



Skills for Life:

Changing lives

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Executive summary	7
Chapter 1 Our world-class ambition	11
Chapter 2 Working together to deliver our ambition	15
Chapter 3 Delivering Skills for Life at work	22
Chapter 4 Supporting individuals to improve their Skills for Life	34
Chapter 5 Building capacity to deliver flexible and responsive Skills for Life provision	49

Foreword

We can only succeed in a rapidly changing world and create a society in which everyone has the opportunity to realise their full potential if we invest in our nation's skills. Beyond today's global slowdown lies a world of new opportunities for which we must prepare. Although the months ahead will be tough, the coming decade offers vast new opportunities for Britain.

Research consistently shows that a skilled workforce is a productive workforce, better able to respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by ever-greater competition, technological change and new markets. Equally, we know what a powerful driver of social mobility skills can be. By supporting adults to improve their skills, we give them an opportunity to change their lives and those of their families.

The Government's continued commitment to Skills for Life underpins all of our ambitions for our nation's economy and our society. That is because good literacy, language and numeracy skills underpin almost everything we do in our daily lives – at work and at home.

Since the launch of the Government's Skills for Life strategy in 2001, over 5.7 million learners have taken training courses and 2.8 million have achieved nationally recognised qualifications, exceeding our 2010 Public Service Agreement target to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills levels of 2.25 million adults more than two years early.

Everyone involved in Skills for Life, from partners, teachers, college staff and union learning representatives, to community workers, volunteers and classroom assistants, should be proud of what we have achieved since 2001. But we cannot be complacent. There are still too many adults in England who struggle with the basics and have difficulty with everyday tasks such as writing letters or emails, family budgeting and helping their children with their homework.

We want to build on the real progress we have made so far and become a world leader in skills by 2020. This document refreshes our Skills for Life strategy and sets out how the Government will work with a wide range of committed partners to realise our Skills for Life ambition.



Rt Hon JOHN DENHAM
Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills

Introduction

1. Like other countries around the world, we are currently experiencing difficult times. The Government will do everything necessary to support people and businesses fairly through the downturn and to get our economy growing again – getting real help to people and to businesses now so that we can get through the downturn sooner and emerge stronger.
2. In tough times like these, it is vital that we continue to invest in our nation's skills. It is the nations and businesses which invest in their people during the hard times that will emerge as winners when the good times return.
3. Put simply, a better-skilled workforce is a more productive, adaptable and flexible workforce, better able to respond to the challenges posed by ever-greater competition, technological change and new products.
4. Equally, giving everyone in our society the opportunity to develop their skills will help us tackle social exclusion and create a fairer society in which everyone has the opportunity to realise their full potential. By helping people improve their grasp of the basics, we help them develop the platform of skills they need to find, stay and progress in work. We help them to improve their earnings. We help them to play an active role in their children's educational development. And we help them to play an active role in their community.
5. Since the launch of the Skills for Life strategy¹ in 2001, over 5.7 million learners have embarked upon training courses and 2.8 million have achieved nationally recognised qualifications, exceeding our Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills levels of 2.25 million adults by 2010.
6. We have achieved this through the tremendous commitment and hard work of a wide range of partners and providers, backed up with over £5 billion of government investment in Skills for Life between 2001 and 2008. Our strategy to date has focused on four themes:
 - a. boosting demand for learning among individuals and employers;
 - b. ensuring there is capacity to deliver high quality provision by funding and co-ordinating the planning and delivery of provision, and diversifying the provider base;
 - c. raising standards by putting in place a teaching and learning infrastructure which includes a national curriculum, national tests, new quality standards and measures to professionalise the teaching workforce; and

¹ DfES, 2001, *Skills for Life: The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills*.

- d. increasing learner achievement by removing barriers to learning and encouraging more learners to work towards a nationally recognised qualification.
7. Though our strategy has been a huge success – we met our PSA target more than two years early – now is not the time for complacency. There are still far too many people in England who are at risk of being socially excluded because they lack the skills necessary to flourish in a modern economy. Too many people are without the skills that would enable them to secure jobs and give their children the opportunities that they never had, and too many are stuck in low-wage jobs with little prospect of promotion. This is not acceptable.
 8. That is why the Government set itself the ambition to be a world leader in skills by 2020, benchmarked against the upper quartile of OECD countries. For Skills for Life, by 2020 we want 95 per cent of the working-age population to possess at least functional levels of literacy and numeracy.
 9. To deliver this world-class ambition, and to make real progress towards it by 2011, we have refreshed our strategy for addressing literacy, language and numeracy needs. Our refreshed strategy, set out in the rest of this document, is focused around three central themes:
 - a. **focusing Skills for Life on employability**, ensuring that the literacy, language and numeracy skills we help people develop will support them to find, stay and progress in work;
 - b. **raising demand** for literacy, language and particularly numeracy skills among individuals and employers, changing the culture and attitudes to Skills for Life that prevent people from embarking on learning; and
 - c. **delivering flexible and responsive Skills for Life provision** which meets learner and employer needs, is high quality, delivered in innovative ways and embedded in wider skills provision where that is the best way to meet individual learners' needs.
 10. The rest of this document sets out the actions the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and a wide range of partners will take to deliver on our ambitions. It also reflects our response to the recent National Audit Office² and Public Accounts Committee³ reports on Skills for Life.
 11. **Chapter 1** sets out the challenges ahead in detail. It describes our priority learner groups, the particular challenge we face on numeracy and how our new ambition differs from previous Skills for Life targets.

² NAO, 2008, *Skills for Life: Progress in Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy*.

³ PAC, 2009, *Skills for Life: Progress in Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Third Report of Session 2008–09*.

- 12. Chapter 2** sets out our investment strategy, describes the arrangements we are putting in place to monitor and drive delivery and sets out plans for a new Skills for Life survey in 2010.
- 13. Chapter 3** sets out our plans for significantly increasing employer engagement in Skills for Life. It describes how we will expand and improve Skills for Life delivery through Train to Gain, encourage employers to make the Skills Pledge, raise employer awareness about Skills for Life needs, and promote Skills for Life through public procurement.
- 14. Chapter 4** sets out the actions being taken to support learners and raise demand for skills, including: the continued integration of employment and skills services for individuals; the creation of skills accounts and a new adult advancement and careers service; and the creation of new statutory entitlements to learning and to request time to train.
- 15. Chapter 5** sets out the actions being taken to support and encourage colleges and training providers to deliver flexible, responsive Skills for Life learning, including Skills for Life embedded in wider vocational programmes.

Executive summary

1. We have set ourselves the ambition to become a world leader in skills by 2020, benchmarked against the upper quartile of OECD countries. For Skills for Life, this means ensuring that 95 per cent of the working-age population possesses at least functional levels of literacy at level 1 and numeracy at entry level 3. We want to make real progress towards that ambition by 2011, and have set a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target that between 2008 and 2011 we want:
 - a. 597,000 people of working age to achieve a first level 1 or above literacy⁴ qualification; and
 - b. 390,000 to achieve a first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification.
2. These 2011 targets differ from previous Skills for Life targets in that they are focused on helping adults to reach a minimum 'threshold' level of literacy and numeracy, rather than on moving up a level and achieving a first qualification.
3. The Government has also established separate measures for literacy and numeracy for the first time, recognising the importance of each discipline in its own right – and the particular importance of making progress on numeracy.
4. Although it is too early to report formally on progress against the 2011 PSA target, the number of adults obtaining their first functional literacy and numeracy qualifications is increasing year on year:
 - a. 215,000 adults achieved their first level 1 or above literacy or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualification in 2006/07, compared to 42,000 in 2002/03; and
 - b. 84,000 adults achieved their first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification in 2006/07, compared to 3,000 in 2002/03.
5. The huge progress we have made since 2001 has been achieved through the commitment and hard work of a wide range of teachers, partners and providers across the further education (FE) and skills sector. It is to their tremendous credit that we have so dramatically improved Skills for Life in this country since 2001. And it is because of their commitment and contributions that we can look forward with such high ambition.
6. To deliver our world-class ambition, we need to focus our collective efforts and support on the following priority learner groups:
 - a. people who are unemployed and on benefits;
 - b. low-skilled adults in employment;

⁴ Learners who achieve their first ESOL qualification at level 1 or above will count towards the new literacy target.

- c. prisoners and those supervised in the community; and
 - d. other groups at risk of social exclusion, including some ethnic minorities and those living in the most disadvantaged areas of the country.
7. These are the groups who need particular encouragement and support to improve their Skills for Life so that they are not left behind.
 8. While supporting adults to reach functional levels, we will continue to invest in provision to support those adults with lower levels of literacy, language and numeracy to help them progress towards functional levels in manageable stages. Equally, we will support those who are able to progress to levels beyond the functional levels.
 9. In recognition of the challenge ahead, the Government is significantly increasing its investment in Skills for Life. It is expected that LSC spend on Skills for Life provision will exceed £1 billion in 2009–10 for post-16 learning.

Focusing Skills for Life on employability

10. In delivering our Skills for Life ambitions, it is important that individuals are equipped with the literacy, language and numeracy skills that will help them find and progress in work.
11. To ensure that Skills for Life provision is focused on employability:
 - a. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus will continue to integrate employment and skills services so that Jobcentre Plus clients can access the literacy, language and numeracy support they need.
 - b. For 2009/10, the LSC is giving colleges and providers more freedom over the delivery of provision below level 2 so that they are able to respond flexibly to local needs, while continuing to deliver our priorities.
 - c. In 2009, the LSC will pilot the use of performance incentives linked to the delivery of employment outcomes. This will include colleges and providers delivering Skills for Life provision. Our aim is that, by 2011, the majority of Skills for Life provision will include performance incentives for providers based on employment outcomes.

- d. From 2010/11, the LSC will open up a proportion of Adult Learner Responsive spend on Skills for Life to enable a wider range of high quality providers able to cater to the needs of Skills for Life learners to help them gain employment and progress once in employment.
- e. The LSC will introduce a new core curriculum for offender learning in August 2009, focused on employability and delivering literacy, language and numeracy preparation for work and vocational training.
- f. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) will review the Skills for Life literacy, numeracy and ESOL curricula, by October 2009, to ensure that they support employability.
- g. LSIS will work with providers to share best practice and build capacity so that, by 2011, we can expect all LSC-funded providers to offer embedded Skills for Life provision where appropriate, as well as stand-alone Skills for Life courses.
- h. LSIS will support providers in 2009/10 to help them develop provision that is more responsive to learner and employer needs, including developing 'roll-on roll-off' provision so that individuals can enrol at any time of the year and increasing the amount of provision delivered on employers' premises.

Raising demand for literacy and particularly numeracy skills

12. Particularly during tough economic times, we need to raise employer and individual awareness of and demand for Skills for Life learning, and continue changing the culture that prevents people from improving their grasp of the basics. To do this:
- a. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will work with partners to launch a marketing campaign in 2009 to raise awareness of workplace literacy and numeracy issues and challenge employers to address them. At the same time, it will renew and extend the Get On campaign during 2009 with a particular focus on raising the demand for numeracy.
 - b. In 2008/09, as the wider Train to Gain service continues to grow, the LSC will expand and improve the delivery of Skills for Life through the service.
 - c. The LSC and a wide range of partners will continue to encourage and support employers to make the Skills Pledge so that, by 2010, 8 million employees are covered by the Pledge.

- d. Business Link and the LSC's National Employer Service will ensure that employers can access expert advice in identifying and sourcing Skills for Life provision through the new integrated brokerage service.
- e. The LSC will continue to trial and rollout skills accounts and the new adult advancement and careers service.

Flexible and responsive Skills for Life provision

13. Colleges and training providers are the key to delivering our Skills for Life ambitions and we want to ensure they have the support they need to develop and deliver flexible, responsive Skills for Life learning which meets the needs of individuals and employers.
- a. LSIS will work with providers to share best practice and build capacity so that by 2011 we can expect all LSC-funded providers to offer embedded Skills for Life provision where appropriate, in addition to discrete Skills for Life courses.
 - b. LSIS, through its National Support Programme, will support providers during 2009/10 to increase their capacity to deliver high quality numeracy provision.
 - c. During 2009/10, LSIS, in partnership with Becta, will support providers to help them develop more flexible delivery models which allow individuals to learn when and where it suits them.
 - d. Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is reviewing current teacher numbers and assessing what more is needed in terms of quality and capacity to deliver our ambitions; this will inform actions to implement the FE workforce strategy. The Year 2 plan for implementing the workforce strategy will be published in April 2009.
 - e. For 2009/10, the LSC will publish guidance on initial assessment for literacy, numeracy and language which will include best practice and set out the expectation that Skills for Life initial assessments are offered to all learners on training programmes at level 2 and below, including numeracy assessments for learners on literacy and ESOL courses. Initial assessment is the process for identifying an individual's current level of skills.
 - f. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will continue to pilot new Functional Skills qualifications as part of a move towards rationalising the current provision on offer to learners and employers. It is planned that functional English, Mathematics and ICT qualifications will be available nationally in 2010.

Chapter 1

Our world-class ambition

1. The publication of the Moser Report in 1999 and the Government's formal response – the 2001 Skills for Life Strategy – marked a step change in the country's approach to tackling the acute basic skills challenges faced by a significant proportion of the adult population.⁵
2. In 2000, the first basic skills target – to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults by 2004 – was introduced. This target was met in November 2004 and a more stretching target was introduced to improve the basic skill levels of 2.25 million adults between the launch of Skills for Life in 2001 and 2010, with a milestone of 1.5 million in 2007. In June 2008, we announced that the 2010 target had been met over two years early.

A new ambition to become 'world-class'

3. As the Leitch Review of Skills highlighted, much more needs to be done if we are to tackle the nation's long-standing skills challenges, give all adults the opportunity to develop the skills they need to succeed, whatever their background, and support the long-term competitiveness of our economy.⁶
4. Lord Leitch proposed a new ambition for the UK to become a 'world leader on skills', benchmarked against the upper quartile of OECD countries. This included the aim for 95 per cent of the working-age population to possess at least functional levels of literacy and numeracy, defined by Lord Leitch as entry level 3 numeracy and level 1 literacy – the minimum levels people need as a foundation for life and at work. This has increased from an estimated 85 per cent and 79 per cent respectively in 2005.
5. In 2007, the Government committed itself to the ambition of becoming a world leader in skills by 2020. We want to make real progress towards that ambition by 2011, and have set a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target that between 2008 and 2011 we want:
 - a. 597,000 people of working age to have achieved a first level 1 or above literacy qualification; and
 - b. 390,000 to have achieved a first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification.

⁵ DfEE, 1999, *A Fresh Start – Improving literacy and numeracy*.

⁶ DfES, 2006, *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*.

6. While it is too early to report formally on progress against the 2011 PSA target, excellent progress is being made in increasing the number of adults achieving their first qualifications at and above those functional levels each year:
 - a. 215,000 adults achieved their first level 1 or above literacy or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualification in 2006/07, compared to 42,000 in 2002/03; and
 - b. 84,000 adults achieved their first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualifications in 2006/07, compared to 3,000 in 2002/03.
7. This progress puts us on track to deliver the 2011 PSA target and build a strong platform for delivery of the 2020 ambition.
8. The numeracy ambition is particularly challenging. To realise it will require a step change in the number of adults undertaking and successfully completing numeracy courses and, in turn, require a change in culture and attitudes regarding numeracy.

A different kind of target

9. The 2011 literacy and numeracy targets mark a change from the previous targets aimed at tackling basic skills needs. Where previous targets were more focused on helping adults to move a step up the ladder and achieve a qualification in literacy, language or numeracy, the new 2011 target is focused on supporting adults to reach a minimum functional level of literacy and numeracy.
10. In addition to changing the nature of the target, the Government has also established separate measures for literacy and numeracy for the first time, recognising that the nature of the challenge differs for each subject and the need for us to make progress on each discipline in its own right.

Priority groups

11. Within the overall strategy, we have identified a number of priority groups that contain a concentration of people who particularly need our support.
 - a. **People who are unemployed and on benefits:** the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) estimates that of those adults who are unemployed for six months or more, 30 per cent have literacy and numeracy skills below functional levels. The employment rate for lone parents without qualifications is 30 per cent, compared with an employment rate of 63 per cent for those with qualifications.⁷

⁷ DfES and DWP, 2007, *A Shared Evidence Base – The Role of Skills in the Labour Market*.

- b. Low-skilled adults in employment:** 40 per cent of Confederation of British Industry (CBI) member employers report that their employees' poor literacy, language and numeracy skills have a negative impact on customer service, and 34 per cent report a negative impact on productivity.⁸ Of the one million care workers in England, it is estimated that 20 per cent have literacy and numeracy skills below level 2, and at least 20 per cent have language needs.⁹
- c. Offenders in custody and those supervised in the community:** 52 per cent of male offenders and 71 per cent of female offenders have no qualifications at all; 48 per cent of offenders have literacy skills at or below level 1, while 65 per cent have numeracy skills at or below level 1.¹⁰
- d. Other groups at risk of social exclusion:** in the most deprived 10 per cent of neighbourhoods, 54 per cent of the working-age population have skills below NVQ level 2, and among these 26 per cent have no qualifications at all. Women with poor numeracy skills are less likely to be in full-time work, more likely to be in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs if employed, more likely to be engaged in home care and more likely to be in a non-working household.¹¹ Men and women with poor literacy and numeracy are more likely to report poor physical and mental health, low self-esteem, and a lack of power to positively change their lives.¹²

English for Speakers of Other Languages

- 12.** ESOL remains a key part of the Skills for Life strategy. Learners who improved their skills and achieved an entry level 3 and above ESOL qualification counted towards the 2004 and 2010 Skills for Life PSA targets. Learners who achieve their first ESOL qualification at level 1 or above will count towards the new literacy target.
- 13.** Since 2001 the demand for ESOL courses has increased significantly. As a result, changes to funding arrangements were made in 2007/08 in order to target public funding on the most vulnerable learners. However, more is needed to ensure we meet the needs of those most at risk of social exclusion and isolation in their communities. Following the national ESOL consultation conducted in early 2008, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will be publishing a 'next steps' document in spring 2009 setting out its approach for ESOL.

⁸ G. Dugdale and C. Clark, National Literacy Trust, September 2008, *Literacy changes lives: An advocacy resource*.

⁹ Data from UK Alliance Stage 1 SSA Report, Skills Needs Analysis of the social care, children, early years and young people's sectors in the UK, July 2007.

¹⁰ C. Clark and G. Dugdale, National Literacy Trust, November 2008, *Literacy changes lives: The role of literacy in offending behaviour – a discussion piece Part 1*.

¹¹ J. Bynner and S. Parsons, NRDC, 2006, *New Light on Literacy and Numeracy*.

¹² J. Bynner and S. Parsons, NRDC, 2006, *New Light on Literacy and Numeracy*.

Information and communications technology (ICT)

14. ICT has a major role to play in helping to deliver our ambition to become a world leader in skills. In a Skills for Life context, it provides a route into learning for people to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, while being an important skill in its own right.
15. We now have new National Occupational Standards for IT users. A new endorsed level 1 certificate, the ITQ for Life, will be available from August 2009. ITQ for Life supports the development of the IT skills required for employment, and provides opportunities for development of literacy and numeracy skills.
16. Becta has been developing a national strategy for ICT as a skill for life in partnership with the FE sector. DIUS is now considering, with Becta and other partners, how best to take forward this work. Proposals will be developed which link with and support action on digital skills and media literacy as outlined within the interim report for 'Digital Britain',¹³ the final report on which will be published by summer 2009.

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
Publish 'next steps' document setting out the approach for ESOL	Spring 2009	DIUS
<i>Digital Britain</i> report published	Summer 2009	BERR, DCMS
New level 1 certificate ITQ for Life available	August 2009	e-skills
597,000 adults to have achieved their first level 1 or above literacy qualification	2011	DIUS, LSC
390,000 adults to have achieved their first entry level 3 or above numeracy qualification	2011	DIUS, LSC
95 per cent of the working population to possess, as a minimum, entry level 3 numeracy and level 1 literacy	2020	DIUS

¹³ DCMS, 2009, *Digital Britain: the Interim Report*.

Chapter 2

Working together to deliver our ambition

The ambition we have set ourselves to become a world leader in skills by 2020 is a challenging one. To succeed we must secure the continued input and commitment of a wide range of partners and stakeholders including colleges and training providers, key partner agencies, employers and individual learners.

Since 2001, the Government has invested over £5 billion in Skills for Life provision. In 2009–10 total government funding for literacy, language and numeracy provision will exceed £1 billion.

For 2009/10, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will give providers greater flexibility to use their budgets for provision at level 2 and below, including for Skills for Life, to respond to local employer and learner needs.

In 2009, the LSC will pilot the use of performance incentives linked to the delivery of employment outcomes. This will include colleges and providers delivering Skills for Life provision. Our aim is that, by 2011, delivery of the majority of Skills for Life provision will include performance incentives for providers based on employment outcomes.

From 2010/11, the LSC will open up a proportion of Adult Learner Responsive spend on Skills for Life to enable a wider range of high quality providers able to cater to the needs of Skills for Life learners to help them gain employment and progress once in employment.

A new Skills for Life survey will be undertaken in 2010 to provide an up-to-date assessment of literacy, language and numeracy skills levels across England.

Working together to deliver our ambition

1. The success of our refreshed Skills for Life strategy will rely on the continued support, commitment and collaboration of a wide range of partners.
2. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has the overall responsibility for setting out the policy and strategy to deliver the skills needed to sustain an advanced, competitive economy. This includes overall accountability for delivering the Skills Public Service Agreement (PSA).
3. Delivery of this PSA is overseen and managed by the Skills PSA Programme Board, which includes representatives from other government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and HM Treasury, the LSC and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

4. To drive performance against its literacy and numeracy level 2 and level 3 targets, DIUS will establish a new PSA Delivery Group which will hold a detailed delivery plan underpinning this document. All key delivery partners will be represented. The Delivery Group will report to the Skills PSA Programme Board.
5. To ensure that the delivery of our Skills for Life strategy is informed by the expertise and experience of and by feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and practitioners, and to maintain the collaboration that has made the strategy a success, DIUS will establish a Skills for Life Stakeholder Group. Its first meeting will be held in summer 2009.
6. A wide range of government departments, agencies and partners play important roles in delivering Skills for Life:
 - a. Skills for Life training is offered by a wide range of providers including FE colleges, independent providers delivering work-based learning, third sector providers and school sixth forms, all of which have played a crucial role in helping individuals to realise their goals and in delivering our new ambition.
 - b. The LSC is responsible for commissioning, funding and securing high quality Skills for Life provision, which is responsive to employer and individual needs and is aligned with regional economic priorities. Progress will be reviewed through the formal accountability system which already exists between the LSC and DIUS, including through the post-19 performance review meetings and the review meetings that Ministers hold with the LSC senior management team, which take place quarterly. The LSC will be expected to provide a detailed update on the delivery of Skills for Life provision, outcomes and expenditure as part of its formal report to each of these meetings.
 - c. The UKCES, created in 2008, has established a powerful employer voice at the heart of the Skills for Life system and advises the Government on improvements to the employment and skills systems to drive up UK productivity and benefit society. The UKCES is currently leading the process for relicensing the network of 25 SSCs, and is supporting the development of a cross-sector strategy with the Alliance of SSCs which will need to ensure that there is effective collaboration on the development of cross-sector occupational standards and qualifications.
 - d. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is the new sector-owned body to develop excellent and sustainable FE provision across the sector. Its role is to support an increasingly self-regulated provider base

to drive up its capacity to deliver high quality Skills for Life provision. In addition, LSIS will deliver the annual national Skills for Life conferences and the Skills for Life *Update* magazine to ensure excellent communication and feedback with colleges, providers and other partners.

- e. Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) responsible for developing the standards and role descriptions, and identifying and quantifying the current and future training and development needs of those working in the FE sector. This includes providing an assessment of how many literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers will be required, and in which areas, to achieve our literacy, language and numeracy ambition.
- f. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is responsible for the development, delivery and reform of the education and training framework for England. It has a role in the delivery of the Skills for Life strategy through the exploration of the suitability of Functional Skills qualifications for adults, the review and ongoing development of Skills for Life qualifications, and through working with the LSC and other stakeholders in preparing partners in England for the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Responsibility for regulating qualifications transferred in April 2008 from the QCA to the new regulator, Ofqual. This includes responsibility for accrediting Functional Skills and Skills for Life qualifications and recognising the awarding bodies that offer them. New legislation was introduced in February 2009 which, subject to its passage through Parliament, will see the QCA become known as the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), and make Ofqual a fully independent non-ministerial government department that will oversee the qualifications and examinations system in England to ensure that it is fair, provides value for money and meets the needs of learners and employers.
- g. Becta leads the co-ordination, development and delivery of 'Harnessing Technology', the national strategy to ensure that technology is used effectively to improve education, skills and children's services.
- h. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) supports the Skills for Life strategy by undertaking development work, providing consultancy and supporting provider training, working with a range of partners.
- i. Unionlearn manages the Union Learning Fund and is responsible for training and supporting union learning representatives. Skills for Life remains a key theme of union learning activity.

- j. The third sector plays an important and unique role in the delivery of Skills for Life, helping us to engage and support harder-to-reach learners. To support the sector in playing that role, the LSC refreshed its commitment to engaging with the third sector in *Working together with the third sector* in November 2008. The LSC will publish a review on the effectiveness of the strategy in engaging third sector partners in Skills for Life delivery in summer 2010.
7. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA), operational from 2010, will support the development of a fully demand-led system. It will support the Skills for Life strategy by ensuring that public money is routed to providers in response to the purchasing decisions of customers; and it will have oversight of the whole FE service and its responsiveness to the strategic skills needs of employers and learners – working closely with the Young People’s Learning Agency (which will also become operational in 2010).

Investment strategy

8. The Government’s Skills for Life strategy is underpinned by a clear and robust investment strategy, managed by the LSC. This strategy is set out in the recent LSC Grant Letter and Statement of Priorities for 2009–10.¹⁴
9. Recognising the scale of the challenge in improving the nation’s literacy, language and numeracy skills, the Government is significantly increasing the resources available to support delivery of Skills for Life provision through a range of different routes, including Train to Gain, Jobcentre Plus, mainstream FE provision, learndirect and through the Offender Learning and Skills Service.
10. It is expected that LSC spend on Skills for Life provision will exceed £1 billion in 2009–10 for post-16 learning. Our investment strategy is focused on supporting both young people and adults to address their Skills for Life needs. However, in recognition of the particular challenge in supporting those individuals already in the workforce, a significant proportion of the budget is being focused on adults aged 19 and above. By 2009–10, it is expected that – within the LSC’s overall investment in Skills for Life – LSC spend on Skills for Life provision for adults aged 19 and above will reach around £750 million.
11. Within the overall growth in the Skills for Life budget, the Government is increasing the focus of its resources on numeracy provision. By 2010/11, it is expected that over half of the resources made available for literacy, language and numeracy training provision (excluding ESOL) will be focused on numeracy, compared to around 40 per cent in 2006/07.

¹⁴ DIUS, DCSF and LSC, 2008, *Government Investment Strategy 2009–10, LSC Grant Letter and LSC Statement of Priorities*.

We are increasingly focusing these resources on helping the most disadvantaged attain functional numeracy.

12. The literacy and numeracy targets within the 2011 Skills PSA focus on the functional levels of literacy, language and numeracy which will help all adults to achieve level 1 literacy and entry level 3 numeracy. These priorities drive the way resources are allocated in the Skills for Life budget. The LSC will continue to focus funding on provision which delivers qualifications that count towards this target.
13. However, the 2011 target is not the end of the story. It is crucially important that we put in place the foundations to achieve our 2020 ambition for literacy and numeracy. Support must continue for those who are at the lowest skills levels to ensure they are supported to progress towards functional levels in manageable stages. Not all of them will reach the threshold by 2011, but every effort must be made to support them at an early stage to ensure that progress is maintained.
14. Equally, no one should be held back. We will support those adults who are able to move directly to levels higher than functional literacy, language and numeracy.
15. The LSC funds eligible Skills for Life provision at a 40 per cent higher level than the learning aims of comparably-sized curriculum areas, in recognition of the additional costs involved. An additional uplift of 12 per cent is also available for disadvantaged learners who are eligible. This higher funding reflects both the smaller group sizes often required and the increased costs of recruiting and retaining learners on Skills for Life programmes.
16. The LSC is committed to maintaining expenditure for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) to ensure that they receive the right provision and support. Many of the learners who will benefit from this commitment will be undertaking Skills for Life courses.

Funding flexibilities to support employability

17. Providers are being given more freedom over the delivery of provision below level 2 so that they are able to use our investment flexibly to deliver our priorities for literacy, numeracy and employability skills in response to the local needs of learners and employers. Through its Adult Learner Responsive budget for 2009/10, the LSC will set out each provider's funding allocations, and providers will be expected to deliver their contribution to the literacy and numeracy targets. However, beyond this, they will be able to use their funds for Skills for Life, the Foundation Learning Tier and developmental learning flexibly in response to local needs.

Alongside this flexibility, providers will be expected to maintain provision in priority areas such as learners with LDD and trade union learning.

18. In 2009, the LSC will pilot the use of performance incentives linked to the delivery of employment outcomes. This will include colleges and providers delivering Skills for Life provision. Our aim is that, by 2011, delivery of the majority of Skills for Life provision will include performance incentives for providers based on employment outcomes.
19. From 2010/11, the LSC will open up a proportion of Adult Learner Responsive spend on Skills for Life to enable a wider range of high quality providers able to cater to the needs of Skills for Life learners to help them gain employment and progress once in employment.

Manchester Training – work-based training provider

In September 2008, Manchester Training opened a warehouse dedicated to learning, sponsored by major industrial leaders in the sector, where learners can acquire skills and experience in a live working environment.

The company developed a learning programme that seeks to develop learners' confidence to get a job, enable them to gain a qualification, and demonstrate their job-competence through the practice given in the warehouse environment.

Literacy and numeracy are embedded into the programme via a two-week intensive programme, delivered by learndirect. Learners often approach this part of the programme with reluctance, but once they experience the one-to-one support, this attitude changes. The provider has a 96 per cent success rate and a number of learners continue on to take further qualifications once in employment.

One such learner, Paul, went to Manchester Training aged 24 with very little confidence after experiencing six years of unemployment. He worked through the programme and was then accompanied by staff to an interview for a logistics job which he succeeded in getting. The company has since reported positively on his work performance.

Measuring progress: a new Skills for Life survey

20. The first Skills for Life survey was carried out between June 2002 and May 2003. It showed that 16 per cent of adults (5.2 million people) in England possessed literacy skills below level 1 and 21 per cent (6.8 million people) possessed numeracy skills below entry level 3.
21. A new survey will be undertaken in 2010 to provide us with an up-to-date assessment of literacy and numeracy skills levels across England. The survey will report in 2011.
22. DIUS will also participate in the OECD Programme for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies (PIAAC). This will enable us to make comparisons over time on literacy, language and numeracy, using directly comparable measures to the previous international study in 1996. The PIAAC survey will report in early 2013.

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
Skills for Life stakeholder group established	Summer 2009	DIUS
Implement funding flexibilities for providers for delivery of provision below level 2	2009/10	LSC
Pilot the use of performance incentives linked to employment outcomes for Skills for Life provision	2009	LSC
Review on the effectiveness of the strategy for engaging third sector partners in Skills for Life delivery	Summer 2010	LSC
Open up a proportion of the Adult Learner Responsive spend on Skills for Life for a wider range of high quality providers	2010/11	LSC
Delivery of the majority of Skills for Life provision will include performance incentives for providers based on employment outcomes	2011	LSC
Publish findings of Skills for Life survey	2011	DIUS
Reporting of PIAAC survey	2013	DIUS

Chapter 3

Delivering Skills for Life at work

The benefits to business of having a skilled workforce are proven: flexibility, adaptability, higher productivity and greater profitability. We need more employers to recognise and invest in a literate and numerate workforce as a means of surviving and thriving in an increasingly competitive global economy.

In 2009/10, as the wider Train to Gain service continues to grow, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will expand and improve the delivery of Skills for Life through the service.

The Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) will ensure that employers can access expert advice in identifying and sourcing Skills for Life provision through the new integrated brokerage service provided by Business Link.

The LSC and a range of partners will continue to encourage and support employers to make a reality of their Skills Pledge and ensure that, by 2010, 8 million employees are covered by the Pledge.

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) will work with partners to launch a new marketing campaign in 2009 to raise employer awareness and understanding of the importance of Skills for Life, and how they can address skills needs to support their employees and their business.

Government departments and agencies will promote Skills for Life training opportunities through public procurement by requiring successful contractors to give their employees access to literacy, language and numeracy training if they need it.

As part of the relicensing process, all Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are expected to be able to demonstrate an extensive understanding of the current and future skills needs, across the UK, of their sector's employers. Where Skills for Life has been identified as an issue, SSCs have a responsibility for raising employer demand to address it.

Expanding and improving Skills for Life through Train to Gain

1. Train to Gain is the Government's flagship service to support employers in England to invest in the skills of their employees. Since April 2006, over 101,000 employers have engaged with Train to Gain and it has supported over 570,000 employees to begin learning. Over 60,000 have started Skills for Life courses, with over 32,000 achieving qualifications so far.

2. Through Train to Gain employers can access:
 - a. government funding, to sit alongside their own financial contribution, including fully-funded literacy, language and numeracy learning and partially-funded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning for all employees who need it;
 - b. quality-assured, impartial advice from skills brokers with expertise in their sector, to help identify their skills needs at all levels and source high quality Skills for Life and vocational skills provision that will best meet that need; and
 - c. a range of other support, including a contribution to wage costs for working time spent training for businesses with under 50 full-time equivalent staff.
3. Building on the successes of Train to Gain so far, the LSC will continue to expand and improve the delivery of Skills for Life through the service. From the 2008/09 academic year onwards:
 - a. Skills for Life courses are available at all levels in Train to Gain, from entry level 1 up to and including level 2.
 - b. Employees can access Skills for Life training which is embedded in a wider vocational programme such as an NVQ, or they can pursue a discrete Skills for Life programme – whichever best meets their needs.
 - c. Skills for Life training is available for all employees who meet the general Train to Gain eligibility criteria, irrespective of their prior qualifications. For example, someone who holds a level 3 qualification but who needs to improve their literacy, language or numeracy skills can access Skills for Life training; and individuals who have achieved a Skills for Life qualification at one level can progress to Skills for Life learning at a higher level.
 - d. New 'ESOL for Work'¹⁵ qualifications, designed to offer a more job-focused, practical approach to English-language skills, are now available nationally. These qualifications are partially-funded by the LSC with the employer expected to make a contribution.
4. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will be the top priority for a £350 million growth in Train to Gain funds over the next two years, designed to help them survive and prosper during tougher economic times. Since January 2009, they have been able to access increased support through new flexibilities in the offer, including training in business-critical areas such as business improvement, IT support and finance, and joined-up support for SMEs located near each other – in business parks or through supply-chains. Providers will be able to engage more employees in Skills for Life training as part of the wider training on offer.

¹⁵ These qualifications are not part of the Skills for Life suite of qualifications.

5. The Train to Gain offer has also been extended to support people moving from unemployment into work, by providing full or part funding for qualifications at levels 2 and 3 regardless of whether they already have a qualification at this level. These permit learners to re-skill or refresh their skills during their transition back into work, and will provide the opportunity for them to get the Skills for Life support they need as part of this wider training.
6. To build the capacity of Train to Gain, the LSC, working with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), will invest £30 million in college and training provider capacity to expand and improve the responsiveness of the training they deliver through Train to Gain, and providers will receive further consultancy and training support from LSIS through its World-Class Skills programme.
7. DIUS is working with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), SSCs, the LSC, employers and other stakeholders to ensure that the nation's strategic skills needs are effectively forecast and addressed. As approaches are developed to respond to identified strategic skills needs, the UKCES will ensure that action required to address Skills for Life needs in those areas is included.
8. Through sector compacts, DIUS and the LSC are working with SSCs to tailor the Train to Gain offer to meet the particular needs and circumstances of employers within each SSC's 'footprint'. Through the 10 compacts agreed to-date, employers have committed to supporting an additional 55,000 employees to pursue literacy and numeracy programmes. As these compacts are implemented and new ones negotiated, DIUS and LSC will seek further commitment from employers to address Skills for Life needs.

Sainsbury's

The Sainsbury's distribution centre at Hams Hall in Coleshill, North Warwickshire, employs over 800 people working around the clock, seven days a week. Sainsbury's recognised that low levels of literacy and numeracy impact on business performance and that encouraging and enabling staff to gain skills to progress within the business would reduce staff turnover, as motivation and self-confidence increased.

Yet this had to be balanced with operational demands. So Sainsbury's provided a dedicated learning centre and paid time off for staff to learn, and the North Warwickshire and Hinckley College delivered training at times to suit shift patterns – even during the night.

Integrated brokerage support for employers

9. Skills brokers work with employers to help them identify their skills needs and to source the provision that will best meet those needs. From April 2009, the Train to Gain skills brokerage service will form part of a new RDA integrated brokerage service delivered by Business Link. This will become the primary route for employers wishing to access government support for all their business needs, including skills.
10. To ensure that the new integrated brokerage service is effectively supporting employers in identifying and addressing their Skills for Life needs:
 - a. The standard which all brokers need to have met or be working towards before they can practice will continue to require that brokers have a detailed knowledge of the Skills for Life offer and how it can be communicated to employers in the context of business improvement.
 - b. RDAs will monitor the performance of the brokerage service on Skills for Life. A key requirement will be that all skills brokers and training providers present the Skills for Life offer in their meeting with an employer if the organisational needs analysis highlights a business need for this support.
 - c. A Business Link broker training programme will be run in 2009 and will include training on Skills for Life. Details will be made available by the RDA once the programme has been finalised.

- d. Through the Move On initiative, LSIS will deliver seminars for Business Link brokers to help them develop their knowledge of and ability to support employers in relation to Skills for Life.

Working with large employers

11. The LSC's National Employer Service (NES) works with employers with over 5,000 employees, and operates across England. It encourages employers to invest in the skills of their workforce, make the Skills Pledge and engage with Train to Gain. The NES will engage 200 of the FTSE 350 companies by the end of 2009, and 300 by 2011. The NES helps employers to integrate literacy, language and numeracy training into their wider training programmes through a dedicated account management team. This ensures that employers are introduced to the right third party agencies, or that in-house employer-led provision is established to support the set-up of Skills for Life provision and map job competencies to Skills for Life requirements.
12. To help large employers find a solution to their Skills for Life needs, NES is identifying provider organisations with the capacity and expertise to provide Skills for Life training to multi-site employers. A number of training providers and colleges have expressed interest in becoming part of the service. Successful organisations will join an NES list of approved Skills for Life training providers to whom employers will be referred. To be successful, each provider will need to demonstrate the capability to deliver quality training to high volumes of learners, both face-to-face and via e-learning, and to achieve high success rates.

Raising employer awareness and demand

13. As part of the wider Train to Gain marketing and communications effort, the LSC will run publicity campaigns aimed at both employers and employees throughout 2009 to promote Skills for Life as part of the core Train to Gain offer to businesses.
14. In addition to this strengthened promotion of the Skills for Life offer in Train to Gain, DIUS will work with partners to launch a broader marketing campaign in 2009 to raise awareness of workplace literacy, language and numeracy issues and challenge employers to address them. This new campaign will focus on numeracy in the workplace. It will dovetail with the existing Train to Gain campaign for employers and target specific sectors, using a mixture of advertising, case studies and peer-to-peer promotion.

The Skills Pledge

15. The Skills Pledge is a voluntary public commitment by an employer to support its employees to improve their skills and gain new qualifications. Though individual employers will often tailor their Skills Pledge commitment around the particular needs and circumstances of their business, all commit to supporting their employees to gain basic literacy, language and numeracy skills and work towards their first level 2 qualification. Employers who make the Pledge can access the comprehensive package of support available through Train to Gain.
16. Since it was launched in June 2007, over 11,000 employers covering over 5.5 million employees – including all government departments – and 86 local authorities have made the Skills Pledge.
17. This is excellent progress, but more employers need to make and deliver on a Skills Pledge commitment if our skills ambitions at all levels are to be realised, particularly for literacy, language and numeracy. By March 2010, our ambition is for 8 million employees (40 per cent of England's workforce) to be covered by the Skills Pledge.
18. To encourage more employers to make the Skills Pledge:
 - a. Regional LSCs are working closely with local authorities and other partners to drive up demand through workshops and collective employer groups.
 - b. Working with the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA), DIUS and the LSC will look at ways to build on the synergy between the Get On (GO) Award and the Skills Pledge to generate greater demand for Skills for Life learning.
 - c. The LSC will undertake research in 2009 to measure the impact of the Skills Pledge in order to develop further strategies to drive up demand. Work is also under way with employers to produce a 'basket of measures' that employers can choose from to measure and promote the success and impact of their investment in skills.

Merseytravel

Merseytravel employs 9,500 people to provide transport in Merseyside. In a project called Merseylearn, it has created three state-of-the-art learning centres offering Skills for Life learning 24 hours a day. Some 95 per cent of staff members have now used Merseylearn with the support of 28 trained union learning representatives.

The centres offer a flexible response to shift working and the peripatetic job roles of many staff. Merseytravel has experienced improved retention and reduced absenteeism as well as a 50 per cent drop in complaints over a three-year period.

"We're proud to have made the Skills Pledge... we recognise that by involving employees and boosting their skills through training we can encourage greater levels of motivation and retention and offer better service to our customers."

Neil Scales, CEO, Merseytravel

19. The GO Award enables local authorities to demonstrate their commitment to working with employees at all levels to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to improve their skills and gain literacy, language and numeracy qualifications.
20. IDeA is working with 169 councils which have committed to the award. To date, over 60 local authorities covering more than 683,000 employees have achieved the full GO Award – made once a council has had its Skills for Life action plan approved and has evidenced its successful implementation. DIUS, in partnership with LSC and IDeA, will set out in 2009 how the award will be developed to complement the Skills Pledge.

Investors in People

21. The Investors in People standard is a tool for employers to use to improve the performance of their business in accordance with their organisational goals and objectives. Currently 39,000 organisations covering 31 per cent of the total UK workforce hold the standard. Organisations which sign up to Investors in People make a commitment to the development and training of their staff. The standard has to be demonstrated across the whole workforce, so it is particularly helpful in engaging lower skilled individuals who may not normally take up training opportunities. Literacy and numeracy development is included as part of the standard.

22. Investors in People advisers and assessors are trained and supported by a specialist literacy and numeracy co-ordinator located in each Investors in People delivery organisation. Advisers help employers identify where they may have employees with literacy and numeracy needs and what support is available by referring employers to Train to Gain.
23. In 2008, Investors in People UK published a guide on literacy and numeracy for Investors in People specialists, linked to the Skills Pledge and Train to Gain, and a guide for trade unions on getting the most out of Investors in People, explaining the role that union learning representatives can play.

Sector Skills Councils

24. The UKCES is currently leading the process for relicensing the network of 25 SSCs, against a new remit sharply focused on three strategic objectives:
 - a. raising employer engagement, demand and investment in skills;
 - b. ensuring authoritative labour market information for their sectors; and
 - c. developing National Occupational Standards and ensuring that the qualifications meet employer needs.
25. The UKCES will make recommendations to the Government on the relicensing of the SSCs. As part of the relicensing process, SSCs are expected to be able to demonstrate an extensive understanding of the current and future skills needs, across the UK, of their sector's employers. This will leave them well placed to show the extent to which Skills for Life is an issue within their sector. Where Skills for Life has been identified as an issue, SSCs have a responsibility for raising employer demand for literacy, language and numeracy provision in order to tackle the needs identified.
26. The UKCES is supporting the development of a cross-sector strategy with the Alliance of SSCs who will need to ensure that there is effective collaboration on the development of cross-sector occupational standards and qualifications, and that identified literacy, language and numeracy skills needs are addressed as part of this process.
27. In April 2009, the UKCES will set out in its annual business plan its arrangements for performance managing SSCs and strengthening SSCs' work on cross-sector skills issues.

28. Asset Skills, the SSC for the property, facilities management, housing and cleaning industries, will continue to act as the lead SSC on Skills for Life. It will champion and provide expert advice on Skills for Life and support other SSCs in fulfilling their remit.

Apprenticeships

29. An Apprenticeship is a structured training programme which gives people the opportunity to work for an employer, learn on the job and gain transferable skills and nationally recognised qualifications. Currently, 130,000 employers are offering Apprenticeship places, covering 180 different types of Apprenticeship across 80 industrial sectors.
30. The number of adults and young people starting an Apprenticeship increased from 65,000 in 1996/97 to 224,800 in 2007/08, and is expected to grow to more than a quarter of a million over the coming year. We anticipate that there will be significant further expansion in the number and range of Apprenticeships in England as we take forward a number of measures to make Apprenticeships more attractive and accessible for both employers and learners, including the establishment, from April 2009, of the National Apprenticeship Service which will lead the expansion and improvement of the Apprenticeships programme.
31. The National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) is working with local authorities to develop and test models to support care leavers into employment. As part of this work we will ensure that, from September 2009, all suitably qualified care leavers will be offered an Apprenticeship place. We intend to make this a legal entitlement from 2013.
32. All Apprenticeship frameworks include literacy and numeracy qualifications – it is not possible to complete an Apprenticeship without achieving Key Skills in Application of Number and Communication at level 1 (for a level 2 Apprenticeship) or at level 2 (for a level 3 or Advanced Apprenticeship). In 2010, these Key Skills qualifications will be replaced by functional English and Mathematics qualifications.
33. The Specification of Apprenticeships Standards in England (SASE) was published for consultation in February 2009. The consultation document set out the minimum entry requirements, including literacy and numeracy, and progression routes related to Apprenticeships. The consultation period will last 13 weeks and the LSC will publish a finalised SASE by autumn 2009.

Trade unions

34. Union learning representatives (ULRs) are responsible for the Union Learning Fund (ULF) and ensuring that the union contribution to Skills for Life remains central to government and trade union strategies on learning and skills. The ULF has a separate strand to support union activity on Skills for Life. This enables unions to ensure that Skills for Life underpins their work with Train to Gain, Sector Skills Councils and Apprenticeships to ensure that Skills for Life needs are picked up and addressed. ULRs are key partners in successful programmes such as Move On, Get On at Work and Quick Reads.
35. ULRs support and encourage employees – particularly those with the lowest skills levels who will require greater support – to take up learning opportunities. In 2007/08, the ULF brought 34,000 learners into Skills for Life programmes. They also encourage and work with employers to support Skills for Life learning for their employees.
36. There are now over 20,500 ULRs operating in England. In 2007–08, ULRs helped over 200,000 employees back into learning, including over 34,000 employees with poor literacy and numeracy skills. Of these 6,295 achieved a literacy qualification and 4,561 a numeracy qualification at either level 1 or level 2. Supported by its learning and development organisation, unionlearn, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has a target of 22,000 trained ULRs by 2010, helping over 250,000 workers a year back into learning.
37. Through unionlearn, all ULRs are provided with a bespoke training programme which ensures they have a clear understanding of the impact of low-level literacy, language and numeracy skills on the life chances of union members and their families, and are able to effectively encourage and support learners to address these skills needs and progress, working in partnership with employers and providers.
38. Unionlearn will implement a strategy and delivery plan for 2009/10 to support greater numeracy activity in the workplace, building on a range of current ULF projects that are helping trade unions to develop tailored strategies to support numeracy. Implementation will begin in April 2009.

Unite

Paul, a Unite member, had been in his print industry job for over 15 years and had no formal qualifications. Paul was anxious about his future because he was poorly qualified and believed that he was incapable of doing maths. He came along to the union's U-Net centre in Castleford.

Paul's initial assessments showed that he was strong on literacy and he was able to pass a level 2 qualification at the first attempt. The centre staff set Paul numeracy tasks in small stages and it soon became clear that Paul's maths was better than he thought.

Eventually, Paul took his level 1 numeracy and passed, followed by level 2.

Shortly afterwards, he was offered a new job as a Police Community Support Officer. Although the qualifications Paul had been working on were not a precondition for the post, his new employers reported that it was his obvious commitment to learning and self-improvement that had distinguished him as a candidate and helped him get ahead of other challengers for the job.

Promoting Skills for Life through public procurement

39. The Government is taking action to ensure that we exploit the potential that public procurement has to promote skills training. The 'Joint Statement' agreed by central government, the trade unions and private and third sector organisations in July 2008 established the aim that all employees working on central government contracts to deliver public services should be given access to literacy, language and numeracy training where these skills are relevant to the performance of the contract, whether they are employed by public, private or third sector employers.
40. In March 2009, the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) will publish a new guide for procurement professionals on the inclusion of skills requirements in government contracts.

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
OGC guide on promoting skills through procurement published	March 2009	OGC
Launch of new employer engagement campaign	Spring 2009	DIUS
Train to Gain skills brokerage service integrated into wider Business Link brokerage service	April 2009	LSC, RDA
Implement unionlearn strategy for supporting greater numeracy activity in the workplace	April 2009	TUC
Set out annual business plan for performance managing SSCs	April 2009	UKCES
National Employer Service engaged with 200 of the FTSE 350 companies	December 2009	NES
Business Link broker training programme delivered	2009	LSC, RDA
Specification of Apprenticeship Standards in England published	Autumn 2009	LSC
8 million employees covered by the Skills Pledge	March 2010	DIUS, LSC
Increase the number of ULRs to 22,000 to help over 250,000 workers a year back into learning	2010	TUC
National Employer Service engaged with 300 of the FTSE 350 companies	2011	NES

Chapter 4

Supporting individuals to improve their Skills for Life

We are committed to ensuring that every adult has the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to realise their full potential. In the current economic climate, it is important that our support is focused on improving individuals' employability so that the Skills for Life training we deliver helps them find, stay and progress in work.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus will continue to integrate employment and skills services so that all Jobcentre Plus clients receive tailored support for their literacy, language and numeracy needs.

The LSC will continue to trial and rollout skills accounts and the new adult advancement and careers service, creating opportunities for greater personalisation and choice.

The Government has created a new statutory entitlement making literacy and numeracy training at the functional levels (level 1 literacy and entry level 3 numeracy) free to all who need it. For the academic year 2009/10 the LSC will be under a duty to provide proper facilities for adults seeking to improve their literacy and numeracy at functional levels.

The Government is taking legislation through Parliament to introduce a statutory right which would enable employees to request from their employer time away from their core duties to undertake relevant training. This proposal began to go through the legislative process in February 2009 and, if agreed, it will be implemented in 2010.

The LSC will renew and extend the Get On campaign with a particular focus on raising the demand for numeracy among our priority groups.

Integrating employment and skills services

1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) are committed to putting in place an integrated employment and skills system that will increase people's chances of finding employment and progressing in work. In 2010/11, over 100,000 people will be helped to gain sustainable employment and to achieve a recognised qualification.
2. As part of our plans to integrate employment and skills, we are trialling a new offer in the following Jobcentre Plus districts: West Midlands, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, Norfolk, Greater Manchester Central, Greater Manchester East and West, and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. In March 2009, trials will commence in two more Jobcentre Plus districts: Central London and Southwark, and Lambeth and Wandsworth.

3. The new offer includes:
 - a. better identification of literacy, language and numeracy needs through Jobcentre Plus;
 - b. the introduction of a full skills health check to help people identify their skills needs where more diagnosis is needed; and
 - c. referral to an employability skills programme or other appropriate provision for all those with identified literacy, language or numeracy needs.
4. DIUS and DWP introduced the Employability Skills Programme (ESP) in 2007 to support the needs of Jobcentre Plus customers. As well as addressing literacy, language and numeracy needs, ESP provides employability qualifications, job-search support and work experience. Following a review of ESP to be completed by May 2009, the LSC will launch a refreshed programme from August 2009 to ensure it offers jobseekers the service they need to help them find work and continue their progression once in work.
5. To make it easier for people to find work, continue their learning and gain qualifications once they have started their job, Jobcentre Plus will use the employment and skills trials to improve the referral of their customers to the most suitable provision; this includes the ESP and other Skills for Life providers.
6. The LSC will use these trials to secure more flexible provision that can support people pre- and post-employment (Chapter 5 sets out how providers are being supported to develop the type of provision that is needed).
7. Alongside this, Jobcentre Plus will be piloting the requirement to address skills needs as a condition of Jobseeker's Allowance. In addition, *Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future*¹⁶ sets out the ambition to take the powers needed to make identifying and addressing skills needs a condition of benefit receipt for those in other key out-of-work groups: lone parents whose youngest child is aged five or six and those who start to claim Employment and Support Allowance. For these groups, conditionality needs to be tailored to individual capacity and be appropriate to their circumstances. Lone parents with younger children will first be encouraged and supported to improve their employment prospects, with sanctions being used only as a last resort.

¹⁶ DWP, December 2008, *Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future*.

8. This will complement the extra support DIUS announced in December 2008 for an additional 40,000 people currently facing redundancy and those looking for work, to help them retrain and develop their skills so they can quickly move back into sustainable employment. The extra funding will help the LSC, local colleges and training providers work closely with Jobcentre Plus to make sure those people affected get access to the services they need as quickly as possible. Together with the additional funding DIUS has already announced for increased provision of advice on careers and the training available to help people get the jobs that are available, this amounts to up to £212 million of additional help for people during the downturn.
9. As part of the Government's package of enhanced support for Jobcentre Plus customers reaching the six-month claim point announced in January 2009, from April 2009, 75,000 new training places are being offered to jobseekers on Jobseeker's Allowance. This short-term, flexible training will not conflict with availability for work or delay entry to the job market; learners will be able to start courses full or part-time while out of work, and continue/complete in work with the employer's agreement.
10. DIUS will work with DWP and Jobcentre Plus to determine what additional support may be needed for frontline Jobcentre Plus staff to enable them to undertake the enhanced role in identifying skills needs.

Barnfield College and London Luton Airport

Barnfield College, working in partnership with London Luton Airport, the airport retailers, Jobcentre Plus and Skillsmart (the Sector Skills Council) is developing a new local retail pathway to employment. This will help learners with interview techniques, literacy and numeracy skills, and more specific, airport-based retailing knowledge.

As the programme is tailored to airport retailing and partly delivered by airside retail staff, learners should be more likely to meet employment criteria, thereby cutting airport retailers' recruitment costs and the time taken to train recruits to be fully operational.

Skills accounts and the adult advancement and careers service

- 11.** Through the creation of skills accounts and the new adult advancement and careers service (aacs), a single service is being developed that will engage people and empower them to take control of their learning, connecting them directly to the information, advice and support they need to improve their skills, find and progress in work.
- 12.** The aacs is an evolution of the current Careers Advice Service and local nextstep advice services – bringing them together to form a single service. It will provide a universal and differentiated offer of advice and support, focusing the most intensive support on those who need it most, including the low skilled. It will also connect people to wider sources of advice on other issues that can act as barriers to accessing learning, such as finding the right childcare, understanding housing and employment rights, and personal financial management. These issues can be particularly relevant for those with literacy, language and numeracy needs.
- 13.** The LSC will progressively trial key elements of the new service in 2008/09 and 2009/10. The aacs will be introduced from autumn 2010. As part of this process, the LSC will develop and test a diagnostic tool to help people identify their current and future skills needs – this is currently being tested with Jobcentre Plus customers and nextstep advisers. This tool will also include a facility to screen for possible literacy, language and numeracy needs.
- 14.** As part of the offer to individuals with the aacs, skills accounts will incentivise people to undertake learning by giving them:
 - a.** clear information on how much government funding they could be entitled to for learning;
 - b.** a secure record of their skills and qualifications that they can build and take with them through life; and
 - c.** a ‘statement’ showing how much the state, employers and individuals have invested in their training.

15. Since September 2008, as part of a small-scale trial, people in the South East and East Midlands have been opening skills accounts through partner colleges, local nextsteps services, online or through the Careers Advice Service. Skills accounts will also be tested with Jobcentre Plus customers as part of the programme of integration of employment and skills services. National trials of the account system will begin in 2009/10. The LSC will consider how accounts can best support those with literacy, language and numeracy needs. National rollout will commence from autumn 2010.
16. Together, skills accounts and the aacs will provide a single gateway – whether face-to-face, by telephone, or online – through which people will be able to get advice and support on improving their literacy, language and numeracy skills. They will be able to work through a diagnosis of their needs, find suitable learning opportunities, and understand how the Government can help them access learning with further advice and guidance and financial support – this universal offer of support will be promoted widely, through a variety of different channels, using a motivational new brand.

Statutory learner entitlements

17. Since the launch of the Skills for Life strategy in 2001, the LSC has operated an 'administrative entitlement' making literacy and numeracy free to all learners who need it. That entitlement has now been enshrined in legislation. When the legislation comes into force for the academic year 2009/10, the LSC will be under a duty to secure the provision of proper facilities for adults seeking to improve their literacy and numeracy at functional levels – literacy at level 1 and numeracy at entry level 3 – and to ensure that these courses are free to learners. This legislation gives a new level of priority, in terms of funding, to these courses, similar to that currently in place for learning for 16- to 19-year-olds. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision is not covered by this entitlement.
18. This means that learners can expect a wide variety of free literacy and numeracy courses to be available to them. They can also be confident that there will be sufficient courses on offer to allow them to attend in a location of their choice, within a reasonable period of time, and that all courses will be of a standard that will allow them to achieve their aims.

19. As part of its responsibility, the LSC will need to ensure that providers are able to meet learners' needs. The new legislation will be reflected in the LSC's funding guidance, to be published in spring 2009.

'Time to train'

20. The Government announced, in the 2008 Queen's Speech, new proposals to create a statutory right that would enable employees to request from their employer time away from their core duties to undertake relevant training. We believe that giving employees a right to a serious conversation with their employer about their skills development will be a major boost to the chances of employees getting help with their literacy, language and numeracy skills, particularly in cases when employers have not broached the issue with their employees or have not previously been receptive to employees' Skills for Life needs and the impact this can have. Union learning representatives will have an important role to play and will help support and encourage individual employees to make the most of their right to request time to train.
21. This proposal is going through the legislative process. If agreed, it is expected that time to train will be implemented in 2010.

The Get On campaign

22. The Get On marketing campaign was launched in 2001 to raise demand for adult literacy, language and numeracy learning. Since then, over 370,000 people have directly contacted the Get On helpline and many more have gone direct to their local provider to enrol on a course.
23. In March 2008, DIUS and the LSC launched a new national marketing campaign focused predominantly on numeracy. The first phase focused on raising awareness and building confidence in relation to numeracy. The second phase over the summer of 2008 focused on encouraging adults to enrol on a numeracy course at their local provider. So far, the new campaign has generated 20,000 calls and 70,000 visits to the website (www.direct.gov.uk/geton). Phase three will start in March 2009 and there will be a new strand of the campaign targeted specifically at black and minority ethnic groups. Phase four will commence in August 2009 and phase five is planned for January 2010.

24. In 2009, the LSC will extend the reach of the Get On campaign by working with partners such as Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure that Skills for Life publicity is available to our target audience in a wider range of locations.
25. The national campaign is significantly strengthened by providers adopting the campaign messages, branding and publicity materials locally. These are available together with marketing advice and a Skills for Life marketing toolkit, free of charge, from the Get On campaign office on 020 7455 3130 or from www.lsc.gov.uk/campaignresources. We are encouraging all providers to become involved in the campaign and take advantage of the support and advice available.
26. National advertising is complemented by a range of awareness-raising and engagement activities across the country. These include:
 - a. Quick Reads is a major collaboration between government, employers, unions, the publishing industry, providers and libraries that produces short, exciting books by bestselling authors and celebrities for adults who are new to reading or may have literacy issues. The outreach campaign, organised by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), engaged over 11,000 organisations in 2008 and provides additional resources to support literacy tutors and intermediaries around the country. The new set of books was published on World Book Day, 5 March, and a similar engagement campaign is under discussion around numeracy outreach.
 - b. Move On is a national project focused on helping adults brush up their skills. Since its launch in 2003, providers have used the Move On approach and resources to enable over 760,000 learners to gain Skills for Life qualifications. Move On is undertaking a range of activities to support numeracy, including sector-specific skills checklists and quizzes to engage employers and employees.
 - c. Adult Learners' Week, Learning at Work Day and the Family Learning Festival are annual events which raise awareness of skills issues and generate thousands of enquiries to the national Get On helpline. DIUS will ensure that each forthcoming event gives a focus to numeracy.

- d. Heading for Success is an initiative that links providers with their local football club to offer literacy and numeracy learning. Over 30 football clubs and providers have developed partnerships within the scheme and a further 10 college-only models are in operation, helping over 2,800 learners to date. The Heading for Success approach is currently being evaluated with a view to embedding it within the core business of participating providers, and guidance will be issued in spring 2009 to encourage other providers to adopt this approach.
- e. The BBC launched a major focus on numeracy and financial capability in early 2009 as part of its Read and Write campaign.

“These are the skills which you need throughout life and which underpin everything that you do at home and at work. I tell my own children that they should continually learn to achieve their goals and I hope that I’m a good role model for them.”

Amanda Hedley, who achieved literacy and numeracy level 2 qualifications after undergoing a skills health check at New College Durham

Financial capability

- 27. Raising levels of financial capability in the UK and ensuring that people have the skills and confidence to manage their money well has been a government commitment since the publication of the Government’s long-term approach for financial capability in 2007.¹⁷
- 28. In July 2008, HM Treasury and the Financial Services Authority (FSA) launched the financial capability action plan, which set out the Government’s programme of financial education in schools, plans for the ‘Money Guidance Pathfinder’ and a wide range of targeted financial capability initiatives for adults and families.¹⁸
- 29. Improving financial capability through adult learning is a key part of the action plan. Since 2001, DIUS has provided over £3 million to support the improvement of literacy, language and numeracy in the context of financial capability. DIUS will continue to work with HM Treasury, the FSA and other stakeholders to improve financial capability through the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills.

¹⁷ HM Treasury, January 2007, *Financial Capability: the Government’s long-term approach*.

¹⁸ HM Treasury, July 2008, *Helping you make the most of your money: a joint action plan for financial capability*.

30. The financial capability action plan also set out plans to expand family finance courses as part of the Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) initiative. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) will develop both short (30 hour) and standard (60 hour) family financial capability courses for parents and children, delivered in a range of settings including children's centres, schools and the third sector. Guidelines, resources and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for teachers will be made available for providers in March 2009.

Family learning

31. Improving parents' literacy, language and numeracy skills can have a positive impact on the whole family, including the educational performance of children.
32. FLLN courses deliver significant benefits for both adults and children by enabling parents and carers to learn with their children and gain a qualification. Provision is focused on the most disadvantaged local authority wards, thus ensuring that it is targeted at people who are often low skilled and furthest from the labour market. Wider Family Learning (WFL) supports a range of informal local activities including ICT, citizenship and the environment – delivered in settings such as museums, libraries, sports centres and colleges. Each year between 2008 and 2011, DIUS is investing £25 million for the delivery of FLLN provision and £12 million for WFL.
33. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) announced in its *Children's Plan*¹⁹ £30 million between 2008 and 2011 for Family Learning Impact Funding (FLIF) programmes. Led by the LSC and delivered by local authorities in partnership with DIUS, LSIS and the LSC, the programme has the following main strands.
- Rolling out the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) courses, piloted in 2007/08, to extend the reach of family learning to Early Years settings.
 - Building the capacity of the teaching workforce, introducing numeracy 'champions' and extending the range of courses on offer to support family numeracy.
 - Increasing the number of families engaged in improving their literacy, language and numeracy in the context of finance and money management, and enabling parents to better understand the information they receive from schools and children's services about their children's learning and development.

¹⁹ DCSF, 2007, *The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures*.

- d. Improving the opportunities for progression from WFL courses to FLLN courses, supported by a new web-based system to capture robust data on the progression of parents and their children.
34. Working with the LSC and LSIS, DIUS and DCSF will agree deliverables for phase 2 of the FLIF programme (2009/10) by March 2009 based on the above strands. Deliverables for phase 3 (2010/11) will be agreed by March 2010. The LSC will issue guidance on each occasion.
35. NIACE has developed a set of resources to help family learning providers track progression in and from family learning, including educational, economic, social and personal progression. These tools are being used by providers to monitor learner progression from the FLIF programmes.
36. Step into Learning is a training programme for frontline workers, which equips them with the skills needed to identify parents with potential skills needs and signpost them to local provision. The programme has now been customised for the health sector and extended to schools. LSIS's Skills for Families advisers will continue to promote and embed the Step into Learning approach within local authorities.
37. In October 2008, DCSF announced the Home Access programme, with plans to ensure that every child has access to a home computer and the internet for school or college work. This will have a positive impact on whole families. DIUS will ensure that a package of support to encourage adult learning is rolled out alongside Home Access, starting with pilots in Oldham and Suffolk from March 2009.

"I now spend all my spare time reading for pleasure and love being able to read to my son every night. My new skills are helping both of us achieve more in our lives. I have now changed my job to a project worker, so that I can help others improve their lives in the same way I have been helped."

Declan, who enrolled on a Skills for Life course after approaching his employer, Brighton and Hove Council. He is now about to complete a higher level GCSE in English

Offender learning

- 38.** Increasing the literacy, language and numeracy skills of offenders can result in better employment prospects on release. But there are wider benefits to society, including a reduction in the cost of re-offending and reduced personal costs to victims of crime. As offenders make up one of our priority groups, we must continue to support them to ensure that they can achieve their learning and employment goals.
- 39.** The LSC will introduce a new core curriculum for offender learning in August 2009, focused on employability and delivering literacy, language, numeracy, preparation for work and vocational training. Crucially, the core curriculum will bolster transition, enabling offenders who commence learning in one prison to continue that learning as they move throughout the system and continue in colleges or with other providers after release. We will continue to expand the volume of learning embedded into other prison activities, with the LSC and its providers working collaboratively with the National Offender Management Service to deliver this.

Working across government

- 40.** Individuals, and particularly those in our priority groups, come into contact with a wide range of government services at various points in their lives. There are already some good examples of wider activity that also promotes skills training but we need to do more.
- 41.** DIUS will explore with other government departments what further action could be taken to promote Skills for Life learning through the services which they provide.
- a.** Skilled for Health is a joint DIUS, Department of Health (DH) and third sector national programme which simultaneously addresses literacy, language and numeracy skills and health inequalities that are prevalent within traditionally disadvantaged communities. DH has announced its intention to extend the Skilled for Health programme more widely from 2009 as part of its health inequalities strategy. Skilled for Health will embed literacy and numeracy into building 'health literacy' among learners from disadvantaged communities and in workplace settings while continuing to promote the importance of progression on to nationally recognised qualifications.
- b.** Since 2002, the Armed Forces have built a Service-wide Skills for Life programme for their workforce as part of the Armed Forces Basic Skills

Policy, tailored to the needs and demands of Service life. All applicants wishing to join the Services have their literacy, language and numeracy skills assessed. Those with literacy or numeracy skills below entry level 2 or with speaking and listening skills below level 1 – the required levels for entry – are referred to local provision and encouraged to reapply once their skills have improved. Contextualised Skills for Life programmes are delivered through an extensive network of 30 Army Education Centres and over 120 e-learning centres – in the UK and overseas – using specialist Ministry of Defence (MOD) Skills for Life teachers, volunteer mentors and external providers. In addition, Skills for Life provision for the spouses of Armed Forces personnel is being delivered by LSC-funded providers in England and in overseas locations using Armed Forces education facilities, where spare capacity exists.²⁰ DIUS and the MOD are sponsoring an Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study (2008–11) involving 1,600 Army recruits to assess the impact of improving literacy and numeracy skills on the operational effectiveness of Service personnel. A report will be produced by June 2011.

- c. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) led Library Service Modernisation Review²¹ will define the Government's vision for modern, world-class public library services and set out some of the necessary steps to achieve it. Libraries can have a real impact on local residents' skills development and well-being, and the review is considering how libraries can maximise their impact as community hubs – gateways to formal and informal learning, to community information, to technology and to entertainment resources locally.
- d. DIUS and DCMS are working together to support the widening of access to learning in libraries and in the wider cultural and leisure sectors and the further opening up of spaces for self-organised learning groups like the University of the Third Age. This will involve working with organisations and networks – including over 3,000 libraries in England – to encourage more partnerships with local providers to deliver increased informal and formal adult learning opportunities locally.
- e. DIUS will work with Communities and Local Government (CLG) to explore how we can promote Skills for Life through the duty being placed on local authorities to undertake an assessment of the economic challenges facing their areas, the Regeneration Framework and other activities to improve conditions for people living in the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

²⁰ MOD, July 2008, *The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans*.

²¹ The review was launched on 9 October 2008 and its findings will be published in spring 2009.

Informal Adult Learning

42. Informal learning is learning for its own intrinsic value. It takes place in a wide range of public, private and third sector settings and does not necessarily result in a qualification. It improves the strength, health and well-being of individuals and their communities through creative engagement, active participation, physical activity and volunteering. The inclusion of Informal Adult Learning into guidance services offered through the adult advancement and careers service (aacs) will help us engage some of the hardest-to-reach adults and give some of them the chance to progress to formal learning programmes including literacy, language and numeracy courses. DIUS will soon publish a strategy paper on the future of Informal Adult Learning.

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
Phase three of the Get On marketing campaign is launched	March 2009	LSC, DIUS
Guidelines on professional development opportunities regarding family financial capability teaching are published	March 2009	LSIS
Guidance and resources made available for new family financial capability courses	March 2009	LSIS
Home Access pilots launched in Suffolk and Oldham	March 2009	Becta
Integrated employment and skills service trials rolled out to Central London and Southwark, Lambeth and Wandsworth	March 2009	DIUS
Deliverables for phase 3 of the Family Learning Impact Funding programme agreed	March 2009	DIUS, DCSF, LSIS, LSC
BBC Read and Write campaign launched	Spring 2009	BBC
LSC funding guide published, to include guidance relating to learner entitlement	Spring 2009	LSC

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
New Heading for Success guidance published	Spring 2009	DIUS
75,000 new training places offered to jobseekers on Jobseeker's Allowance	April 2009	DIUS, DWP
Learner entitlement legislation comes into force	August 2009	DIUS, LSC
Refreshed employability skills programme launched	August 2009	LSC
Phase four of the Get On marketing campaign is launched	August 2009	LSC
Introduction of a new core curriculum for offender learning which includes literacy, language, numeracy, preparation for work and vocational training	August 2009	LSC
'Administrative entitlement' legislation comes into force	September 2009	DIUS
Phase five of the Get On marketing campaign is launched	January 2010	LSC
Deliverables for phase 3 of the Family Learning Impact Funding programme agreed	March 2010	DIUS, DCSEF, LSIS, LSC
National roll-out of skills accounts commences	Autumn 2010	LSC, JCP
New statutory right for employees to request time to train comes into effect, subject to passage of legislation	October 2010	DIUS
New adult advancement and careers service introduced	Autumn 2010	DIUS/DWP/ LSC

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
100,000 people gain sustainable employment and achieve a national qualification through the integrated employment and skills service	2010/11	DIUS, DWP
Armed Forces longitudinal study report published	June 2011	MOD, DIUS

Chapter 5

Building capacity to deliver flexible and responsive Skills for Life provision

Skills for Life provision needs to be flexible and responsive to employer and learner needs. As these needs change in response to changes in economic and personal circumstances, providers will need to develop the capacity to adequately respond.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), through its National Support Programme, will support providers to develop Skills for Life provision that is flexible, available all year round, and tailored to local employer needs.

LSIS will work with providers to share best practice and build capacity so that, by 2011, we can expect all Learning and Skills Council (LSC)-funded providers to deliver embedded Skills for Life provision in addition to discrete Skills for Life courses.

Through its National Support Programme, LSIS will support providers to improve the quality and increase the capacity of their numeracy provision.

LSIS will develop focused support for providers to build capacity to deliver Skills for Life through Train to Gain.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is reviewing current teacher numbers and assessing what more is needed in terms of quality and capacity to deliver the 2011 targets and 2020 ambition for literacy and numeracy; this will inform actions to implement the FE workforce strategy. The Year 2 implementation plan will be produced in April 2009.

The LSC will set a new expectation that all providers offer Skills for Life initial assessment to all learners on programmes at level 2 and below, including numeracy assessments for learners on literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) will continue to pilot new Functional Skills qualifications as part of a move towards rationalising the current provision on offer to learners and employers.

Flexible and responsive Skills for Life provision

1. To deliver our ambition, Skills for Life provision needs to be high quality, flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and employers. LSIS launched a consultation on its National Improvement Strategy in December 2008. Following the consultation, a new, more co-ordinated offer of support for Skills for Life providers will be made available in June 2009 for the start of the 2009/10 academic year.

2. That programme will include support for providers to help them:
 - a. Develop programmes that focus on employability to ensure individuals acquire the skills that will help them find and progress in work.
 - b. Develop 'roll-on roll-off' provision to allow individuals to enrol at any time of the year, enabling people to fit their learning around their lives.
 - c. Increase the amount of Skills for Life learning delivered on employer premises so that it is easier for employees to get the support they need during work time.
 - d. Develop flexible delivery models to allow individuals to learn when and where it suits them. This will include exploring what more can be made of 'blended learning', whereby a mixture of learning approaches are used – such as classroom-based, independent and e-learning – and how to make better use of technology so that people can access learning and assessment when and where they want it.
 - e. Develop provision that is contextualised to what people need and to the needs of local employers to ensure that individuals are supported to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills while improving their employability.
 - f. Develop the capability to offer embedded Skills for Life provision which involves the teaching of literacy, language and numeracy as an integral part of a wider programme such as a vocational course. Research²² has shown that embedding increases success rates of both Skills for Life and vocational level 2 provision and can engage learners who would not otherwise seek help with their literacy, language or numeracy. In 2009/10, LSIS will continue to support providers to develop embedded Skills for Life provision through taking a whole-organisation approach. This involves strategic and operational support to help providers position the Skills for Life needs of learners at the heart of their activity.
3. Funding of the embedded approach requires two or more learning aims to be in place – one for the vocational programme and the other for the additional literacy, numeracy or ESOL programme. It is not currently possible to record whether Skills for Life provision is embedded. The LSC will review how embedded Skills for Life activity can be funded and recorded as a single Skills for Life vocational learning aim. Any subsequent changes will be introduced in August 2010.

²² NRDC, 2006, 'You wouldn't expect a maths teacher to teach plastering'. *Embedding literacy, language and numeracy in post-16 vocational programmes – the impact on learning and achievement.*

New College Nottingham

New College Nottingham is one of the first colleges to be awarded an 'outstanding' classification by Ofsted for its employer responsive provision. The college attributes much of this success to the strong partnership between its vocational and Skills for Life staff which sees them working closely together in a dedicated business unit to develop provision which is fully embedded.

Skills for Life staff have mapped all the NVQs they offer against the generic communication-based competences common to most of them, and have devised materials and e-learning resources that develop these skills in the different vocational contexts. These skills include reflective writing, customer care and communication skills. The Skills for Life teachers then teach these skills as part of the NVQ offer but the skills are 'frontloaded' as part of a 'brush-up' approach which prepares learners for returning to learning so that they are able to tackle the vocational course. This approach gives employees the opportunity to take the national Skills for Life tests and to acquire NVQ units from the same sessions.

The college feels this highly focused teaching gives credibility and a rationale to learners and employers for Skills for Life learning to be at the heart of the wider training offer.

4. Support for providers to enhance their delivery of Skills for Life through Train to Gain has been stepped up through the distribution of £30 million in capacity-building grants to Train to Gain providers by the LSC in February 2009.
5. Providers can bid for a grant of up to £200,000 until April 2009. Grants will be allocated based on 2007/08 Train to Gain achievements, and there is provision for reclaiming the money if the provider fails to deliver on Train to Gain priorities. The grant can be used for a number of purposes including staff recruitment, retraining and restructuring, and the promotion of the Skills for Life offer to employers and employees. This investment in provider capacity will have to promote the delivery of flexible, responsive Skills for Life provision which meets the needs of employers and their employees.

Initial assessment

6. Initial assessment is the process for identifying an individual's current level of literacy, language or numeracy. It is used to help place a person on the appropriate course at the right level and is usually followed up by a more in-depth assessment to identify a person's strengths and weaknesses so that a tailored learning plan can be developed.
7. For the academic year 2009/10, the LSC will publish a definition of initial assessment to be used consistently across all its funded programmes, and guidance for providers on its expectation that Skills for Life initial assessment is offered to all learners on training programmes at level 2 and below to determine their literacy and numeracy needs. This includes identifying the numeracy needs of learners on literacy and ESOL programmes. LSIS's Support Programme will provide advice and support for providers in implementing this.

National Skills Academies

8. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) is working with the LSC to ensure that National Skills Academies (NSAs) deliver the skills required by key sectors and sub-sectors of the economy. NSAs are employer-led, innovative, sector-based education and training organisations which provide an 'all through' route for young people and adults to train for jobs. They are designed to enable high levels of employer involvement and attract significant employer sponsorship and investment. Where Sector Skills Agreements highlight that Skills for Life levels are an issue for particular sectors, NSAs will respond by including literacy, language and numeracy training as an integral part of their business plan.
9. The Government's ambition is to have an NSA in each major sector of the economy, as resources allow. Ten NSAs are currently operational and a further six are in business planning. Another competitive bidding round will be held in 2009–10 to expand the NSA programme by providing funding for an additional four academies. The NSA prospectus for future competitive bidding rounds will emphasise the importance of addressing literacy, language and numeracy needs and how these skills underpin other areas of skills development and employability.

Keits Ltd

Keits Ltd is a work-based training provider in the Eastern region, working with employers in land-based industries. Keits accessed support from LSIS's Skills for Life Support Programme in order to develop a whole-organisation approach to embedding literacy and numeracy in its vocational Apprenticeships.

Keits trained dual-skilled teachers and worked to make all Skills for Life input and assessment work based, vocationally relevant and individualised for each learner.

This approach has resulted in improved learner completion rates of over 75 per cent for the full Apprenticeship framework, and a dedicated staff team who have actively contributed to all aspects of an improved quality cycle.

Focus on numeracy

10. The National Centre for Excellence in Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) undertook a year-long review of what constitutes and promotes effective Mathematics learning.²³ It reported the need for a 'wider menu' of numeracy programmes to link the learning to individuals' personal challenges, goals and aspirations, and the need to equate numeracy with problem solving rather than just number work.
11. The NCETM is working with regional LSCs and partnerships to promote and support numeracy activity at regional level and will establish a baseline of progression from numeracy courses to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and level 2 programmes. The project will deliver in March 2009.
12. LSIS will give priority to numeracy in its 2009/10 Support Programme for providers in order to support them to increase their capacity to deliver quality numeracy provision.
13. Through its family literacy, language and numeracy programme, LSIS is supporting the training of more specialist family numeracy teachers. A range of continuing professional development (CPD) modules are also being developed to support delivery to entry level 3 learners, which include practical family Maths activities. These will be available on the Skills for Families website by March 2009.

²³ NCETM, 2008, *Mathematics Matters Final Report*.

14. LLUK is working with the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and awarding organisations to ensure that accredited professional development opportunities are available for the family learning workforce. These will be offered at a range of levels and in settings where family learning takes place. A qualification at level 5 will provide a pathway for specialist family literacy and numeracy teachers.

Longden Training

Longden, a small private training provider based in the West Midlands, knows that many support staff in schools are wary of Maths and do not hold a Maths qualification. They recognise the need to encourage these key school staff to become positive advocates of Maths with the children in their schools.

Longden has developed a short numeracy programme for support staff and classroom supervisors, delivered in schools. Delivered through Train to Gain, the innovative 'blended' course includes a one-day team challenge, short e-learning and Maths 'takeaways', and personal coaching.

Fifty-two learners enrolled on the numeracy programme with the aim of achieving a qualification. Feedback from the learners has been excellent. One learner said: *"We are overcoming family and cultural taboos, without breaking any cultural or religious rules."*

15. The Move On Learner Route provides online practice tests and support for learners to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills. Since the launch of the Move On Learner Route in June 2005, over 600,000 learners have registered on the site and, of these, over 145,000 have completed at least one practice test. In May 2008, the Learner Route was broadened to include an entry level 3 numeracy pathway to help learners develop the skills needed to achieve the entry level 3 numeracy qualification.

The teaching workforce

16. A key challenge in meeting the 2020 ambition will be to ensure that we have enough fully trained teachers to meet the increased demand for courses, particularly in the case of numeracy. There were an estimated 18,800 individuals teaching in the Skills for Life workforce as a whole in 2004/05, the most recent year for which full data is available.
17. At the same time, recent research into skills shortages in FE teaching, conducted for LLUK by GHK Consulting, highlights shortages of literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers, with numeracy posts the most difficult to fill.

- 18.** The Government has a target of ensuring that all Skills for Life teachers are fully qualified, or working towards required qualifications, by September 2010. Regulations came into force in September 2007 which require all newly appointed teachers to hold or work towards appropriate qualifications; all specialist teachers to hold a qualification(s) in the subject(s) they teach (including literacy, numeracy and ESOL); and all teachers to undertake at least 30 hours' CPD each year, including subject-specific CPD, in order to maintain the professional standing and 'licence to practise' in England'.
- 19.** Workforce reforms are being led by LLUK on behalf of the sector and are set out in the *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007–2012* and the supporting *Strategy Implementation Plan*, which was published in March 2008.²⁴ LLUK will review and refresh the workforce strategy and actions to implement it. This will include an assessment of what more is needed to deliver the 2011 targets and the 2020 ambition for literacy and numeracy. The Year 2 implementation plan will be produced in April 2009.
- 20.** While the role of fully qualified teachers will remain central, growth in the capacity of the wider workforce – those who support teaching and learning and those who offer advice, guidance and support for learners – is also crucial, particularly to support an increase in the use of technology and flexible learning styles. LLUK are holding a series of consultations to define how learning support practitioners and those working with people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can support Skills for Life.
- 21.** To raise the quality and boost the capacity of the teaching workforce, a range of actions are being taken.
- a.** DIUS will look to the Institute for Learning (IfL)²⁵ to ensure that the FE teacher professional registration database captures the details of all specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers, and is used to identify future training and professional development needs.
 - b.** To address skills shortages identified in the GHK research, LLUK will run a planned recruitment campaign in early 2009 specifically targeted at attracting teachers to STEM teaching in FE. Further campaigns will be organised where shortages remain.
 - c.** Higher rate incentives are being offered to trainee numeracy teachers through the bursary programme. In order to retain teachers, a 'golden hello' of £4,000 is payable to those who stay teaching a shortage subject for a second year, which rises to £5,000 for those training in numeracy.
 - d.** Future development of training capacity, both for initial teacher training

²⁴ LLUK, 2008, *Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England, 2007–2012*.

²⁵ IfL is the professional body for FE teachers.

and the upgrading of the qualifications of existing teachers, will be reviewed by DIUS, LSIS and LLUK to identify opportunities for existing numeracy teachers to upgrade and to cater for the needs of new entrants. Decisions will be made by April 2009 on how LSIS will develop this aspect of its Skills for Life Support Programme; what support will be provided through the network of Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs) to improve support for numeracy, literacy and ESOL teachers; and the training of numeracy specialists through the NCETM.

- e. LLUK will review the knowledge and skill needs of teachers delivering Functional Skills and will make recommendations about what (if any) additional qualifications or CPD they may need, to support teaching these subjects.
- f. Subject to the outcome of the current review of roles, LLUK will produce updated guidance on teacher and support staff roles, and will support the development of new unit- and credit-based qualifications to meet any identified gaps by July 2009. This includes identifying a specialist learning support practitioner role in literacy, language and numeracy, and developing a qualification for it.
- g. LSIS, LLUK and IfL will review and bring together opportunities for CPD, including:
 - I. further development of the CPD places currently offered to 7,000 teachers by LSIS, with priority given to numeracy;
 - II. structured business interchange opportunities for Skills for Life teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills provided by LLUK as part of its Catalyst Programme; and
 - III. opportunities to identify and share best practice for Skills for Life specialists provided through the IfL's CPD portal for FE teachers, *Reflect*.
- h. LSIS will deliver training for family numeracy and finance practitioners and will recruit 300 family numeracy 'champions' to motivate parents and carers to join family numeracy classes.

Assuring quality

22. High quality provision is essential if individuals are to be motivated to continue their learning, achieve and progress. As part of the move towards a self-regulated FE system, the LSC evaluates the performance of a provider and undertakes a differentiated level of intervention and scrutiny subject to that evaluation, taking a lighter touch for high-performing providers.
23. Ofsted is responsible for inspection of the FE system. Inspection reports by Ofsted indicate that the quality of literacy, language and numeracy provision is improving, with more programmes meeting the needs and interests of learners.
24. In all cases where Ofsted judges a college to be inadequate overall, the LSC will issue a 'Notice to Improve', the conditions of which need to be met within 12 months of the issue to avoid further action by the LSC. For FE colleges, the LSC has specific powers of intervention.
25. Ofsted are undertaking a review of literacy and numeracy provision which will identify successful practice and interventions for raising the literacy and numeracy levels of post-16 learners. The review will report in autumn 2009.
26. In September 2008, the LSC introduced a single, unified framework for managing performance – the Framework for Excellence. The Framework uses a 'balanced scorecard' approach designed to produce comparable performance information about all types of provider for different types of user. The Framework will set clear and unambiguous standards of excellence and assess providers against these standards. Providers' performance ratings will be published annually to help learners and employers choose the learning experience which best suits their needs. The Framework complements the wider programme of reform for achieving excellence in FE through the National Improvement Strategy, the LSC's intervention programme and the work on self-regulation. As of 2008–09, all colleges and work-based providers will be in the scope of the Framework and this will extend to all FE-funded delivery partners by 2010–11.

27. To support the focus of Skills for Life provision on employability, the Framework will include an indicator that rates a provider on their responsiveness to employers. In addition, it will also include an indicator, 'learner destinations', which will rate a provider's performance on the possible contribution it has made to achieving a positive further learning or employment outcome for the learner. DIUS will work with Ofsted to identify opportunities for evaluating the extent to which Skills for Life provision is supporting employability and for following up the current review of numeracy provision through surveys.

Qualifications and curricula

28. National Occupational Standards (NOS) are the standards that underpin the development of vocational qualifications. Following work by the QCA on the feasibility of embedding Skills for Life into the qualification accreditation process, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is establishing how NOS can take account of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills assumptions. Further information about how this will be addressed will be included in the UKCES NOS strategy review due in March 2009.
29. Launched in November 2008, the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a new way of recognising skills by awarding credit for qualifications and their composite units, allowing learners to study employer-relevant qualifications in small chunks and at a suitable pace. All achievement information will be recorded on an individual learner record supported by the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) unique learner number service.
30. By 2010, all key vocational qualifications and entry level and level 1 provision will be part of the QCF. At present, Skills for Life qualifications are not on the QCF.
31. Functional Skills qualifications are being developed in English, Maths and ICT and evaluated by the QCA in a three-year pilot from 2007 to 2010. It is planned that these new qualifications will be available nationally in 2010, alongside Skills for Life qualifications.
32. DIUS has funded an expansion of the Functional Skills pilot to ensure that the models of assessment that are developed fully meet the needs of adult learners in a range of contexts. Led by the QCA, this includes evaluating the potential for assessing the individual units that make up each qualification, the positive role technology can play and ensuring that tests are user-friendly and available on demand.

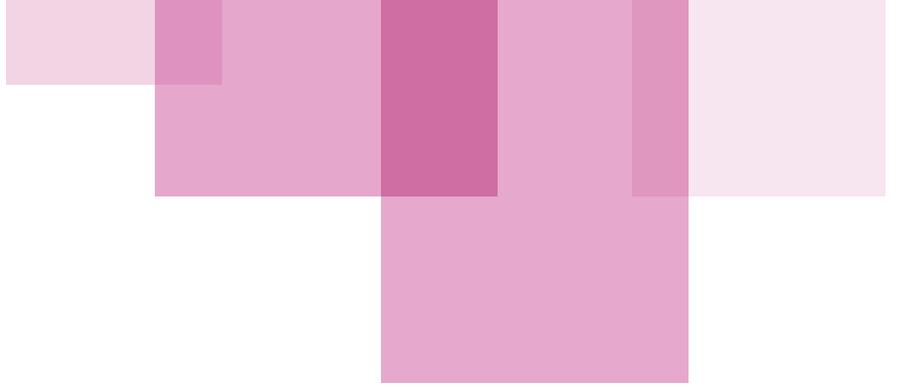
- 33.** Functional English, Maths and ICT qualifications will replace Key Skills qualifications in Communication, Application of Number and ICT from 2010. A decision on whether functional English and Maths qualifications will replace the current Skills for Life literacy and numeracy qualifications will be taken based on the outcomes of the pilot. QCA will give advice on the suitability of the qualifications for adults by March 2010. Subject to this advice, Functional Skills qualifications will be adopted by adult learning providers in place of Skills for Life qualifications from September 2012. Moving from Skills for Life to Functional Skills qualifications would provide a single set of qualifications that works for employers, adults and young people. DIUS will assess the applicability of functional ICT for adults based on the outcomes of the Functional Skills and Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) pilots, and the review of ICT being undertaken by Becta.
- 34.** ESOL learners are to be included in the adult pilot to see whether, in principle, Functional Skills qualifications are suitable for their needs. Decisions on whether ESOL qualifications are to be replaced by Functional Skills will be taken in the light of QCA's report on ESOL qualifications, the Government's ESOL strategy and evaluation of the adult pilot.
- 35.** A workforce support programme is currently being contracted by LSIS to support the Functional Skills pilots. This will build upon existing support programmes and will be available to all pilots (pre- and post-16) and providers planning for future implementation. LSIS will ensure that its Functional Skills and Skills for Life support programmes work closely together to maximise the amount of resource that is available to support literacy and numeracy provision.
- 36.** The FLT is being introduced to replace and rationalise the current complex range of provision and qualifications below level 2, and to make the system more accessible. Within the FLT, progression pathways will be the main vehicle of learning, allowing units and qualifications to be drawn from the QCF into personalised programmes that will support achievement and enhance progression.

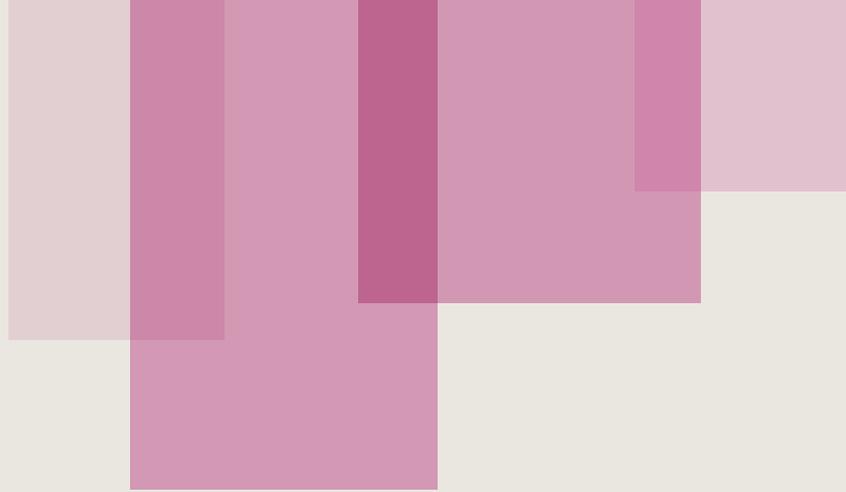
- 37. The LSC and the QCA have a joint remit to deliver the FLT with phased implementation for post-16 learners already under way. The pathways will provide a balance of functional literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, personal and social development, and subject and vocational learning depending upon the needs of the learner. Learners will be able to build up credits on the way to achieving a qualification at level 2. There is a minimum level of achievement necessary in Functional Skills (in English, Maths and ICT), reflecting the need for a solid foundation for progression.
- 38. The expectation is that, over time, all learners working at entry level and level 1 will do so within the context of the FLT. By 2011, there will be a comprehensive offer of progression pathways available for both young people and adults.
- 39. To ensure that the Skills for Life curricula are responsive to new demands:
 - a. LSIS will be launching a new interactive web-based curriculum in March 2009 which will provide tools that will enable practitioners to create customised learning experiences and share good practice through practitioner networks.
 - b. LSIS will review the extent to which the curricula support employability, by October 2009, and make any necessary adjustments. In addition, LSIS's Skills for Life Support Programme will deliver support for providers focused on tailoring the curricula to support local employment needs, and to help those out of work to develop literacy, language and numeracy skills that will help them find and progress in work.
 - c. Based on the outcomes of the Functional Skills pilot, LSIS will ensure that the Skills for Life curricula are adapted to support Functional Skills qualifications in the event that they replace adult literacy and numeracy qualifications.

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
£30 million in capacity-building grants distributed to Train to Gain providers	March 2009	LSC
Range of CPD modules available on the Skills for Families website	March 2009	LSIS
New interactive Skills for Life (literacy, numeracy and ESOL) curricula launched	March 2009	LSIS

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
Support delivered to regional LSCs and numeracy progression baseline established	March 2009	NCETM
Review of Skills for Life qualifications completed	March 2009	UKCES, NOS
STEM teacher recruitment campaign run	Spring 2009	LLUK
Reviewed and refreshed workforce strategy and actions to implement the strategy	April 2009	LLUK
Guidance on wider workforce roles produced	July 2009	LLUK
Co-ordinated offer of support for Skills for Life providers within the National Improvement Strategy	August 2009	LSIS
New NSA bidding round	2009/10	DIUS, LSC
Definition of initial assessment and guidance published for providers on the expectation that Skills for Life initial assessment is offered to all learners on training programmes at level 2 and below	2009/10	LSC
Outcome of Ofsted thematic reviews of literacy and numeracy published	Autumn 2009	Ofsted
Evaluation of the extent to which the Skills for Life curricula support employability	October 2009	LSIS
All FE-funded delivery partners in the scope of the Framework for Excellence	2010/11	LSC
All Skills for Life teachers hold or are working towards an appropriate teaching qualification	September 2010	Providers
Subject to its review, the LSC will introduce a fundable and recordable embedded Skills for Life vocational learning aim	2010/11	LSC

Action	Achieved by date	Owner
All key vocational qualifications and entry level and level 1 provision will be part of QCF	2010	LSC, QCA
Functional Skills pilot for adult learners completed	2010	QCA
Functional English, Maths and ICT qualifications are available nationally from entry level to level 2	2010	QCA
Comprehensive offer of Progression Pathways for young people and adults	2011	LSC (YPLA/SFA)
All LSC-funded providers deliver embedded Skills for Life provision where appropriate	2011	LSIS
Subject to pilot outcomes, providers deliver Functional Skills qualifications to adults	2012	DIUS, QCA





Printed in the UK on recycled paper with a minimum HMSO score of 75

First published March 2009

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills www.dius.gov.uk

URN 210-09-SK-b

© Crown Copyright 2009