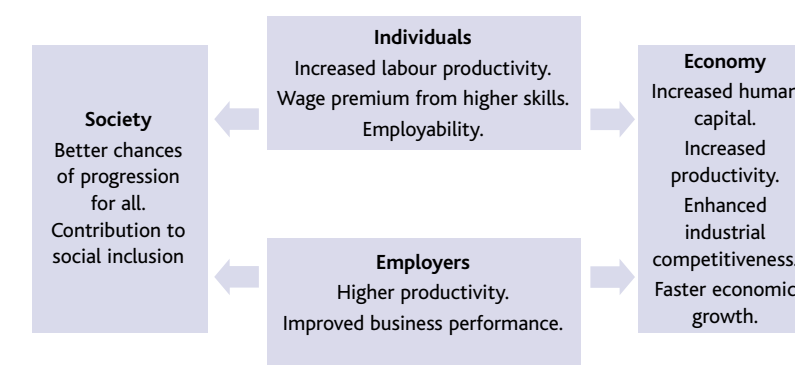


Figure 7 - Who benefits from investment in workforce development?

The National Skills Task Force estimated that:

- an increase of 0.1% per annum growth in productivity would generate around £10 billion more output over the next 10 years;
- closing the productivity gap with Germany would generate £50 billion more output over the same period.

While there are a number of problems in estimating the returns to training, the available evidence suggests that:

- training significantly boosts productivity;
- the effect of training on productivity is around twice as great as the effect of training on wages. Employees and firms share in the gains from employer-provided training.
- the results demonstrate a sizeable effect - e.g. raising the proportion of workers trained in an industry by 5 percentage points (say from 10% to 15%) is associated with a 4 per cent increase in value-added per worker and a 1.6% increase in wages.

A further benefit is the role of training in assisting those who begin work with low skills out of low pay-no pay cycles and into social inclusion by raising their skill levels and therefore their chance of gaining higher paid, more stable and rewarding work.

Sector Skills Priorities

For a number of purposes, the South West Regional Development Agency²² (SW RDA) has identified seven priority sectors across the region. These sectors will be the focus of workforce development activities funded by the Agency and for joint activity on sector skills with relevant National Training Organisations (NTOs), local Learning and Skills Councils, etc. The Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership²³ also has several priority sectors and SW RDA is currently funding workforce development projects in three of these sectors (in automotive, biotechnology and polymers sectors). Joint working of this sort, particularly involving relevant NTOs, should enable greater

Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership sector priorities	South West RDA sector priorities				
	Automotive engineering	Biotechnology	ITCE ²⁴	Materials technology	Research and development
Advanced Engineering					
Marine & Offshore Technologies					
Food & Drink Manufacturing					
Tourism					
Creative industries					
Biotechnology					
Environmental Technologies					

Figure 8 - Local and regional sector priorities

Source: WSEP Economic Strategy 2000; SW RDA Website

²² More information available on the Internet at www.southwestrda.org.uk
²³ More information available on the Internet at www.wsep.org
²⁴ ITCE consists of information technology, communications and electronics industries

penetration and impact to be achieved, while also reducing the scope for confusion amongst employers regarding the plethora of public sector initiatives.

Centres of Vocational Excellence in Further Education Colleges²⁵ (COVE)

The Learning and Skills Council is using its Standards Fund to improve the quality of vocational learning provision in FE colleges. FE colleges are encouraged to develop their proposals for Centres of Vocational Excellence, consistent with the needs of the economy. Key objectives are that Centres will:

- be of high quality and take account of local, regional, sectoral and national needs;
- increase active employer/college engagement to underpin, develop and strengthen innovative and flexible approaches to meeting the nation’s current and future skills needs.
- secure enhanced vocational learning opportunities for all learners in Further Education, and 14-19 year olds in schools, with a key focus on developing employability and career prospects, particularly for those from disadvantaged groups.

Nationally, the Learning and Skills Council intends that, by 2003-04, half of all colleges will have developed at least one Centre of Vocational Excellence.

Young People’s Participation and Achievement in Learning

If young people have bad experiences of education, or do not continue in structured learning beyond 16, this may have a profound effect on their future participation in learning and their long-term career earnings potential. A lack of foundation skills may also have negative consequences for labour productivity and business competitiveness. It is a national priority for the Learning and Skills Council therefore to raise participation in structured learning by young people. Here follows an assessment of current participation and achievement by young people.

	Primary		Secondary		Post-16	
	Infant	Junior	Lower	Upper		
Ages	5-6	7-8	11-12	14-15	16-17	18+
	6-7	8-9	12-13	15-16	17-18	Continuation of 9-10 further education, entry to higher education, work-based learning, adult and community learning, etc.
	9-10	13-14				
	10-11					
Key Stages	1	2	3	4	5	
Years of compulsory full-time education (Years 1-11)	1, 2	3, 4, 5, 6	7, 8, 9	10, 11	12, 13	

Table 6 - Key Stages in learning

Source: NFER Website, 2001

Notes: 1. While the majority of local children attend primary and secondary schools, in parts of south Wiltshire, children transfer from first school to middle school at age 9 and subsequently to a secondary school at age 13.
2. The vast majority of local secondary schools are comprehensive schools and do not select pupils on grounds of ability. Grammar schools select children on ability.
3. Post-16 years of age, education is non-compulsory. The main post-16 learning options include: ‘A’/‘AS’ levels / Modern Apprenticeships / vocational further education
4. In Wiltshire LEA, most Key Stage 5 learning takes place in 6th forms, whereas in Swindon LEA, most takes place at colleges, reflecting a lack of 6th forms in Swindon schools.

²⁵ Centres of Vocational Excellence in Further Education: The Way Ahead, DfES, July 2001.

While the Learning and Skills Council is mainly concerned with learning activities beyond the end of compulsory full-time education ('post-16'), destinations at age 16 are largely governed by achievement at 16 years in GCSE examinations. It is important therefore to understand the influence of earlier events on participation in learning post-16. The table above provides an overview of the structure of education and the Key Stages referred to later.

Achievement Pre-16

Achievement at ages 7, 11 and 14 (Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) may provide an indication of later results at GCSEs. The performance of both LEAs is similar at Key Stage 1, but Wiltshire LEA increasingly out-performs Swindon LEA thereafter. Locally, as nationally, females out-perform males in English (including reading, writing and spelling).

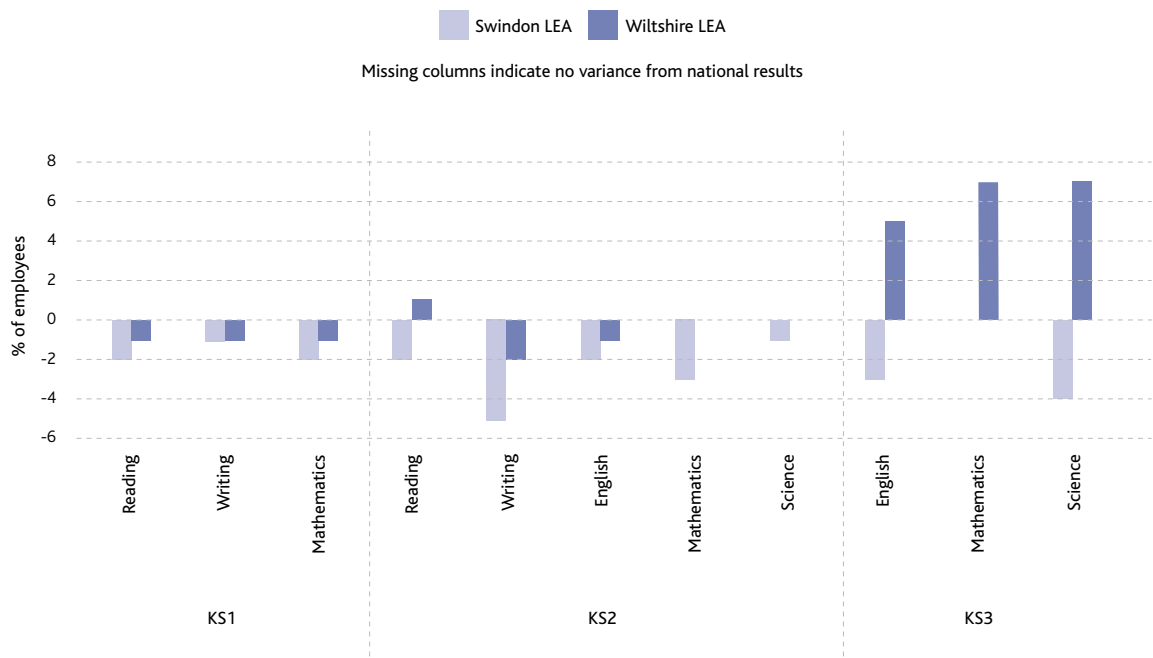


Figure 9 - Local variance from the national average in Key Stage tests

Government targets are for 80% of 11 year olds to reach the expected Level 4 standard in the Key Stage 2 tests in English by 2002, and for 75% to reach the expected standard in Mathematics. As is generally the case nationally, both local LEAs are currently below this standard. For Key Stage 3 measures, Swindon is within the lowest 40% (English) and 50% (science and mathematics) of LEAs, whereas Wiltshire is within the top 20% (science and mathematics) and 30% (English).

Key Stage 4 (age 16), National and Regional Positions

Overall, Wiltshire and Swindon pupils achieve above average performance at GCSEs at age 16. There is great diversity of performance, however, within this overall picture. Half of the Modern and Comprehensive secondary schools of both local education authorities perform above the national average for achievement of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C. Wiltshire schools maintain the lead established by Key Stage 3 with achievement in the range of 32%-100% compared with a range of 14%-65% in Swindon schools. It should be noted that the highest performing schools in Wiltshire have selective entry policies.

(percentages)	5+ A*-C GCSEs	5+ A*-G GCSEs	No Passes
England	50.0	88.9	5.5
Swindon	44.5	88.3	6.4
Wiltshire	55.4	91.7	4.3

Source: DfES Website

Table 7 - 16yr olds achieving 5+ A-C grade GCSEs in 2001 (KS4)

Young People’s Learning Participation Post-16

As noted earlier, participation by young people in learning is largely governed by their destinations after completion of their GCSEs: destinations at age 16 provide a good indication of participation in post-compulsory education. In recent years, nationally, the increase in ‘staying on’ rates, is one factor that has contributed to the increase in attainment levels across the workforce.

Local destinations of 16-18 year-olds are reported by Lifetime Careers Wiltshire, based upon a survey of the previous year’s Year 11 students undertaken each autumn. Trend data from the survey are shown below.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Further Education	42%	40%	41%	43%	43%
School	32%	32%	30%	30%	30%
Employment*	9%	12%	12%	13%	18%
Work Based Learning	6%	7%	7%	7%	1%
Unemployment	6%	4%	4%	5%	5%

* from 2000, Employment figure includes work-based learning employees
Source: Lifetime Careers Wiltshire

Table 8 - Destinations of Wiltshire and Swindon Year 11 students 1996 – 2000

There has been little change in the destinations of local 16 year-olds in recent years. Since 2000, the Employment destination includes employed work-based learning trainees, thus explaining the sudden shift from Work-Based Learning to Employment destinations. Although direct comparisons are problematic, it appears that more local 16 year-olds enter employment without structured learning than is the case nationally. Based upon the available figures, it appears that approximately 1,200 (18%) local 16 year-olds were not involved in structured learning at the time of the survey in 2000. More worryingly, approximately 300 (5%) were not in education, training or work at the time of the survey.

At age 16, only 79% of young people locally were in structured learning (including work-based learning), compared with 83% nationally and 84% for the South West region as a whole. The low local participation rate is continued at age 17 when it is 71% compared with 74% nationally and 76% for the South West region as a whole.

Participation in structured learning by 16 and 17 year-olds in Wiltshire and Swindon is lower than in any neighbouring Learning and Skills Council area and is the 7th lowest of the 47 local Learning and Skills Council areas. This may be a cause for particular concern, given the low national rate of participation compared with almost all OECD countries.

	Full-time education				Total	Other		Total education and training (less overlap)
	Maintained Schools	Independent Schools	Sixth form College	Other FE		GST	part-time education ¹	
England	25	6	8	24	63	10	6	78
South West	27	8	2	29	66	10	5	80
Wiltshire & Swindon	23	7	1	33	64	7	4	75

¹ Part-time education is almost entirely in other colleges of further education
Source: NS Bulletin, DFEE

Table 9 - Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds participating in structured learning, by LSC, 1998/99

The Government's Social Exclusion Unit has highlighted the problems associated with non-participation by young people. The Connexions service and the Learning and Skills Council clearly have shared responsibilities for raising young people's participation but raising participation will require action by a wider range of organisations. In addition to providing support post-16, it is important to address emerging issues prior to the point at which young people leave full-time compulsory education. The Learning and Skills Council will need to promote such activity in partnership with local schools and the LEAs.

Adult Participation and Achievement in Learning

The 2001/04 Corporate Plan commits the Learning and Skills Council to developing robust measures of adult participation that will enable it to track the engagement of individuals in learning, with a view to setting targets in the rolled-forward 2002/05 Corporate Plan.

According to the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU), for employees, there are two main groups:

- those who need to develop additional skills to do their job better; and
- those who need to develop skills to gain employment or to move to more fulfilling or better paid employment.

For both of these groups the issue of motivation is key. 50% of unskilled workers and 31% of semi-skilled workers are non-learners. The LSC has been tasked with addressing this issue by:

- increasing demand for learning amongst adults
- equalising opportunities through better access to learning

While recognising the key role played by motivation, there is a range of practical barriers to individual participation in Workforce development. These include: time; funding; childcare; transport; information, advice and guidance. Practical barriers may not deter well-motivated individuals. But for those whose motivation is weak, they can make a significant difference. Such barriers may not only stop an individual commencing learning, but may result in higher drop out rates and more people undertaking courses that are wrong for them. If these barriers can be overcome, they may contribute to an increase in demand and an increase in successful completion of development activities. However this may best be achieved through the integration of workforce development policies with broader policies to regenerate local economies and tackle social exclusion.

Policy initiatives aimed at increasing participation in education and training have tended to concentrate on reducing barriers for those who are most motivated to learn (e.g. improving access to higher education), or those outside the workforce (e.g. the New Deal). There is a paucity of sustained or coherent initiatives from either Government or employers aimed at developing those employed in low or intermediate skilled work, the Union Learning Fund being a significant exception. For example, only 13.5% of plant and machine operatives receive job-related training compared to 46.4% of professional workers.

Stimulating demand amongst individuals is essential to the Government's achievement of national targets. The creation of a learning society requires a significant cultural shift, which will not be achieved overnight, and will require constant and continual promoting of the benefits of lifelong learning. It needs a large network of agencies and individuals to be involved in stimulating the demand for learning, but coherence in delivery is essential. Achieving raised demand by individuals will involve demonstrating to those individuals, the benefits in terms of employability and social mobility resulting from workforce development.

Local FE colleges commissioned research in 1999 among adults of all ages to gain a better understanding of issues associated with their participation and non-participation in learning. Approximately 20% of local adults stated they would never consider participating in further education. These adults were weighted towards the following groups: older people; lower socio-economic groups and males. Non-participants and those who rejected FE had little or no educational experience beyond school years. Barriers of cost and time were real issues but lack of motivation appeared to be more significant for this group. A two pronged approach was recommended by the researchers:

- for non-participants with similar characteristics to participants – make it easier to participate
- for non-participants with negative perceptions of learning – give them a reason to participate

Similar results were obtained from a local household survey of 1,000 economically active adults in 2000. For those adults who were 'negative/very negative' towards future learning (8%), not being interested and lack of time were the most frequently cited reasons for non-participation. Only for those more positively disposed towards future learning were barriers such as cost, travel, childcare, etc. reported as significant

factors. Just under a quarter (23%) were 'neutral' towards future learning suggesting they may be open to persuasion. Self-employed adults, the low skilled and older workers were the least inclined towards future learning.

These results imply that, whilst 'internal' rewards (personal satisfaction and knowledge) are important, the majority of people may also require 'external' incentives (higher pay, 'free' training and employer compulsion / support. The Employer Training Pilots (in which we hope to take part) will present the Learning and Skills Council with a good opportunity to assess the impact of such measures as a means of incentivising employers and their workforces and driving up adult participation and achievement.

Learning Achievement by Adults

The 2001/04 Corporate Plan proposes three national targets for adult achievement so that, by 2004: the literacy and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults will be raised; more adults will be at level 2 (Target to be set); and 52% of adults will be at level 3.

Adult Basic Skills

There are an estimated seven million adults who are functionally illiterate or innumerate, but only 250,000 are taking part in relevant study to overcome these problems. The target set by Moser is that by 2010 there should be a reduction, by half, in the number of functionally illiterate adults of working age. This equates to 450,000 people per annum from 2002, passing the threshold for literacy and numeracy, compared to a current rate of 70,000 per annum.

The extent to which individuals recognise and acknowledge literacy and numeracy problems is potentially one of the key barriers to improvement. Only 5% of adults indicate that they have problems with reading and a similar proportion that they have difficulties with numbers, compared to the estimated 20% with low or very low literacy and 40% with low or very low numeracy. Moreover, around 500,000 people whose first language is not English, have little command of the English language. The issue is particularly prevalent amongst Punjabi and Bengali speakers.

As with other skills (as proxied by qualification levels), there are significant disparities within the population in the extent to which individuals are disadvantaged in relation to basic skills development. The Adult Literacy in Britain Survey (1997), indicates that the following groups are amongst the most likely to have the lowest level of basic skills:

- older people (aged over 45);
- those with low levels of educational attainment;
- the unemployed and economically inactive;
- manual social classes;
- those with a low income.

The following table indicates the levels of basic skills held by adults locally, as compared with regional and national skills levels.

Literacy %	low skills	lower skills	very low skills	total with poor literacy
Wiltshire and Swindon	14.8	3.9	3.5	22.2
South West	15.2	3.7	3.5	22.4
England	15.0	5.0	4.0	24.0

Numeracy %	low skills	lower skills	very low skills	total with poor numeracy
Wiltshire and Swindon	11.2	6.1	4.4	21.7
South West	10.7	6.8	5.3	22.7
England	12.0	7.0	5.0	24.0

source: Basic Skills Agency

Table 10 - Percentage of adults aged 16-60 yrs with poor literacy / numeracy skills

Using Basic Skills Agency population estimates, the numbers of local people with basic skills gaps are:

- local adults with poor literacy skills = 79,000
- local adults with poor numeracy skills = 78,000

Possession of Qualifications by Adults

Despite improvements, largely arising from increased attainment by young people, there remain 26% of the workforce who have either no qualifications or qualifications below level 2. The distribution of qualifications across different groups in the workforce varies considerably. Inequalities in educational attainment are apparent in relation to a number of variables including economic status, age, gender and occupation.

The following groups are amongst the least likely to hold any formal qualifications:

- ILO unemployed (22% without qualifications)
- economically inactive (31% without qualifications)
- individuals aged over 50 (21% without qualifications)
- individuals employed in manual occupations (up to 23% without qualifications)

Inequalities in attainment by gender are most apparent at levels NVQ 2/3 and equivalent. Whilst the proportion of females without formal qualifications is only slightly above that for males, the proportion of females qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent is considerably below that for their male counterparts. The proportion of females qualified to NVQ 2 or equivalent, on the other hand, is considerably higher. Women are under represented in education and training at level 3, experiencing only limited progression from level 2.

An analysis of educational attainment by broad ethnic group tends to mask the highly significant differences between ethnic groups if they are examined at a more disaggregated level. A separate consideration of all of the non-white groups shows that individuals from the Bangladeshi (24%), Pakistani (19%) and Black Caribbean (16%) ethnic groups are considerably more likely not to hold any qualifications than those of white (12%), Black African (8%) and Indian (10%) ethnicity. Only 28% of Bangladeshis and 39% of Pakistanis are qualified to NVQ level 3 or above, or its equivalent, compared to more than 50% of whites.

The disparities in educational attainment across occupational groups can also be considerable, presenting potentially significant barriers to individuals' prospects for occupational mobility. In addition, concerns expressed regarding the high proportion of managers and proprietors with either no qualifications or only qualifications below level 2 are borne out by current levels of attainment – 17% of managers are only qualified, if at all, to NVQ 1 or equivalent. This is significant not only because it indicates relatively low levels of managerial skills, but also because it is acknowledged that highly qualified managers can act as a catalyst to the uptake of education and training opportunities throughout the workforce.

Intermediate Qualifications (Level 3 & 4)

The significant expansion of higher education has led to an increase in the proportion of the workforce qualified to NVQ or equivalent level 4, and above). However, some concern has been expressed that this increase is at the expense of individuals who, previously, would have undertaken specific employment-related intermediate level training. More employers are now recruiting graduates to positions that, in the past, have been filled at technician level.

These changes are partly as a result of changing demand (i.e. the need for a higher standard of performance and / or a higher level of skill or knowledge). However, there are concerns amongst employers about the 'lack of appropriate work experience' and 'lack of commercial understanding / awareness' amongst graduate applicants, reflecting a continuing demand by employers for the skills and knowledge most easily acquired through employment based intermediate skills training.

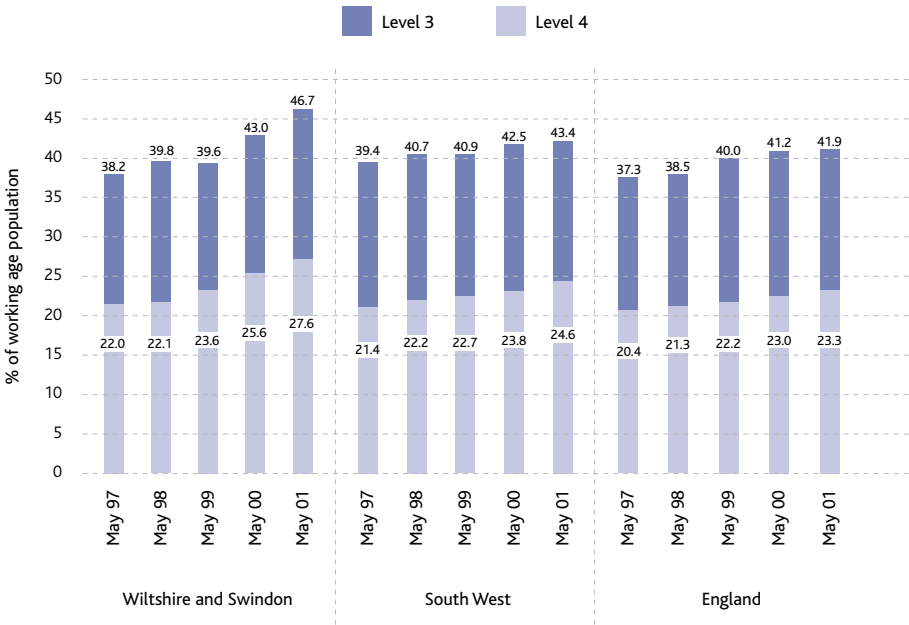


Figure 10 - Adults qualified at levels 3 and 4

Source: NOMIS, Labour Force Survey

Modern Apprenticeships are one route via which the supply of such intermediate work-based skills can be increased, notwithstanding age restrictions on eligibility. In addition, the development of Foundation Degrees (to start in 2001-2002) is also partly aimed at tackling this issue; the new qualifications being designed to supply highly-qualified graduates to address the shortage of people with intermediate level skills in a wide variety of professional areas determined by employers demand. The courses are designed to combine both academic and workplace learning.

While not a funding responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council, higher education plays an important role in stimulating demand for learning and in widening participation. There are important links between higher education and local employers, other learning providers and the wider community. Higher education institutions will also benefit from increased demand for HE that is stimulated by increased levels of participation and achievement in LSC-funded learning activities. It will be important therefore for the Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon to develop working relationships with higher education providers, not least, the University of Bath in Swindon.

> Annex 2 - Overview of Funding Resources

Our local commitment to the national Targets will be reflected in our allocation of funding resources. A major reason for creating the Learning and Skills Council was to bring together those sources of funding dealing with post-16 learning with the aim of making the system easier to understand, more rational and exploiting economies of scale. Broadly, the Learning and Skills Council's funding is allocated as follows.

Activity / allocation	England	Wiltshire and Swindon (%)
Further Education	£3,600 million	£48 million (68.0)
Adult Community Learning	£150 million	£0.48 million (0.7)
Work Based Learning for young people	£750 million	£7 million (10.0)
Workforce Development	£48 million	£0.60 million (0.8)
Sixth Form funding (from April 2002)	£1,300 million	£14.5 million (20.5)

While local Learning and Skills Councils have access to additional funds, those shown above may be considered to be 'core' or 'mainstream' funding, for which a national funding formula applies. As a local Learning and Skills Council, we receive an annual allocation of funds against each of these headings. Clear, nationally determined funding guidelines inform the funding allocations we make to local learning providers. Advantages of the new post-16 funding system include:

- a single point of contact for national employers and organisations;
- national arrangements for funding, payments, audit, monitoring and management information;
- national funding rates but with volumes reflecting local needs;

- local flexibility, allowing partners and the local Learning and Skills Council to focus resources on priority issues;
- significant local discretionary funds to promote equality and social inclusion.

While we refer to a new post-16 funding system, it is in transition and we will not have a common funding system until 2004/05. It is important that we maintain stability and confidence in post-16 learning provision, and that need will be reflected in our approach to bringing forward necessary changes.

While a common funding system is needed, it may be desirable to increase flexibility in local Learning and Skills Council funding arrangements to respond to diverse needs of local communities and businesses. This may be particularly appropriate where we are seeking to engage learners and businesses that traditionally have not participated in publicly supported learning and workforce development. Increased local flexibility and freedom will support achievement of national Targets and the cultural change that is intended with the creation of the Learning and Skills Council.

Local Discretionary Funding

Local discretionary funding may amount to as little as 5% of total Learning and Skills Council funding in its first three years. Because of the local flexibility it brings, however, its impact can appear disproportionately large. In Wiltshire and Swindon we have access to three main sources of local discretionary funds:

1. **Local Initiatives Fund (LIF)** - disbursed annually by our national office;
2. **'TEC Legacy'** funds (one-off TEC surpluses to be distributed after the setting-up costs of the Learning and Skills Council have been paid);
3. **European Social Fund (ESF)** – we are giving a high priority to the new ESF co-financing arrangements to ensure that they support projects and providers more effectively. Our local ESF co-financing plan is available on the Internet at www.trainingpays.com.

Local discretionary funds are generally used to: address local barriers to participation in learning; support local economic development priorities, including regeneration; and enable individuals to develop skills to the point where they can benefit from our mainstream funding.

The use of European Social Funds is guided by priorities in the South West Regional Development Plan. For our other two key discretionary funds, however, our local Council has identified the following particular local priorities:

- support for 14-19 years learning – measures to improve achievement at 16 and participation post-16;
- adult basic skills; and
- engaging employers in workforce development.

We are keen to ensure that we have a fair and easily understood process for allocation of our three main discretionary funds. For the period 2002/04, draft priorities, possible funding levels and timetables for decision making are set out below.

Discretionary funding	Funding priorities	Possible level of local funding	Decision deadlines
European Social Fund (ESF)	Workforce skills, adult basic skills and bringing under-represented groups into learning	£2 million between April 2002 and Dec 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult Oct 2001 • Agree allocations Feb 2002
Local Initiatives Fund	Activity in support of the LSC Key Objectives, particularly: 14-19 years learning; adult basic skills;	£0.85 million in 2002/03 financial year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree criteria Jan 2002 • Agree allocations March 2002
TEC legacy Fund	and engaging employers in workforce development	£0.9 - £1 million to be spent by March 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree criteria Jan 2002 • Agree allocations March 2002

As part of our commitment to joint planning, we will seek to influence the deployment of other external funding and encourage partners to work with us to support learning and skills development at all levels to meet shared objectives. Acting alone or with partners, we will identify and access such additional funds to address local priorities. Examples include the South West Regional Development Agency's 'single pot' funding and other sources of European funding such as Leader Plus.

> Annex 3 - Our Staff and Local Council

Our Staff

The national office and local arms share a common vision and values, based on the Learning and Skills Council's aim of being an exemplary public service organisation. Locally, we have identified a number of principles that will underpin our actions. All our dealings - internally with staff and externally with partners, providers and stakeholders - will be fair and open so that the reasons for our decisions and actions will be clear and robust. We intend that the following should characterise our approach to planning:

- openness to ideas and suggestions
- maximising the contribution of local people and organisations
- putting the learner at the heart of our decision making
- achieving clarity of purpose and responsibilities
- focusing on results and improvement

In these early stages of the development of the local Council, we recognise the need to support the delivery of our plans by providing staff development opportunities to address identified needs and to identify and adopt a model for organisational development that has an impact on staff development.

Local Council Members

Local Council members lead and steer our organisation to ensure that the needs of local stakeholders are met. We intend that local Council members will receive

induction and ongoing support to assist them in performing their duties. Council members represent the major stakeholder groups as well as organisations involved in local planning and delivery of pre and post-16 learning. The local Council has authority to act for the National Council in Wiltshire and Swindon. At this local level, relationships between key providers, partners, employers and communities are developed; plans consulted on and agreed; budgets allocated and contracts managed to deliver the objectives of the organisation for local learners. An outline of our local Council's organisational structure is shown below.

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The Bora Building, Westlea Down SWINDON SN5 7EZ
T: 01793 608050

David Simpson	Alison Bennett	Peter Marsh
Corporate Services T: 01793 608038 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Resources• Data Services and Facilities• Finance• Provider Assurance	Service Delivery T: 01793 608006 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contracting• Quality Improvement• Employer Development	Planning and Development T: 01793 608032 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing• Partnership Development• Research and Planning• Social Inclusion

Local Council Members

Bryan McGinity Chairman	Project Manager for the Wiltshire e-government Pathfinder project, with previous experience as Managing Director of a number of industrial companies, most recently at Tennex in South Wiltshire.
Tim Boucher	Chair of the Kennet and North Wiltshire Primary Care Trust; Vice-Chairman of the Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership. Latterly, Chief Executive of the Wiltshire and Swindon TEC, with previous experience as Managing Director of a number of industrial companies.
Gill Brain	Principal of Salisbury College, having previously held a variety of roles in education throughout the UK. She holds a wide range of voluntary appointments in the County and South West.
George Bright	Principal of the newly formed Wiltshire College, with previous experience in both education and business. He holds a wide range of appointments in the educational and business fields in the County.
Peter Chalke	South West Regional Development Agency representative and Leader of Wiltshire County Council, with previous experience in running businesses in Wiltshire.
Gill Chapman	Group Human Resources Director for WH Smith plc.
Tim Cooper	Business Development Director for the Shaw Trust in Trowbridge, with previous posts in SCOPE and a Housing Consortium.
Jim D'Avila	Regional Organiser for the Amalgamated Engineering Union and Electrical Union and has many appointments within Swindon Borough Council.
Revd Christine Gilbert	Chaplain for Economic Life in Swindon, with previous appointments in both industrial and agricultural dioceses.
Tim Moore	Colonel in the Army HQ in Upavon with responsibilities for learning services for Army personnel.
Dr Keith Robinson	Chief Executive of Wiltshire County Council.

Jane Scott	Wiltshire County Councillor, with particular interests in the agricultural sector and in education for the disabled.
Val Skinner	Director of the Office of Associated Colleges at Bath University.
Steve Stone	Executive Director of Avon Rubber plc, one of Wiltshire's key employers, and holds several other local appointments.
Gary Williams	Executive Director of Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon

> Annex 4 - Glossary and Sources of Further Information

ACVE	Advanced Certificate of Vocational Education – vocational 'A' level
AGNVQ	Advanced General National Vocational Qualification
AS level	Advanced Supplementary
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ES	Employment Service
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GCE 'A' Level	Advanced level
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
IiP	Investors in People
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PIU	Performance and Innovation Unit
SMEs	Small and medium sized enterprises
SW RDA	South West Regional Development Agency
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TUC	Trades Union Congress
Ufi	University for Industry / more widely known as LearnDirect
WSEP	Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership

Some Websites with further relevant background information include:

Department for Education and Skills - statistics - www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics/
Learning and Skills Council - www.lsc.gov.uk
Learning and Skills Council Wiltshire and Swindon - www.trainingpays.com
Learning and Skills Development Agency - www.lsagency.org.uk/
Lifetime Careers Wiltshire - www.lifetime-careers.co.uk/lcw/
National Training Organisations - www.nto-nc.org
OFSTED - www.ofsted.gov.uk
Performance and Innovation Unit - www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/
Small Business Service / Business Links - www.businessadviceonline.org
Social Exclusion Unit - www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/
SW Learning and Skills Intelligence Module - www.swslim.org.uk
SW Learning and Skills Research Website - www.southwestsurvey.com
SW Regional Development Agency - www.southwestrda.org.uk
Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership - www.wsep.org

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Learning+Skills Council
Wiltshire and Swindon