



the area

Your newsletter from London West Learning and Skills Council

Transforming provision

Strategic recommendations to transform learning provision in London West were unveiled as the LSC launched a period of consultation on 19 October.

Lively debate led to strong arguments for and against many of the recommendations as some 200 delegates had an opportunity to share and discuss their initial thoughts at an event compered by William Roe, a highly experienced facilitator.

'Today is just the beginning of the consultation period and I am pleased that discussion has been enthusiastic and forthright,' said Peter Pledger, London West LSC's Executive Director. 'I look forward to receiving more considered responses. The only way that the Strategic Area Review (StAR) will work is if we all agree the way forward. We will take on board all comments and opinions and these will shape our final decisions for improved and more effective learning provision in the future.'

The consultation period continues until 17.00 on Tuesday 4 January 2005.

The consultation document, response proforma, and a findings and conclusions report can be downloaded from www.londonwest.org/star or by contacting Anna Price on 020 8929 8553 (anna.price@lsc.gov.uk).



Hounslow comes out tops

The recently-published Hounslow 14-19 Area Inspection Report rates the quality of learning provision in the borough among the highest in the country.

London West LSC and Hounslow Council were commended for planning and implementing effective education provision. 'Good' grades were achieved for: the quality of 14-19 education and training; leadership and management; and access to – and participation in – education and training. These ratings make Hounslow's report the best in London and one of the best inspections in the country so far.

The Inspectors praised the quality of teaching in Hounslow's schools and colleges, the improvements in A Level performance and the development of a wider range of learning opportunities for young people. Hounslow Education Business Partnership's imaginative activities, designed to promote work-related learning and involve employers in the curriculum, were described as 'outstanding'.

Peter Pledger, London West LSC's Executive Director, said: 'This remarkable achievement demonstrates our joint commitment to providing young people with the highest quality learning, offering them a choice for the future.'

However, the Report also highlighted some areas that need to be developed,

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CORPORATE

HOUNSLOW

Comment

Welcome to issue 10 of *the area*, which I hope you find informative.

We have just successfully launched the consultation phase of the Strategic Area Review. I encourage those who could not attend the event to



get a copy of the consultation document and complete the accompanying response proforma. Your views are vital to ensuring the success of our aim to provide the highest quality learning and training that meets the needs of learners, employers and local communities

Congratulations to everyone involved in Hounslow's excellent Area Inspection, which was the result of a strong partnership effort. We are now working with Harrow and Hillingdon LEAs in preparation for their respective Inspections.

Finally, and importantly, we are about to launch our **Champions of Learning Awards 2005**, which recognise the excellent training and development currently taking place across London West. Watch out for further information and do please enter.

Peter Pledger, Executive Director

StAR research

For the Strategic Area Review (StAR) process to be fully effective, we must identify and address the unique set of post-16 learning challenges in our area.

In order to do this, London West LSC has funded a significant amount of in-depth research to ensure that the StAR process is guided by an accurate, up-to-date picture of local needs and current provision.

To find out more about the range of research that we have undertaken, visit our website (www.londonwest.org/star/documents.htm).

Recent findings from the following projects include:



- ★ A focus on the unheard learner
- ★ Adult and Community Learning, progression and non-accredited courses
- ★ Young people's perspective
- ★ Mapping learning opportunities offered by voluntary and community organisations.

Moving in the right direction



Javed Khan, Director of Learning and Community Development at Harrow Council, is the newest member of the Council of the London West LSC and is looking forward to his new role.

'The LSC faces some amazing challenges — meeting the needs and aspirations of young people and adults, addressing the skills shortages across the area and engaging employers. I intend to use my broad experience of over 20 years in the learning and skills sector to help the LSC develop its strategic direction. I also hope to ensure that the LSC understands the complex equality and diversity challenges across west London,' said Mr Khan.

Wealth of experience

He has been Director of Education with Harrow Council since January and is responsible for a range of services including all schools, libraries, adult and community learning, arts, culture and social inclusion. He was previously Assistant Director of Lifelong Learning in Birmingham and has spent many years working in schools, sixth forms, further education colleges and local government.

Mr Khan is the UK's first Pakistani/Kashmiri heritage Chief Education Officer. He has worked extensively with the voluntary and community sector and local business developing sustainable strategic partnerships tackling deprivation. His four children attend Harrow schools.

Hounslow comes out tops

(continued from front page)

including: the underachievement and poor progression among white working-class young people and black young men; the increase in the number of students permanently excluded from school; and the poor teaching accommodation in some schools.

Dr Robert Garnett, Corporate Director, Lifelong Learning & Cultural Services at

Hounslow Council, said: 'Of course we must use this as a stepping stone to further improvement, but this is a solid foundation from which to start.'

An Action Plan to address the areas for improvement is currently being developed and will be launched early next year.

To download a copy of the Inspection Report, visit www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports





CORPORATE



London West LSC, Hounslow Council and West Thames College have teamed up with the *Hounslow Chronicle* and launched a writing competition for the borough's Year 11 students.

Entrants are required to write a news story about the importance of staying in post-16 learning, and about the various learning options available. The winner's story will be published in the *Chronicle* and they will be invited to spend a day working with a reporter and gaining first-hand experience of pulling a newspaper edition together.

The initiative is part of a programme to get young people involved in the launch of the Hounslow Post Area Inspection Action Plan early next year.

Closing date for entries is Friday 12 November 2004. Contact Geeta Sharma on 020 8929 8444 (geeta.sharma@lsc.gov.uk).



CANDIDATE CITY

Going for Gold 2012

Winning the Olympics for the capital would provide a major boost to regeneration and development plans for west London.

London West LSC is a member of the recently-formed West London Alliance, which seeks to help secure the 2012 Games in London and to ensure that west London is in a position to maximise the potential economic and social benefits that hosting the Games would bring.

For more information about the bid to bring the Games to London, visit www.london2012.com

ESF news

London West's
European Social Fund
(ESF) Co-financing
Programme has now
entered its final
phase



A major discretionary fund, ESF plays a key role in helping to implement the UK Employment Action Plan. It aims to:

- Help unemployed and inactive people enter work
- Provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market
- Promote lifelong learning
- Develop the skills of employed people
- Improve women's participation in the labour market.

Match funding has always been a requirement of ESF support and the cofinancing arrangement means that London West LSC is able to provide it. This is great news for training providers, particularly smaller organisations with limited resources, who were effectively applying for 100% funding in the recent local tendering round.

Six workshops organised by London West LSC – one per borough – ensured that potential applicants understood the objectives of ESF and how to improve their chances of submitting a successful bid.

A total of 201 bids were received by the 20 October 2004 closing date from providers keen to win a share of the £14.2 million project funding available. We will be reporting on successful tenders in a future issue of the area.

For more information about ESF, visit www.londonwest.org/DiscretionaryFunding/ or contact Claire Dimmer at the LSC on 020 8929 8427 (claire.dimmer@lsc.gov.uk).

Hounslow Council Driving the message home

A new partnership agreement between London West LSC and Hounslow Council is helping to drive up the quality of learning provision in the borough.

The partnership is working closely with local schools, West Thames College, private training providers and numerous other groups to build a coherent, effective and high-achieving learning and training environment in Hounslow. This integrated approach to the development and implementation of strategies is also helping to ensure that budgets are used in a streamlined and complementary way.

The partnership is working to ensure that all learners can access high-quality learning,

regardless of their background or location. It is also driving the message home that learning makes a significant contribution to active citizenship, building stronger communities and establishing a commitment to lifelong learning.

Working together

Dr Robert Garnett, Corporate Director, Lifelong Learning & Cultural Services at Hounslow Council, said: 'It is absolutely crucial that all the partners work together to ensure that we are making the best possible use of resources and enabling learners to have the widest possible choices to suit their needs.'



4 YOUNG PEOPLE

EMA is a significant £450 million a year national programme



Opting in

Following the success of previous tours, London West LSC has again commissioned the ImpAct theatre group for a series of presentations to schools in early 2005.

Designed to inform, entertain and inspire Year 9 students, ImpAct's 'Opt into Learning' tour will run from 24 January 2005 until 18 March 2005. Already, 55% of show places available have been taken up by secondary and special schools.

To book your performance or obtain more information about the 2005 ImpAct tour, contact Clare Mitchell (clare.mitchell@impactonlearning.com).

Getting a taste of training

The London LSCs are the main sponsor of SkillCity 2005, the UK's largest-ever national careers and training event, which will take place at the ExCel exhibition centre in London Docklands in July next year.

More than 120,000 visitors between the ages of 12 and 30 are expected to attend the event, which will provide an exciting and accessible showcase for the practical skills currently in short supply across many different areas of employment, including construction, healthcare, uniformed services, tourism, hospitality, retail and business services.

Practical excellence

As well as witnessing demonstrations of practical excellence, attendees will be invited to 'have a go' at many new skills. They will also be able to access detailed information and expert personal advice on jobs and training opportunities in a wide range of industry sectors.

Up to 200 employers, colleges, universities and other training organisations also stand to benefit from the event, which will provide an invaluable opportunity to tap into a source of new young talent.

Earn 'n' learn

Rolled out across the country in September, Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has made life a whole lot better for many young people who have decided to stay in learning.

EMA is a significant national programme valued at £450 million a year that offers a financial incentive to encourage good attendance and a commitment to learning among young people. It is not entirely new to London West, because the LSC has been working for some time on a pilot EMA exercise in three of its boroughs – Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham.

Weekly payments of up to £30 are available for eligible young people attending a full-time further education course for a period of up to three years. Students who remain on their course

Peter Pledger, Executive Director for London West LSC, said: 'A skilled young workforce is the linchpin to our region's



future prosperity. This important showcase for skills-based careers brings together major London employers, training organisations and young people in a unique, dynamic environment that will doubtless exert a considerable influence on the long-term economic development of the capital.'

If you want to attend SkillCity 2005, please call freephone 0800 083 2308. If you would like to exhibit, please contact Dilip Patel on 020 7316 9000.

and make good progress also receive bonus payments, while they are studying, of up to £500. Student benefits, part-time

earnings and parents' rights to Child Benefit are not affected by the allowance.

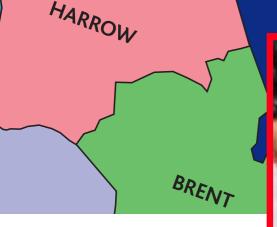
London West LSC has been busy promoting EMA by visiting local schools, colleges and Connexions services. At the start of the summer, information was sent out to parents of Year 11 students. In August, reminder postcards were distributed to students just after their GCSE results were announced.

Sharing best practice

Government-funded schools and colleges with 10 or more EMA students who enrolled onto the EMASYS system before 29 October received a £70 per pupil one-off payment to help offset the administration costs involved. London West LSC hosted workshops in October to encourage the sharing of best practice around EMA among local schools and colleges.

London West LSC Executive Director Peter Pledger said: 'The LSC is committed to realising the potential of all young people, regardless of their financial circumstances. EMA will help us improve participation, retention and achievement in post-16 education.'

To find out more about local activities, contact London West LSC's EMA Co-ordinator Joanne McCourt on 020 8929 8428 (joanne.mccourt@lsc.gov.uk). A dedicated partner helpline is also available on 0800 0562 811. For information on the national campaign, visit www.ema.dfes.gov.uk.







Supporting minority groups

London West LSC is embarking on a pilot programme to open up the Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant (EMSAG) to workbased learning providers in order to reach more groups in need.

Traditionally, EMSAG is used to support activities being undertaken by further education (FE) colleges to improve participation and achievement of learners from ethnic minority groups. For example, Harrow College received funding to identify the barriers faced by Black African and Caribbean students whose retention and achievement was 10-20% lower than their White and Asian counterparts. The results of the research will be used to develop an action plan to improve the quality and outcomes of the college experience for this group of young people.

The lion's share of this year's £378,900 EMSAG allocation will be used to support ongoing FE provider projects. However, £30,000 will be ringfenced for a pilot exercise involving projects by a small number of work-based learning providers in order to widen the base of those who benefit

For more information about EMSAG, contact Rose Turner on 020 8929 8454 (rose.turner@lsc.gov.uk).



Three former Claremont High School students scooped the top three prizes at London West LSC's Art from Schools summer exhibition. Shown here is the winning painting, 'The Mistress', created by Kasim Shaffi.

Hands-on experience

benefited from an exciting range of CAN DO!

With even more employers and schools taking part, this year's CAN DO! event was a great success.

Local employers and providers ran a total of 29 hands-on workshops over the three-day period, giving 289 young participants from 16 London West special schools an invaluable opportunity to try their hand at a variety of skills, including aromatherapy, animal care, pizza making, first aid and music.

Education Business Link's SEN/WRL
Co-ordinator Fiona Kellam said: 'Extending
this year's CAN DO! event from two days to
three proved an immediate success. Four extra
schools took part and the overall attendance
figure was up by nearly a third. This event is
extremely important in providing workrelated activity for the special schools in
London West.'



Wasim Akram and Tony Galvin, Head of Sport at the Uxbridge College Sporting Academy

Cricket academy

Students across the area are benefiting from a new cricket academy at Uxbridge College, funded by a grant from London West LSC.

The college has installed indoor nets for year-round practice in its sports hall and also linked up with Uxbridge Cricket Club to form a college cricket team. Students could play for the club's Sunday league side and other local teams.

Legendary Pakistan captain and Lancashire stalwart Wasim Akram was guest of honour at the opening ceremony and said: 'It will be an inspiration for younger players.'

Simply the best

St. Dominic's Sixth Form College, Harrow, has been awarded extra funding for the new academic year in recognition of the outstanding quality and standard of learning it provides.

Only 73 further education (FE) institutions across England received premium funding, a new initiative that aims to recognise and reward excellent performance by colleges and FE providers as part of the Performance Review process.

Principal Patrick Harty, who took over the reins at St. Dominic's in September, commented: 'I am delighted that St Dominic's has been recognised as providing outstanding

quality. Since taking up my new post, this excellence in terms of academic performance has been clear in the examination results achieved by our students last year. It is also apparent in the ethos of the college and the pastoral care provided by the dedicated team of staff'

London West LSC's Executive Director Peter Pledger applauded St. Dominic's for its consistently outstanding provision. He said: 'The LSC's approach is to reward excellence and to drive out poor quality, and we are concentrating hard on both extremes. We are determined to ensure that all the provision we fund is of the highest possible standard.'



6 EMPLOYERS

HILLINGDON EALING

An all-time high

Now that the first phase of the national Apprenticeships campaign has come to an end, we look at the early results and next steps.

The Apprenticeships campaign has generated lots of interest from employers and young people throughout the country. Between 10 May and 6 September 2004 – 8,167 leads from employers and a further 48,849 leads from young people (an all-time high) were received.

Responses from employers have exceeded expectations, particularly in the London LSC region. The sectors producing the highest number of employer responses are: construction; engineering; business and professional services; agriculture; manufacturing; hospitality; health and social work; and retail and wholesale.



The top five Apprenticeship programmes requested by young people across the country are construction, engineering, media/design, business administration and professional.

Television advertising produced 58% of employer responses, followed by direct mail (15%). The internet proved to be the most popular response option for the vast majority of young people, although it's likely that the television advertisements



provided the initial spark of interest for many of them.

Phase 2 of the campaign will continue until November — traditionally a high recruitment period for employers. It again focuses on the benefits that Apprenticeships can bring to employers and aims to generate at least the same level of leads as phase 1.



Left: Apprentice Joseph Byrne is benefiting from quality training Above: A great example of Wise Production's lighting expertise

A bright spark

Wise Productions, a lighting, sound and presentation specialist company based in Hammersmith & Fulham, has just taken on a 16-year-old Apprentice.

Managing Director David Wise explained why he's sold on the Apprenticeship concept: 'When I was new to the business, I had an amazing manager who devoted an enormous amount of time to developing our team. I've never forgotten that and am keen to do the same for my employees. I view Apprenticeships as an opportunity for me to put something back into the community.'

Quality training

Wise Productions' latest recruit is 16-year-old Joseph Byrne, who said: I took on the Apprenticeship to become a full-time electrician. I am benefiting from quality training, here at work and at college. I can soon see myself with greater knowledge of the job.'

One of the organisation's most successful apprentices was a technician who was employed 10 years ago to work on maintenance and the preparation of lighting and sound equipment. He made great progress over the years and is now working as a lighting desk operator for conferences in America.

An enhanced business support network

London West LSC is about to launch a new comprehensive employer support network that will offer employers in the area the support, advice and guidance they need to access the most effective training and development for their organisation and their people.

The LSC can wholly or partially fund a wide range of training and development activity, from tailor-made courses for individuals to strategic development for the entire organisation. Our challenge is to ensure that all employers are aware of what is available to them and know how to access it.

The employer support network will guide employers from the initial stage of identifying their training and development needs through

to the selection of the most appropriate activity to meet those needs.

It will comprise a number of agencies with proven, sector-specific knowledge and expert understanding of what training and development is available for employers and how it can be accessed. They will work with all business support agencies and other key stakeholders such as FE colleges, private training providers, trade associations, sector skills councils and, of course, employers to ensure that the skills needs of employers and their people are met.

We are in the final stages of discussion with these agencies and will report further on this exciting new service in the next issue of the area





7 EMPLOYERS

All learners are entitled to learning that takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. This is a fundamental value of the Learning and Skills Council.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 requires the LSC to secure proper facilities for education and training. This has resulted in two key objectives — raising standards and seeking assurance — which the LSC is focusing on through three connected themes: the safe, healthy and supportive environment; the 'safe learner' concept; and health and safety management.

Meeting standards

To provide assurance that health and safety standards are being met, the LSC uses surveys to find out about any health and safety concerns learners may have, including any incident or accident while on a funded programme. David Bryant, National Health and Safety Manager, said: 'Accident statistics tell us that some incidents that should be reported to the LSC are not being reported. Surveys help identify learners who may have had an incident that needed reporting, but has not been.'

Here in London West LSC a questionnaire was sent to 2,000 work-based learners with a view to collating information regarding the health and

Joint ESF event

Uxbridge College and the London West Learning Partnership will publicise the outcome of four ESF projects at an event to be held at the Sheraton Heathrow Hotel on 26 November. The event, for partners, beneficiaries and LSCs, will enable attendees to see where money has been spent and what impact it has had.

For further information, please call Jackie Strang on 01895 85 3560.

safety of learners while on their training programmes.

A total of 215 responses were received and the information is being used by London West LSC's Health and Safety advisor to help improve health and safety in the workplace.

Amrit Dosanjh, Provider Quality Manager at London West LSC, said: 'The results of the survey will help us identify areas of improvement that are needed at work and in educational environments. We will then work closely with our training providers to address any areas of concern to ensure that they are providing safe environments for all learners.'

Brokering the deal

In the space of one year, Hillingdon Training Limited has made a big impact on the local community.

The brainchild of a partnership between Hillingdon Education Business Partnership (EBP) and the local education authority, Hillingdon Training is a not-for-profit organisation providing work-based training opportunities to meet the needs of the local community and schools.

Peter Sale, Director of Hillingdon Training, is very well connected – he's also Manager of Hillingdon EBP and Head of Vocational Education for the London borough of Hillingdon. He said: 'Our approach to work-based learning is quite unusual. We source employment opportunities first, then recruit local young people to fill the vacancies we have created.'

Student progression

The results to date are impressive. In the summer, a cohort of 20 young people from the local area completed an e2e programme. Delivered at The Hayes Manor School by the teaching staff, the programme was structured around the learners' English for Speakers of

Champions of Learning

London West LSC is launching its **Champions of Learning Awards 2005**. Full details and entry forms will be available this month. For further information, contact Jolene Chait on 020 8744 2630 (champions@golleyslater.co.uk).



Other Languages (ESOL) and development needs. And 80% of participants have since progressed to other courses or employment.

Hillingdon Training also offers Level 2 Apprenticeships in Early Years Care and in Sport and Recreation, along with a newly-introduced pre-16 Construction package. Plans are already in the pipeline to raise the existing Apprenticeships to Level 3 next year, and to develop a new Apprenticeship in Construction.

Going from strength to strength, Hillingdon Training is now operating from a £400,000 new two-storey Skills Centre at Mellow Lane School in Hayes. Peter said: 'The Skills Centre is the result of an effective local partnership. We're grateful to the LSC for helping us broker the deal, which was funded by the London Borough of Hillingdon, the London Development Agency, BAA (Heathrow), Hillingdon EBP, Connexions and Mellow Lane School itself. The LSC's support on the planning front also proved extremely useful, as is its funding of all the e2e learners and Apprentices using the Centre, which is filling up fast!'



ADULTS





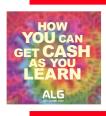


It's 'cool' to learn

The Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund (NLDCF) has enabled voluntary organisation Ealing Dyslexia Association (EDA) to establish a highly effective 'Touch-type, Read and Spell' course.

EDA wanted to set up a new, free course that would help develop the literacy skills of families from deprived communities. The course objective was a perfect match for the NLDCF, which aims

ALG – one year on



Adult learners across London West have seized the opportunity to access the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) during the first 12 months of a two-year pilot exercise.

Implemented by London West LSC as part of the Government's Skills Strategy, the ALG offers payments of up to £30 per week to eligible applicants aged over 19 who are studying for at least 12 hours a week.

During the first year of the ALG pilot, a total of 428 applications were received, which compares favourably with the national average of 400.

London West LSC made 218 awards – slightly below the national average of 223 to students based at eight local colleges. With 81 student awards, Harrow College proved the most successful, followed by Uxbridge College, where 65 students accessed the grant.

To boost awareness and uptake of ALG, London West LSC and the six FE colleges worked together to develop and co-ordinate a publicity campaign during the key preenrolment period. The approach focused on helping learners understand which courses were eligible for the grant and included press advertising and distributing localised leaflets in high street and college locations.

For more information on ALG, contact Rose Turner on 020 8929 8454 (rose.turner@lsc.gov.uk).

to increase community learning opportunities and to engage 'hard to reach' learners.

'The NLDCF funding from London West LSC meant that we could set up and run a multisensory, computer-aided course for students with spelling or writing difficulties,' explained EDA's Heather Matthews.

'The 10-week course started in the summer of 2003 and is based on 45-minute weekly sessions. Whereas participants often find handwriting slow, painful to produce and difficult to read, they discover that touch-typing is far easier; they don't have to "draw" the letter the right way round - they just have to hit a key.'

Raising self-esteem

Heather continued: 'Parents take part too, either learning alongside their child or observing. The students are very self-motivated and many of them score between 95% and 100% in performance tests on a regular basis. According to them, the course is "cool".

'After 10 lessons, these are no longer "the students who can't spell", but "the students who can type" – it's wonderful to see. An adult learner recently remarked: "Now I've got the confidence to learn - when I leave I will have a skill that I can use."

During the first year around 50 people, from two of the most deprived communities in this country, participated in the course. Touch-type, Read and Spell is now receiving LSC mainstream funding through Ealing LEA's ACL budget.

All change!

New qualifications in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills for Life will offer more relevant and flexible learning for adults wishing to improve their literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL) skills.

From 1 August 2004, new qualifications -Certificates in ESOL Skills for Life – became available for the great majority of ESOL learners working towards a QCA nationallyaccredited qualification from Entry Level to

The new ESOL qualifications bring many advantages to learners:

- Meeting the needs of adult learners living and working in England
- Ensuring parity with other adult literacy qualifications
- Acknowledging different levels of prior attainment
- Establishing clear progression routes.

Based on the ESOL curriculum, the new qualifications are fully aligned to the national standards for adult literacy and represent a more relevant, flexible and up-to-date measure of competence for learners who are resident in England.

The replacement of existing ESOL qualifications with the new qualifications will have programme design and funding implications for providers of ESOL.

For more information about the NLDCF, contact Ellen Quaye at the LSC on 020 8929 8439 (ellen.quaye@lsc.gov.uk). You can also contact Ellen for full details of the new ESOL qualifications (including contact details of awarding bodies) - alternatively visit www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/FundingLearning/BasicSkills/default.htm

If you have changed your address, have some article ideas to put forward for future issues of the area or require additional copies, please contact us on 0845 019 4164.

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