

Supported by:



Leading learning and skills

1. What is the Learning and Skills Council?

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone over 16 in England, other than in higher education. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country. In 2004-2005 our budget is £9.3 billion.

2. The LSC's vision and current priorities

Our vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world and will be part of a truly competitive workforce.
We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure we have a workforce that is of world-class standards.

The LSC's priorities for 2005/06 are to:

- Make learning truly demand-led so that it better meets the needs of employers, young people and adults*¹
- Ensure that all 14-19 year olds have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities*
- Reform Further Education so that it attracts and stimulates more business investment in training and skills development
- Strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development so that we provide the skills needed to help all individuals into jobs
- Strengthen the LSC's capacity to work effectively at a regional level – particularly with Regional Development Agencies and Regional Skills

¹ Starred * items are those that are of particular relevance to Inspire

Partnerships*

- Improve the skills of the workers who are delivering public services* (this relates both to library staff and to others who are supporting learners)
- Complete the successful transfer of responsibilities from the DfES to the LSC, including for Learner Support, Basic Skills and Offender Learning

The skills we need: Our Annual Statement of Priorities, (LSC), 2004

3. How is the LSC structured?

The LSC is still evolving. Recent restructuring has introduced three tiers of management: local, regional and national.

Local

There are 47 local LSC offices, each led by an Executive Director and a local council. The latter operate as sub-committees of the National Council.

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (the VCS) is an important aspect of the LSC programme and links to the VCS via the LSC are important for Inspire. The VCS is a key group which local participating libraries could target to encourage the take up of the Inspire offer.

Regional

In early 2004, the LSC established a regional tier of leadership and management. Each of the nine LSC regions is led by a Regional Director (London has both a Regional Director and a Regional Director Operations).

National

The LSC works through five Groups at national level: Learning; Skills; Human Resources; Resources; and Strategy and Communications.

The Learning Group focuses on the LSC's work to support young people, community-based adult learning and the widening participation agendas, as well as leading on arrangements for quality improvement. *

The Skills Group leads the LSC's work on the Government's Skills Strategy which creates a new alliance bringing together Government, public bodies like the LSC, employers and trades union focus efforts and resources on answering the skills needed for today and the future.

National Council

The work of the LSC is overseen by the National Council, appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and made up of a Chair and fifteen members. It is supported by three advisory committees:

- the **Young People's Learning Committee**
- the **Adult Learning Committee**
- the **Equality and Diversity Committee**

4. LSC key national policies and programmes

Skills for Life Strategy (2001) - addresses the needs of adults needing to improve their reading, writing, mathematics and English language skills in order to succeed and progress both at work and in every day life.*

Success for All: Reforming Further Education (2002) - outlines reforms for adult learning providers that are funded by the LSC, including the VCS, in order to ensure that provision meets the needs of learners, employers and communities, and is of high quality.*

14 – 19 Education and Skills White Paper (2005) - aims to raise the aspirations of all 14-19 year olds and to meet their education and skills needs with high quality academic and vocational provision.*

21st Century Skills: Realising our Potential (2003); and Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work (2005) - these two White Papers set out the priorities for adult learning and skills* in the context of the government's twin goals: economic success and social justice. There is a particular focus on full Level 2 and Level 3 skills in technician, skilled trade and associate professional areas. Both White papers commit the DfES and the LSC to agreeing a budget to safeguard learning for leisure.

5. Key LSC strategies relating to the VCS

It is hoped and intended that VCS organisations will make extensive use of Inspire, both in terms of learner support and referral and also as a source of training and education material for developing their staff (paid and unpaid). There are a number of current LSC strategies that are particularly relevant for the VCS and (by extension) Inspire:

Working Together: a strategy for the voluntary and community sector and the Learning and Skills Council (2004) - recognises that the VCS is a key partner in terms of working with 'hard to reach' learners and supporting the LSC's widening participation and equality and diversity objectives*. As employers, VCS organisations have an important a role to play in workforce development. They also provide a valuable source of information and expertise about communities and disadvantaged groups and communication with them. *

Successful participation for all: widening adult participation strategy (2003) - aims to co-ordinate the range of LSC policies, programmes and initiatives that support learning opportunities for people from disadvantaged and under-represented groups.*

Equality and Diversity Strategy (2004 – 2007) - provides a framework for promoting and implementing national equality and diversity legislation within

the LSC and LSC-funded providers.

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Services for Adults (2004)- aims to deliver a coherent and integrated IAG service for adults through a single information service and a network of local services. It underpins the need to work with partners in the VCS as a source of specialist expertise.

Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund (2004) – supports learning opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and to build the capacity of VCS organisations to deliver this community-based learning in innovative and flexible ways.*

Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (2004-05) – a strand within *Skills for Life* that uses a range of programmes aimed at raising the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents and children working together as family units.

Testbed Learning Communities – helps communities in developing their collective base of adult skills by developing new approaches and models for learning and skills. It will link schools, colleges, businesses, Regional Development Agencies, Local Strategic Partnerships, VCS organisations, local authorities and other partners in sharing ideas and resources.*

Literacy, Language and Numeracy

LSC funding entitles learners to free tuition at entry levels 1, 2 and 3 and levels 1 and 2. The priority is to increase the numbers of adults who can demonstrate an improvement in their 'basic skills' (Skills for Life) by the achievement of a National Test at Level 1 or Level 2. The LSC also supports provision that does not lead to the National Tests and that which is at pre-entry level. VCS organisations are key providers of language, literacy and numeracy provision at all levels and including embedded learning.*

First Steps Learning, Learning for Personal and Community Development

The LSC is preparing to implement reforms to the planning and funding of 'first-steps' learning (ie learning leading to level 2) and learning for leisure.* These changes will inform the LSC's wider review of its funding as part of its Agenda for Change, a fundamental review of its systems to be in place by 2006.

Widening Adult Participation Action Fund

This is a regional measure that underpins the LSC's widening adult participation strategy. The aims of the fund are to finance developmental projects, to support the evaluation of such projects and to identify and promote emerging effective practice locally, regionally and nationally.

6. Further Information

For further information on the LSC's widening adult participation strategy, please contact:

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