

This is a briefing paper for QIA trainers who deliver training on disability related issues. It will bring trainers up to date with the national perspective.

Its specific focus is education however it also gives information on broader topics that affect the lives of people with disabilities.

The intention is for this paper to act as a signpost. It does not go into detail but does offer websites to visit for further clarity.

Learning for Living and Work

Learning for Living and Work (LSC, 2006), the national strategy for LSC funded provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the FE system, was published in October 2006. It sets out the LSC vision for the planning and funding of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It came with a funding pot worth £35m. which has been distributed between each of the nine regions.

The LSC national office asked each regional LSC to respond to Learning for Living and Work by setting out, in a regional implementation plan, how they would move forward with the vision set out in the strategy.

Each regional LSC now has a LSC LLDD Manager in post and it is their responsibility to ensure the regional implementation plan is carried out.

A year on the LSC national office plan to shortly publish a report setting out what they have achieved to date.

Log onto www.lsc.gov.uk for regular updates. The national LSC website also has a easy link map that will take you to the website of your regional LSC where you will find the regional implementation plan.



The LSC also has a strategy for learners with mental health difficulties – ‘Improving services to people with mental health difficulties’ which is also downloadable from the LSC website <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2006/learningopportunities/promotion/nat-improving-services-for-people-with-mental-health-difficulties-ps-aug2006.pdf>

If you are training in a region it would be helpful to know who the regional LSC LLDD lead is in that region. The current list is:

East Midlands	- Karen Johnson
North East	- Paula Martin-King
North West	- Margaret Pritchard
South East	- Mike Dalton
South West	- Matthew Garbett
East of England	- Carole Prance
London	- Elaine McWilliam
Y&H	- Claire Hemingway

There is no one in the West Midlands post at the time of going to print.

Learning for Work - Employability and Adults with Disabilities

Learning and Skills Council, Regional Events, January - March 2008

A series of regional events chaired by Peter Little OBE. Each event will highlight the work of regional LSCs on increasing economic participation through sustainable employment for disabled learners. This is a key priority work area in the Learning and Skills Council's strategy to improve education and training opportunities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The events will :

- provide an update on national developments, including the Government's Strategy "Progression through Partnership" on the role of further education and training in supporting disabled people to achieve fulfilling lives;
- consider implications of DWP formal consultations on the future of its provision to disabled people
- review progress on the priority area 'increasing economic participation through sustainable employment' for disabled learners during 2006-2007 at national and regional levels
- explore further "supported employment model", an LSC requirement by 2010
- consider specific employability issues for learners with mental health difficulties

The conferences will be run by NIACE. Dates to be confirmed.

Developing a Learner Involvement Strategy

In June 2007 the LSC published *Developing a Learner Strategy*, a handbook for the further education sector (LSC, 2007). It sets out the requirement, that from September 2007, every provider has a Learner Involvement Strategy. The LSC suggest that providers have a dedicated student liaison officer on the senior management team, an independent learner committee or student council and an established mechanism for involving learners in the review process.

Some of the case studies demonstrate how providers have consulted with and involved disabled learners to make effective changes.

This publication is available from the LSC website, www.lsc.gov.uk reference LSC-P-NAT-070093 or contact the LSC Help Desk 08709006800

Progression Through Partnership

Progress Through Partnership (HM Government, 2007) is the joint strategy between the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, the Department of Health and the Department of Work and Pensions on the role of further education and training in supporting disabled people to achieve fulfilling lives.

These three government departments tend to be the ones that deal most with the issues surrounding disabled people. The strategy focuses on the essential need for these three government departments to collaborate in order to help young people and adults *“achieve the education they want and need to be able to live fulfilling lives in their local communities and particularly enter the world of work.”*

There is an outline framework that sets out the 16 objectives in making the partnership work.

The appendices are very useful: one sets out the policies and legislation which have had major impact on the lives of disabled people, one sets out some of the barriers to learning and one sets out some examples of best practice.

At the time of going to print a published action plan was being anticipated.

You can get copies of the publication by emailing PTP.2007@dfes.qsi.gov.uk

Foundation Learning Tier

The FLT is a programme of work, jointly developed by LSC and QCA, to develop a more focused and strategic approach to entry level and level 1 for learners aged 14 and over in order to raise participation, achievement and progression amongst learners at these levels. The FLT is being developed because there is a significant amount of provision at Entry Level and Level 1 which fails to lead to any progression and tends to trap learners in a revolving door of engagement and recurring achievement. Please remember – the FLT is the name for the programme of work – there will be no FLT learners, no FLT curriculum or no FLT qualifications.

The FTL aims to be inclusive and will subsume into entry level what was previously referred to as pre entry level.

The FLT will have Progression Pathways. These are validated combinations of units and qualifications from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) that support learners to level 2 and beyond, or to meaningful destinations such as employment and/or independent living.

Within a Progression Pathway there will be 3 curriculum areas; vocational and subject based learning, Functional Skills and personal and social development learning.

A wrap round of information, advice and guidance, effective initial assessment, comprehensive ongoing review and provider collaboration will support Progression Pathways.

There are currently 4 priority pathways being talked about 14-16 Entry-level Pathway; Full level 2; Pre apprenticeship and Independent Living/ Supported Employment. The independent living / supported employment pathway is targeted at learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and appropriate for both 16 to 18 year olds and 19 to 25 year old learners. However that is not to say disabled learners will not access the other pathways. Trial sites are due to start work soon on piloting progression pathways. It is hoped that the FLT will be fully implemented in 2010.

For updates visit the QCA or LSC website www.qca.org.uk or www.lsc.gov.uk.

Professionalising the Workforce

Lifelong Learning UK is the Sector Skills Council responsible for the professional development of all those working in community learning and development; further education; higher education; libraries, archives and information services; and work-based learning.

Specifically of interest to QIA trainers will be the work LLUK are undertaking in relation to Learning for Living and Work teachers and Learning Support Staff.

Learning for Living and Work teachers

Learning for Living and Work teachers, tutors and trainers are facilitating learning, in a wide range of subjects, for learners with cognitive learning difficulties (not including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia).

Learners with cognitive learning difficulties access a broad curriculum offer, which in some cases is a discrete or targeted offer. Equally mainstream provision focused on developing vocational and employment pathways is appropriate and relevant for these learners.

The new professional standards detail the knowledge, understanding and professional practice for all teachers in any role. The application document for Learning for Living and Work teachers details subject knowledge and professional practice required by these teachers. It will also support the development of qualifications.

The application document is currently in its final phase of consultation and will be available soon on the LLUK website www.lifelonglearninguk.org

Learning Support

LLUK is to work with awarding institutions to produce new qualifications for those in a learning support role. LLUK aims to produce:

- a qualifications framework for all learning support practitioners
- a pathway for those learning support practitioners supporting the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills
- an application of the learning support standards for those who support literacy, language and numeracy
- units of assessment for the generic and the literacy, language and numeracy pathways.

Log onto the LLUK website for more information
www.lifelonglearninguk.org

Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA)

Recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) is now accepted and expected within adult learning provision. However within the field of learning difficulties and/or disabilities it has been acknowledged that the quality of RARAP is patchy.

QIA are planning nine, one-day regional training events on RARPA. These are due to take place between February and April 2008. The training days will be based on a cascade model with each delegate receiving a training pack that will enable them to return to their organisation and deliver the training themselves.

Further information will be posted on the QIA website as it becomes available. www.qia.org.uk

The Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning

The Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning, in celebrating diversity, aims to investigate and report on the current practices in the employment of disabled people in order to make recommendations that positively influence culture and practice and promote career opportunities for disabled people.

The Commission is an independent body. It will report its findings to the public, the government, training providers, unions and lifelong learning employers and staff. It will run from September 2007 to March 2008.

For further information and to download a copy of the interim report log onto www.niace.org.uk and click on the link on the right hand side of the page.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Learners

The 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill' not only clearly defines and categorises groups of adults and children as 'vulnerable', but also places duties on those providing services or care to stringently check workers and volunteers.

There is a consultation on a wide range of policy issues that will ensure the successful implementation of the Act. To access the consultation and response form follow this link:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1516>

NIACE has developed guidelines for the learning and skills sector on safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people, as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, and has developed learner materials to raise awareness of safeguarding issues.

'Safer Learning, Safer Practice: A whole-organisation approach to safeguarding vulnerable adults for the learning and skills sector' sets out the safeguarding responsibilities of further education colleges, adult and community learning providers and providers of work-based training in the Learning and Skills Sector in England. Most importantly, this guide recommends creating a 'safer' learning environment that promotes well-being and security, essential for all learners and all staff. Whilst it is important to recognise that certain groups of people are legally identified as vulnerable, and to have relevant policies, procedures and practices in place, it is better to have fully inclusive and integrated 'safer' practices that apply to all staff and learners. This creates a safer environment for all.

Safer Practice, Safe Learning is now available in hard copy from Prolog (see details below) or as a free download from:

<http://www.niace.org.uk/publications/S/safer-practice.asp>

The Disability Rights Commission

On 1st October 2007 the Disability Rights Commission closed and its work was incorporated into the new Equality and Human Rights Commission. The new commission brings together the work of the three previous equality commissions and also takes on responsibility for the other aspects of equality: age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, as well as human rights. Visit www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Single Equality Scheme

The LSC now has in place a Single Equality Scheme (SES), which brings together the LSC's policies on race, gender and disability. This will ensure a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within the organisation and across the learning and skills sector. The LSC plans for the Single Equality Scheme to eventually be a model for colleges and providers to develop their own inclusive and coherent approach to equality and diversity.

The LSC SES is available to download from the LSC website.

First Steps Learning

John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, sets out his vision for pre level 2 learning and progression.

<http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/Adult-Learning-and-Skills-investing-in-the-first-steps.pdf> .

This is a useful document to read especially in light of the debate on the perceived unintended consequences of the focus on Level 2 and Skills for Life.

Useful Resources

- **Being Having and Doing: Theories of Learning and Adults with Learning Difficulties** by Dee. L., Devecchi, C., Florian, L. with Cochrane, S. (2006) published by the Learning and Skills Research Centre.

Available as a free download from
www.lsneducation.org.uk

- **Personalising the curriculum**
Web based resources from the QCA website
www.qca.org.uk.
Follow the link above and click on "Listening to Learners" to get access to some on line resources: Personalising the curriculum for 14-25s with learning difficulties
This guidance describes how you can plan effective learning programmes for young people aged 14-25 with learning difficulties in a school, college or training environment.
This guidance supports the aims of the Foundation Learning Tier reforms, through providing guidance to practitioners on planning effective learning programmes for young people with learning difficulties. Effective learning involves the active ownership of the learning by the learners. Good practice identified in this guidance will also support the successful delivery of revised units and qualifications developed through the Foundation Learning Tier reforms between 2007 and 2010. The Foundation Learning Tier project involves the development of a range of units and qualifications at Entry and Level 1, many of which will be suitable for young people with learning difficulties.

- **The QIA Excellence Gateway**
The online service for post-16 learning and skills providers and the new home for Learning and Skills Web and Excalibur. Here you will find examples of good practice, self-improvement, suppliers of improvement services plus materials to support teaching and learning. Members need to register and sign in.
www.QIA.org.uk and click on the tab for Excellence Gateway

- **Moving into Work: Supporting people with learning difficulties to make the transition from vocational education and training into employment.**

This pack contains a set of six information sheets, aimed at key players who need to be involved in the process of supporting people with learning difficulties in the transition from vocational education and training to employment. There are briefing sheets for people with learning difficulties, parents and carers, employers, Practitioners in the FE systems, Managers and co-ordinators of vocational training and courses and Information, Advice and Guidance services.

Copies of the information sheets can be downloaded from:

www.niace.org.uk/research/HE/documents.htm

- **Brightening Lives**
From September 2006 to March 2007, a DIUS funded project explored Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) and the offer to learners with learning difficulties. The purpose of the project was to see how such provision could best serve these learners.
Good practice guidelines for practitioners and managers are available to download below and an accessible version of the findings, "Brightening Lives", from the learners' survey is also available.
<http://www.niace.org.uk/research/HDE/Documents/brightening-lives.pdf>

There are numerous resources on supporting learning for people with mental health difficulties:

'Learning Journeys' a handbook for tutors and managers in adult education working with people with mental health difficulties' – Joy Mather and Sue Atkinson, NIACE (2003)

'Learning and skills for people experiencing mental health difficulties' James K, NIACE (2005) – downloadable from
<http://www.niace.org.uk/mentalhealth/downloads.htm>

'Mental health and post-16 education – Dutton, Y, NIACE (2005) downloadable from
<http://www.niace.org.uk/mentalhealth/downloads.htm>

<http://www.niace.org.uk/research/HDE/Documents/PCDL-2007.pdf>