



# **Towards a Skills Academy for Social Care:**

*The Proposal for National Skills Academy Status*

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# Towards a Skills Academy for Social Care:

## *The Proposal for National Skills Academy Status*

Prepared by the Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnerships Directorate and Workforce Directorate of the Department of Health

July 2008

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# Executive summary

**This publication updates Towards a Skills Academy for Social Care: a Statement of Vision and Purpose. It sets out the progress that has been made and outlines the content of the Expression of Interest in becoming a National Skills Academy for Social Care that was submitted to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).**

The steering group endorsed the expression of interest, which has been based around discussions with all members together with the wider reference group. It is proposed that the National Skills Academy for Social Care will provide/commission programmes in the following areas:

- Personalised Care Programmes,
- Leadership Programmes,
- Quality Assurance and Kite-marking programmes,
- Career Development and Workforce Retention Programmes, and
- Recruitment and Broadening the Workforce Programmes.

This document is written without prejudice to the outcome of the bidding process for National Skills Academies currently being undertaken by the LSC.

# National Skills Academy Process

The development of National Skills Academies began in 2005. The programme is sponsored by the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The academies are described as “A network of employer-led world-class centres of excellence delivering the skills required by each sector of the economy.”<sup>1</sup>

DIUS and DCSF announced a fourth bidding round for applicants to be endorsed as National Skills Academies in June 2008. There is the potential for an academy for each sector of the economy, and there is formally no limit in this round to the number of bids that could be taken forward. Employer leadership and enthusiasm for an Academy are a priority requirement, but for this round added features included innovation in relation to skills, and some focus on LSC target activities, including Train to Gain, 14-19 diplomas and Apprenticeships. Academies are not expected to be direct providers of training (except possibly for piloting purposes) but may be providers of services associated with it. There is a strong steer towards endorsing the quality of training provision.

A steering group has been taking forward the National Skills Academy for Social Care since the Minister for Care Services, Ivan Lewis MP, announced Department of Health support for an academy, following the proposal by Dame Denise Platt in her report ‘The Status of Social Care’ in July 2007. Steering Group and Reference Group members are listed in Annex A.

A bid for Academy approval was submitted from the Steering Group to the LSC on 15 July 2008. The result of the first sift of applications will be known on 12 August 2008, with selected bidders invited for a competitive interview in early September 2008.

The NSA timetable<sup>1</sup> is set out below:

National Skills Academies 4 <sup>th</sup> round prospectus launched, inviting Expressions of Interest	5 June 2008
Deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest	15 July 2008
Confirmation of Shortlisted Expressions of Interest	12 August 2008
Interviews with those submitting shortlisted Expressions of Interest	2, 3, 4 September 2008
Selection and Approval Panel convenes to decide final shortlist for submission to DIUS Minister	11 September 2008
DIUS Ministerial announcement on Expressions of Interest selected for detailed business planning	September 2008
4 <sup>th</sup> round of National Skills Academies open	2009

The intention is for the National Skills Academy for Social Care to be open in March 2009.

# Vision and Purpose

## Care for its own reward – care for others to succeed

The Skills Academy for Social Care is intended to offer learning leadership and learning for leadership through employers large and small to enable the transformation of adult social care in England. It will encourage, support, promote and celebrate excellence in learning and working for people and social care organisations.

“Social care is there in order to ensure that people achieve their maximum potential, have full and purposeful lives, and exercise real choice and control over how they do this”<sup>2</sup>. Adult social care supports those with a physical or learning disability, people with mental health problems, and older people. It therefore underpins the economic and social life of communities. It can help people develop their confidence and skills to enable them to work – and it allows people with caring responsibilities to follow their own careers. Its contribution to social and economic capital is huge, and fundamental to society’s wellbeing.

This proposal for a new Academy is from a partnership of employers and employer led organisations, who have not only a wealth of expertise and experience in social care, but real aspirations for the sector. People who use services, and carers, have been involved in all aspects of this proposal.

Working in social care demands commitment. Because it is about people and their aspirations, the skills required are interpersonal, practical, social, technical - and infinitely flexible. The Academy will provide exemplar programmes for the skills required across the whole workforce in the private, voluntary and public sectors. It will champion and promote innovative ‘make a difference’ solutions to the challenges employers have identified.

It is intended to raise the status of this diverse and vital sector by championing a radical modernisation of approaches to staff and leadership development. As an employer led organisation, the Academy will:

- enhance and promote rigorously high standards in learning and training in social care which will deliver personalised services for all,
- enable employers to attract and retain talented individuals who regard social care as a rewarding career option, to enable continuity of service and of care,
- enable increased recruitment from across the diversity of the population, including those with shared and similar experiences to service users, to provide a responsive and empathetic service,
- put in place a rigorous and sound induction process, which ensures all workers have core skills for safe practice,
- secure training that is affordable, delivered in-house or as locally as possible, recognised by other employers, to avoid duplication and unnecessary cost,
- secure clear career routes with the development programmes to support them, encouraging confidence in staff and employers in the gains to be made from learning and training,



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- provide opportunities for leadership and professional skill development at all levels of the workforce to maximise the potential of everyone,
- provide support in reaching the training and qualification levels required to deliver a regulated service and generate demand from individuals and commissioners, and
- identify the ways in which the quality of outcomes for users of services and carers can be enhanced through effective learning and training put into visionary practice.

The Academy will not replicate the work of others. It will be the information and reference source for individuals and care providers to disseminate good practice wherever it is found. It will champion innovative solutions to the ways in which training and learning can be delivered and assessed, as closely as possible to the places in which people work. It will identify, promote and celebrate exemplars of high quality training in organisations and individuals.

The Academy will adopt as success measures:

- quality measures from inspection reports on regulated services show improved outcomes from the service users viewpoint which can be linked to staff development and training,
- innovative ways of providing personalised services are more prevalent ,
- the status given to working in social care by staff and the general public is improved,
- an increased proportion of training is delivered to care staff from Academy accredited employer or training provider sources,
- there is an agreed framework to support career progression from new worker to senior management, which recognises professional and leadership skills,
- improved retention and recruitment reduce turnover in the core workforce,
- improved recruitment of frontline staff as the sector becomes the employer of choice
- as a contribution to quality, the diversity of the general population is better represented at all levels in the workforce, and
- leaders at all levels in the sector take part in kite marked training, gain recognised qualifications, have clear career pathways and remain in the sector

# Products and Services

The key products proposed for development by the Academy during its first three years of operation are described below.

## Personalised Care Programmes

- New small employer programme – employers of personal assistants and small employers, including those controlled by users, wanting to offer innovative solutions and models of delivery to individual requirements – based on the business skills required to be a responsible employer. The Academy will link nationally with the Cabinet Office sponsored Innovation Exchange which is encouraging third sector solutions to social care issues
- New commissioning programmes at national level available regionally to ensure that employers are able to contribute to and respond to community and individual needs effectively and efficiently:
  - for the public sector concerned with community level commissioning and how to deliver commissioning for individuals.
  - for individuals/family networks/brokers who would like to develop commissioning skills for themselves.

## Leadership Programmes

- A new trainee scheme intended to have equal status with local government, central government and health schemes. Intended to identify future leaders in any setting and give entrants a rounded experience of different types of employment. Entrants could be new to social care or existing staff, with an emphasis on increasing the diversity of people in leadership roles.
- Identification and where appropriate commissioning, providing or accrediting programmes to inspire and develop the supervision, management and leadership skills of all levels of the workforce.
- A specific programme at national level for the most senior managers in social care, including Directors of Adult Services and those aspiring to the role. This would be achieved partly through the reshaping of the current multi-agency leadership programme, which is due for revision and re-tendering in 2009.

## Quality assurance and kite-marking programmes

- A new national scheme to encourage quality in training provision through an accreditation scheme for associations and providers of training.
- A complementary national scheme to identify and assure quality in trainers to support the drive to improve the delivery of teaching and learning, inside and outside the workplace.
- A new programme of encouragement and support for employers who wish to have their in-house training accredited to national standards.
- Identification and accreditation of materials offering distance learning support through a variety of media, including potentially Social Care TV.
- New programme to evaluate the effectiveness of training and learning as components of good practice and contributors to positive outcomes.

**Career Development and workforce retention Programmes**

- A new programme with training providers building on work already piloted and part-evaluated through QCA to embed key skills development and assessment in level 2 care awards. This would reduce the assessment burden for employers and learners, and enable key skills deficits to be sensitively identified and resolved.
- Progression schemes to enable care staff to progress into professional roles.
- Signposting the funding available for training and for staff and leadership development.

**Recruitment and broadening the workforce Programmes**

- A new recruitment and development programme 'Men who care'. This will be a national campaign to encourage men into social care.
- Care Ambassadors Plus. This will be an extension of the current scheme developed by Skills for Care. We will extend the scheme to promote take up of 14-19 diplomas and apprenticeships through encouraging careers in social care.

# Academy Structure and Functioning

A requirement for Academy recognition is that it has an independent structure which is not-for-profit. From a practical perspective, in its formative phase it will need support from an established organisation. During the business development phase this will be the Social Care Institute for Excellence. There was a firm collective view from employer and agency representatives that the Academy for Social Care should be a lean and focussed body, which complements the work of others but uses its expertise and networks to achieve a transformation in the delivery of social care through attention to the workforce and in particular its leadership. A shadow board will need to be identified, with all the responsibilities inherent in trustee duties, and a small staff team will need to be appointed. Although the bid identifies a possible structure, this will need to be fully explored during the next phase of the work, which is full business planning. The capital element of the bid has been kept very low to reflect this approach to accommodation.

The Academy has to demonstrate that it will be self-sustaining financially after the start-up period of two to three years. This self-sufficiency should be through income generation and employer support. In practice, much of the infrastructure of the social care world is supported by local or central government funding, and the margins enjoyed by most employers are not easily adapted to accommodate the costs of staff investment or infrastructure investment in an Academy. That said, the intention is to explore a membership model (which is also favoured by existing Academies) allowing for benefits to be linked to a degree to a membership fee. It also seems sensible and realistic to seek sponsors for particular programmes of work, which might interest some employers or agencies in particular, including those in the employment field. If developed carefully, the accreditation of training and trainers should contribute to the sustainability of the Academy and add value to employers buying into education provision.

# Annex A: Steering and Reference Group Members

## Steering Group

David Sherlock (Chairman)	Director 'Beyond Standards' consultancy
Jennifer Bernard	Programme Director for the National Skills Academy for Social Care
Sheila Scott	Chief Executive, National Care Association
Martin Green	Chief Executive, English Community Care Association
Des Kelly	Executive Director, National Care Forum
Jo Cleary	Chair Workforce Development Group, Association of Directors of Adult Services
Andrew Cozens	Strategic Adviser for Children, Adults and Health Services, Innovation and Development Agency
Peter Beresford	Shaping our Lives: the national user group
Julie Jones	Chief Executive, Social Care Institute for Excellence
Ian Mclintock	Chief Executive, Agecare representing ACEVO
Tracy Wharvell	Director of Business Implementation, Skills for Care
Glen Mason	Director of Social Care Leadership and Performance, Department of Health
Michael Preston Shoot	Joint University Council's Social Work Education Committee
Jerry Garrett	NVQUK
Keith Brumfit	Children's Workforce Development Council
Anne Mercer	Strategy Manager - Social Care Education, Workforce Directorate, Department of Health

**Reference Group**

Frank Ursell	CEO, Registered Nursing Homes Association
Lesley Rimmer	Chief Executive, UK Home Care Association
Andrea Rowe	Chief Executive, Skills for Care
Paul Snell	Chief Inspector, Commission for Social Care Inspection
Mike Wardle	Chief Executive, General Social Care Council
Vic Citarella	Local Government Association
Nick Johnson	Chief Executive, Social Care Association
Ian Johnston	Chief Executive, British Association of Social Workers
John Coughlan	Association of Directors of Children's Services
Helga Pile	Unison
Julia Scott	Chief Executive, British Association of Occupational Therapists
Stuart Etherington	Chief Executive, National Council of Voluntary Organisations
John Craig	Director, Innovation Exchange

# References

1. The National Skills Academy Network Prospectus Fourth Round. Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2008.
2. Putting People First, Department of Health, 2008.
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4. Towards a Skills Academy for Social Care: a Statement of Vision and Purpose, Department of Health, 2007.
5. Dame Denise Platt, The Status of Social Care – a Review 2007, Department of Health, 2007.
6. World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, 2007.