

# The London Approach

Improving Skills and Employment  
Outcomes for Londoners

“Through the London Skills and Employment Board’s Strategy, we will for the first time achieve coordinated action across the Capital to bear down on London’s long-term historic unemployment and low-employment areas, and give people the skills to get back into work.”

Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London,  
Chair of the London Skills & Employment Board



# Introduction

London is a highly successful world city – but not everyone who lives in the capital is benefiting. That is why in October 2007 the London Skills and Employment Board issued for consultation a draft Strategy for improving skills and employment outcomes in London.

The responses we received to the consultation have echoed the Board's view that there is a pressing need for action to tackle the substantial skills and employment issues in London. We want to keep all stakeholders informed of our plans and engage you in developing and implementing the actions needed to move forward.

This document, therefore, describes the key points raised in the consultation and outlines how the Board will work over the next few months with key stakeholders to ensure that the Board's ambition is translated into workable solutions that are informed and owned by those using and delivering services.

The Board now has a formal statutory basis with the passing of the legislation which created it. It is the first of its kind in England and has a statutory responsibility for the strategic direction of the London Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) adult skills budget. The Board has already started to influence the LSC's plans for funding in 2008/09 and its new statutory powers will put this on a firmer footing.

The Board will publish its Strategy in May 2008, alongside implementation plans that will set out further detail on the delivery arrangements.

# What you told us

We have been impressed and encouraged by the response to the Board's draft Strategy. The responses we received were thoughtful, detailed and provided the Board with a wealth of insights, experience and advice on how to realise its ambition in London. There was strong support for what the Board is trying to achieve, and important and valuable issues to consider through the implementation and delivery process. A detailed summary of the responses to the draft Strategy is available at [www.london.gov.uk/lseb](http://www.london.gov.uk/lseb).

The ambition in the draft Strategy, to get more Londoners into work and to assist those in work to progress, received widespread support. As did the five strategic challenges for action proposed in the draft Strategy:

**Challenge 1** - improving the support and services available to individuals to improve their skills and employment opportunities.

**Challenge 2** - an ambitious new programme to involve more employers in London's employment and skills challenges.

**Challenge 3** - a new level of responsiveness from London's learning and skills providers to ensure provision is focussed on meeting needs.

**Challenge 4** - an integrated skills and employment infrastructure.

**Challenge 5** - public funding for skills and employment in London aligned to these challenges.

Respondents told us that taken together these challenges provided the right framework to address London's skills and employment issues. The Board will, therefore, use this framework as the foundations for the Strategy.

We have also listened to the points you made about wanting to understand more about the supporting details of how this overarching framework will be implemented and what will be different. The Board sees little value in issuing a strategy that is not underpinned by clear actions. For that reason, the Board will publish its final Strategy in May, informed by further consideration of the points made in the consultation, and setting out in accompanying implementation plans further detail on some of the key changes.

“There is strong support for the strategy overall. The strategy has been warmly welcomed by the business community and there seems to be real conviction that the skills agenda can be changed and improved.”

CBI, London



# What needs to happen as a result

To achieve its ambition, the Board wants to set some key principles that will guide and shape delivery. We wanted to share them with stakeholders now so that they can start influencing delivery arrangements. These principles have emerged from the Board's own research and have been reinforced through the consultation process. They also reflect many of the themes emerging in central government policies on employment and skills.

## Key principles:

- **Customer focussed:** The customer experience must drive the design of the delivery arrangements. All London employment and skills services must be easy to access and navigate, providing personalised support and helping people to help themselves. They must also be informed by customer feedback arrangements.
- **Equality of opportunity:** Employment and skills services must focus on removing the barriers – be they attitudinal, financial, lack of information, accessibility, direct or indirect discrimination, or wider social difficulties – that limit people's ability to access opportunities to find work and also to improve their skills. They must also support wider economic development and regeneration activities to deliver sustainable outcomes and communities, particularly for major developments such as the preparations for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Crossrail.
- **Maximising impact:** There are limited public resources available to tackle deep-seated employment

and skills issues in London. The Board, therefore, expects the delivery agencies to coordinate and, where possible, pool public funding so that it is collectively targeted on programmes and activities which will make the greatest impact on improving employment and skills outcomes. These outcomes must also help people to get a job, keep a job, and progress in their working lives. It also means that all activities should be supported by clear evidence of success and value for money. This will involve having robust monitoring and review arrangements including ceasing provision that is ineffective.

- **Better Integration:** All parts of the system must work together to improve chances for sustained employment and progression. Integration should be pursued at all levels: from the point of planning through to procurement and front line delivery, through integrated objectives, targets and processes. Data and information should be shared and there should be a 'no wrong door' approach in delivery. It also means simplification, eliminating duplication and being clear about who is responsible for what.

These principles will require new ways of working at all levels of the supply chain. There also needs to be more collaboration between public, private and third sector providers to develop innovative delivery arrangements and products.

The Board will seek to evidence that these principles have underpinned all investment decisions for what gets funded from the public purse.

“The Board’s ambition to tackle employment and low skills in the capital is admirable, getting skills and employment right is vital to tackling child poverty”

London Child Poverty Commission



# How we will take this forward

We recognise that, while much of the consultation feedback the Board received was supportive of the Board's ambition, there was a wealth of issues and suggestions raised about how it might set about addressing some of the challenges in London. We will, therefore, work with stakeholders to fashion implementation plans that respond to the complex and diverse issues identified in the consultation. We will also work with central government to help ensure national skills and welfare to work policies and target regimes support our aspirations for London.

The Board has asked the key funding and delivery agencies to work together and with stakeholders to ensure all employment and skills services are integrated at point of delivery and focus on achieving sustainable employment and progression outcomes. The Board has identified the following priority projects on which it has commissioned further work to inform the Strategy and implementation plans. We will closely monitor progress on these projects and look to accelerate implementation wherever we can.

Priority Actions	Key Outputs	Milestones
<p><b>Integrated arrangements for the planning and funding of public skills and employment services</b></p>	<p>A joint investment appraisal system initially for the London Development Agency (LDA) and the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) adult skills funding. This will review new proposals/programmes to ensure that: they support the aims of the Board's Strategy; are assessed against common criteria; wherever possible funding rules are harmonised to minimise bureaucracy; and that funding is jointly planned to minimise duplication and identify gaps. This will mean that employability and childcare provision can be planned jointly so, for example, it can be located where the majority of workless lone parents are. At the delivery end, work will continue to integrate individual pathways for skills and employment.</p> <p>A review of arrangements for a 'single purse' for London to assess whether other options need to be considered for the integration of commissioning and procurement arrangements for employment services with skills delivery. This will include working with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Mayor of London to ensure the contracting processes for the flexible New Deal looks at the links with the LSC's and LDA's commissioning processes.</p>	<p>Proposals for a joint investment system developed by summer 2008</p> <p>Proposals for increased integration in London published April 2009</p>

<p><b>Information, advice and guidance</b></p>	<p>An Adult Advancement and Careers Service (AACS) for London that will provide seamless access to the full range of support that people need to ‘get in, stay in, and get on’ in the London labour market. This will include developing proposals for the two London pilots announced on 21 February for the new AACS.</p> <p>As part of this new service, a London Jobs and Skills web portal will be developed to provide on-line information on a wide range of skills and employment opportunities in the London labour market.</p> <p>A campaign to raise aspirations and awareness of skills and employment opportunities, leading to increased take-up of these opportunities.</p>	<p>Specification for the new London Adult Advancement and Careers Service published May 2008</p> <p>New London service fully operational from 2010</p>
<p><b>A new Employer Offer</b></p>	<p>The Board wants to establish an integrated offer to London employers from the public services to help meet their recruitment and skills development needs. In exchange employers would make commitments to recruit local people and develop their workforce. The service will work to ensure that public funding flows flexibly to support the commitments employers make.</p> <p>The new offer would be developed from the roll out of the London Accord and build upon existing employer programmes such as the Local Employment Partnerships.</p> <p>A new integrated brokerage service (incorporating Business Link and Train to Gain brokers) would provide the gateway to this offer for small and medium sized enterprises. In addition a new account management service for large employers is being rolled out.</p> <p>Employer champions will help demonstrate good practice in delivering skills and employment outcomes.</p>	<p>Delivery plan for the new Employer Programme published May 2008</p> <p>London Accord Central Office opens April 2008</p> <p>New integrated employer brokerage service launched April 2009</p>

<p><b>Expanding apprenticeships in London</b></p>	<p>An action plan for raising the number of young people and adults completing apprenticeships in London. This will include improvements to the provision, take up and delivery of apprenticeships, including in the public sector.</p>	<p>Proposals for action to be submitted to the Minister for Skills' London Apprenticeships Taskforce by April 2008</p>
<p><b>A performance and accountability framework to drive up employment and skills outcomes in London</b></p>	<p>A performance and accountability framework that will enable the Board to monitor progress against its ambitions in the Strategy. It will principally be targeted at the delivery and funding agencies (LSC, Jobcentre Plus and LDA) but the Board expects it to influence provision more generally to achieve a sharper focus on outcomes, including linking with Local Area Agreements.</p> <p>It will not replace, but build on the existing performance management systems operated by the funding and delivery agencies to ensure coherence. The Board is also very clear that it should not interfere with, or add to, the reporting arrangements between funding agencies and providers.</p> <p>The framework will include a small number of high-level targets and indicators and demonstrate how they link to national and local level targets and deliver for London's diverse communities. It will also set out clear accountability and governance arrangements that focus on outcomes. The framework should also help identify how employers in the public, private and the voluntary sectors are using their influence on their supply chains to promote the delivery of skills and employment outcomes.</p>	<p>New framework to be published in the Strategy May 2008</p>

We recognise this is a challenging and ambitious agenda. Given the strong support for the Board's proposals and the priority given to these issues by central government, we are confident that there is an opportunity to make real changes in London. The prize for Londoners is a confidence and ability to succeed in the labour

market, getting the support along the way from skills and employment services to achieve and progress. For employers, they will gain access to world-class talent at all levels and strong links into local communities, which will serve to strengthen their competitiveness and contribute to their bottom-line.

“Joint investment planning through the pooling of resources such as LDA, LSC, JCP and ESF would break the cycle of chasing small pots of funding”

London Councils



## Other languages and formats

A summarised version of this document is available in a range of other formats and languages.

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