

London's Future

The Skills and Employment
Strategy for London 2008-2013

Implementation Plans

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Introduction

2 This document outlines the three implementation plans that set out how the key funding and delivery agencies in London will implement the London Skills and Employment Board's Strategy *London's Future: The Skills and Employment Strategy for London 2008-2013*. They outline the key actions needed to deliver the Strategy and the timetable for achieving them. They form the primary basis through which the Board's ambitions will be realised.

Structure of the plans and lead agencies

Three implementation plans cover the Board's three Strategic aims:

Strategic Aim 1: Working with employers to better support them in providing more job and skills opportunities to Londoners, to the benefit of their businesses and to keep London's economy competitive.

Strategic Aim 2: Supporting Londoners to improve their skills, job and advancement prospects through integrated employment support and training opportunities.

Strategic Aim 3: To create a fully integrated, customer-focused skills and employment system.

The Board has established a Joint Delivery Group, chaired by the Vice Chair of the Board and made up of the three funding and delivery bodies – the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the London Development Agency (LDA) and Jobcentre Plus – to manage, coordinate, monitor and review the implementation of the actions in the implementation plans. The Group will report progress on implementation to the Board on a regular basis and the Board will hold this committee to account for the achievement of the plans.

Engaging Stakeholders

The Board expects the agencies to work with key stakeholders in taking these plans forward. Key stakeholders include regional partner agencies and organisations such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE); the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils and London Councils; and, at a local level, local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. Employment and skills providers and their representative organisations will also be included. And there is, as well, a wide range of specialist organisations including experts in advice, guidance and brokerage; experts in the needs of particular groups (for example voluntary sector organisations); and the representatives of employers and learners, who are critical to delivery. The Board will look for evidence of stakeholder engagement as it reviews implementation.

Delivery Principles

The Board has agreed four delivery principles which guide and shape delivery. These are:

- customer focused
- equality of opportunity
- maximising impact
- better integration

These delivery principles are described in greater detail in the Strategy document. In order to meet them each implementation plan will be supported by, for example, clear customer feedback arrangements, evidence of success and value for money, and arrangements for ensuring that outcome gaps for the most disadvantaged are closed.

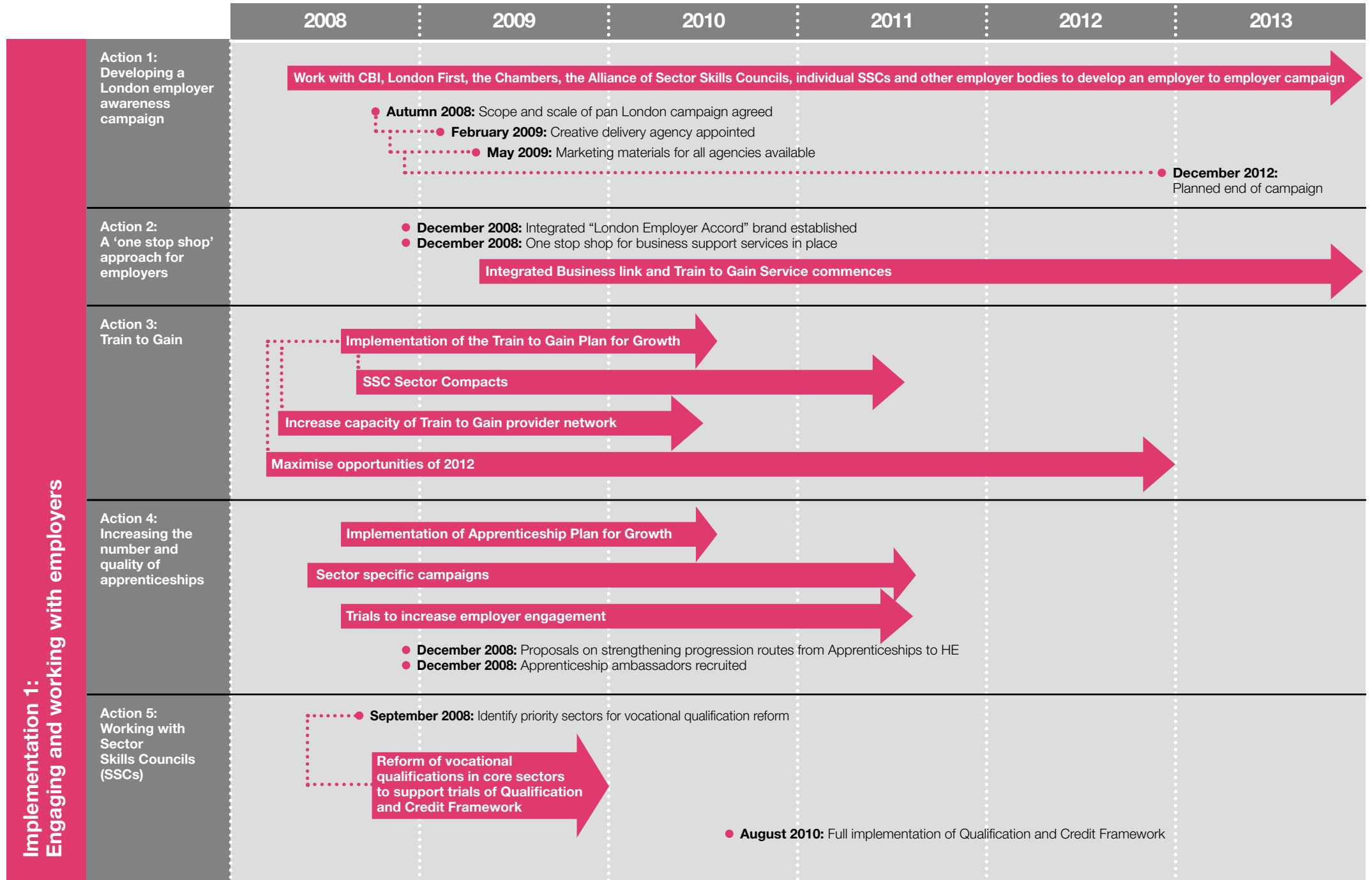
Implementation Plan 1:

Engaging and working with employers

Strategic Aim 1

Working with employers to better support them in providing more job and skills opportunities to Londoners, to the benefit of their businesses and to keep London's economy competitive.

Skills and employment strategy: 2008-2013
Implementation plan 1



Implementation 1:
Engaging and working with employers

- 6 This implementation plan sets out how the key public agencies in London will deliver the Board's aim to better engage and work with employers. We need to ensure that this strategy works for all employers, no matter what their sector and no matter what their size. For example, it will be essential to ensure that the differing needs of small and medium sized firms (SMEs) are adequately met and supported.

The key actions to deliver this aim are:

Key action 1: Developing a London Employer Awareness Campaign

As part of the pan-London awareness campaign described in Implementation Plan 2, the Board has asked the LSC to work with employer groups and representatives such as the CBI, London First, the Chambers, the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, Business in the Community, individual Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the Board members themselves to agree both individual and collaborative action to spread the message and showcase best practice.

The campaign will segment the market – for example, by sector and size – and not target employers as one homogenous group but be flexible enough to have a positive impact on employers of all sizes. It will show how skills can not only support employment but can be a critical driver of productivity and innovation. The campaign will be part of activities to promote a single brand in London that can support skills provision and employer services.

Feedback from employers, for example through focus groups, will be used to both develop the brand and evaluate the impact of the campaign on increased employer involvement in recruiting workless people and in training their workforce.

The heart of the campaign will be employer-to-employer engagement, focused on the business case relevant to their sector.

Further details about the campaign and timescales are in Implementation Plan 2.

Key action 2: A 'one stop shop' approach for employers

Employers are currently asked by public agencies to make a range of commitments in relation to their recruitment practices and workforce development. In addition, a wide range of organisations provide brokerage services for employers but all too often operate in 'silos'. The result is that employers are put off by the complexity, and sometimes bombarded with contact from public agencies who have only partial solutions. This can particularly affect SMEs with limited time and resources to navigate the system.

We want to make support for employers much simpler and more flexible, integrating support to provide a 'one stop shop' approach. In practice, this means:

- **no wrong doors.** No matter which part of the system employers engage with, they will be referred to the expert help they need.
- **effective coordination of services.** Ensuring that all public agencies dealing with employers' labour market needs are aware of the wider public offer, not just that of their own agency.

- **customer relationship management.** Public agencies sharing information on their employer contacts so that employers are not faced with too many different approaches.

To deliver this key action we will:

Action 2a: Establish an integrated brand

The Board wants to integrate the existing commitments employers are asked to make into a single overarching brand: the London Employer Accord. This does not mean abolishing the existing agency commitments such as the Skills Pledge and Local Employment Partnerships; rather it means making it easier to make the commitments that each asks. For example, an employer might pledge to take on 100 long-term unemployed people and to provide them with in-work training. At present, this would require two separate pledges. **This work will be led by the London Employer Accord and be completed by the end of 2008.**

Action 2b: Develop 'One stop shop' brokerage

Employers will make the jobs and skills commitments the Board wants them to make only if they are confident that flexible, accessible public support is there to help them deliver. SMEs in particular need to be more effectively supported, given the particular time and resource constraints they face.

To achieve this goal the Board wants an integrated brokerage service: the LSC and LDA are currently working together to plan for the integration of Business Link and Train to Gain brokerage. This will place skills support at the heart of, and in the context of, wider business support for growth, productivity, enterprise and innovation. The service will be particularly focused on supporting small and medium sized firms, but with support also available for large firms and the public sector. **The new service, for which the LDA will be responsible, will begin across London in April 2009.**

The London Employer Accord is currently working with the LSC, Jobcentre Plus and the LDA to establish workstreams to embed a 'no wrong doors' and 'one stop shop' approach into all business support services, including skills and vacancies filling services. This approach will look to improve referral mechanisms, embedding the wider public offer and effective sharing of customer relationship information. **These workstreams are expected to be completed by the end of 2008.**

Key action 3: Train to Gain

Train to Gain is a national service to support employers of all sizes and in all sectors in improving the skills of their employees as a route to improving their business performance. It is a commitment by employers and Government to jointly invest in training. Under Train to Gain, a skills broker will assess the overall needs of an organisation and how best skills development can meet them, including access to publicly funded training. It also offers wage compensation to employers with up to 50 employees in recognition of the particular barriers and constraints that they face. Partly as a result of this, 70% of firms benefiting from Train to Gain to date have had under 50 employees.

8 The Board believes the principle of Train to Gain, of putting purchasing power in the hands of employers, is right. The challenge is to improve the quality and flexibility of the offer, as well as raising awareness, in order to drive increased take-up. The Board wants the LSC to continue to improve the performance of this service and to ensure that changes are implemented in a way that works for London's unique needs. To achieve this, the LSC's Plan for Growth **will be rolled out from August 2008 to July 2010** and will include:

- **The extension of Train to Gain offer** to include Level 3¹ and those who are self-employed, sole traders, volunteers and those doing a second Level 2 who have been referred from a Local Employment Partnership. Pilots in London include Skills for Life at entry levels 1 and 2 and ESOL for Work. Further flexibilities on a sector basis will be implemented through the sector compacts. The LSC is a partner in the sector compacts and the Board will require that these deliver what is needed for London. Work is already well underway with the first tranche of sector compacts. The compacts are three-year plans – **implementation will begin in summer 2008.**

- **Leadership and management.** The LSC will **increase the resources for leadership and management in 2008/09** within Train to Gain as part of a £30 million national programme.
- **Differentiated offer.** Train to Gain is a service available to employers of all sizes and brokers will be targeting small and medium sized businesses in addition to larger businesses. The LSC will support large employers, including public sector employers, through the Large Employer Unit (part of the Account Management Service).
- **Performance management of providers.** The LSC will manage all providers against a consistent performance management framework and will not fund poor quality provision. Best practice will be shared between providers via the established Train to Gain steering groups.
- **Increase capacity of the providers.** The LSC will enable providers that deliver well to **expand their contracts for 2008/09.** The LSC will develop plans to expand the number of providers in London. They will invite successful

providers from other regions to deliver in London, and support new providers to meet the requirements for data submissions, audit and self assessment. This work has started and will be ongoing for two years, after which the success of the approach will be evaluated.

- **Raise awareness of the Train to Gain service.** The promotion of Train to Gain is part of the national 'In our hands' campaign and will be part of the pan-London awareness campaign. **The LSC, with broker organisations, will carry out a direct mail and telemarketing campaign directed at businesses through 2008/09.** The LSC will continue to promote the service by working with intermediaries and stakeholders.
- **Maximise the opportunities of 2012.** The LSC, the Olympic Delivery Authority and broker organisations will **embed Train to Gain into Olympic contracting processes from spring 2008 to 2012** and ensure that all contractors receive information on Train to Gain.

Key action 4: Increasing the number and quality of Apprenticeships

London has a low number of Apprenticeships relative to its size. The number of Apprenticeships varies significantly by sector and particular groups are underrepresented. We need to significantly increase the number, range, quality and diversity of Apprenticeships and Apprentices. Taking on Apprentices can be a particular challenge for small firms and so SMEs will need particular support. The Board has established a Task and Finish Group which is feeding into a high level taskforce led by the Minister for Skills, David Lammy MP, and has also influenced the LSC's Plan for Growth for Apprenticeships.

To achieve the Board's ambitions, the LSC will **implement a Plan for Growth for Apprenticeships, from August 2008 to July 2010**, which will include the following actions:

- **Sector specific campaigns to increase supply, June 2008 to August 2011.** The LSC will work with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), the TUC, the Greater London Authority, the LDA, local authorities and other key partners to increase

Apprenticeship supply in targeted sectors and geographical areas through an annual campaign. In year one the campaign will focus on health and social care, hospitality, retail, public sector and construction. The campaign will be supported by ongoing analysis of current and projected employment by sector/occupational area.

- **Local authority baseline information and actions for engagement.** The LSC commissioned an analysis of Apprenticeship participation and employer supply by local authority area in **May 2008** and will use this information to revise the Apprenticeship plan and include an action to engage local authorities. This will also include an analysis of participation and employer supply by ethnicity, gender, age and disability. The outcomes of this analysis will be used to set equality and diversity targets in the revised plan.
- **Addressing inequalities in participation.** The LSC will trial a mentoring programme **from August 2008** aimed at improving participation and achievement of underrepresented groups.

- **London network of Apprenticeship ambassadors.** The LSC will work with the SSCs and the national ambassadors network to raise awareness of Apprenticeships through developing a London network of Apprenticeship ambassadors. Board members will play an important role in supporting this. **Ambassadors will be recruited for the network by December 2008.**
- **Trials to increase the engagement of employers in Apprenticeships.** The LSC will identify employers, **by summer 2008**, who will be supported to over-deliver Apprenticeship places, including through financial incentives. The trials will initially be for two years and the excess places should particularly benefit SMEs. The LSC will also run a range of other trials including joint investment, fully funded rates and an innovation fund to support providers to increase Apprenticeships in priority sectors. **The trials will begin in the summer and will last through to July 2011.** Evaluations will take place and good practice be identified.

- **Support for small businesses.** The LSC will develop two group training schemes, which minimise the risk to small businesses by working as an employment agency, and implement a regional trial of wage subsidies for small businesses employing an Apprentice. These will **begin in August 2008** and be run initially for one cohort. **The initial evaluation of this will start early in 2009.** Extension of the trial will be dependent on the evaluation.
- **Performance management of providers.** The LSC will strengthen the management of providers through increased monitoring of those who recruit Apprentices that are not employed at the start of their training, **publishing a performance framework ready for the start of the 2008/09 funding year** and continuing to fund only good quality provision.
- **Progression routes.** The LSC will work with the Lifelong Learning Networks and the SSCs to strengthen progression routes from Apprenticeships to degree level. Work will begin **in summer 2008 and the LSC will make proposals to the Board by December 2008 on how the work can best be taken forward.**

The Government is creating a National Apprenticeship Service that will be part of the Skills Funding Agency. The Board will need to work closely with central Government to ensure sufficient regional flexibility to meet the needs of London.

Key action 5: Working with Sector Skills Councils

SSCs are employer bodies that are a critical part of the 'employer voice' in the employment and skills system. Their three key roles are to: raise employer demand and investment in skills; lead on providing information as to how sector needs are changing; and ensure that vocational qualifications meet the skills needs of employers. The Board wants to work closely with SSCs to deliver these outcomes for London and also wants London employers to engage with and drive the work of their SSC.

Action 5a: Vocational qualification reform

The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils will identify the priority sectors in London where there is a serious and pressing need for vocational qualification reform, including employer accredited qualifications, to meet current and future skills needs. It will do this **by September**

2008. The relevant SSCs will then seek reform of vocational qualifications in their sectors and support the **test and trials of the Qualification and Credit Framework in 2008/09 in preparation for full implementation in 2010.**

Action 5b: Raising employer demand

Action 2a sets out the Board's plans to integrate the existing skills and employment commitments employers are asked to make under a single coherent offer coordinated by the London Employer Accord. SSCs have a critical role to play encouraging employers to increase their workforce development activity and to help people gain the skills to succeed in work. The Board, therefore, wants SSCs to use their influence with employers in their sector to raise demand for learning and to encourage them to open up their employment and skills opportunities to local people. Working with the London Employer Accord, it wants SSCs to use opportunities such as the sector compacts linked to Train to Gain, and the Sector Skills Agreement processes, to secure commitments from London employers in their sector to increase their workforce development, and where possible increase local employment opportunities.

SSCs are of critical importance to many of the Board's plans. For example, they will be key providers of labour market information to the new London Skills and Employment Observatory. Their role in other actions is discussed elsewhere in this and the other implementation plans.

Notes

¹ Levels 1, 2 and 3 are educational attainment levels which are part of the National Qualifications Framework.

Implementation Plan 2:

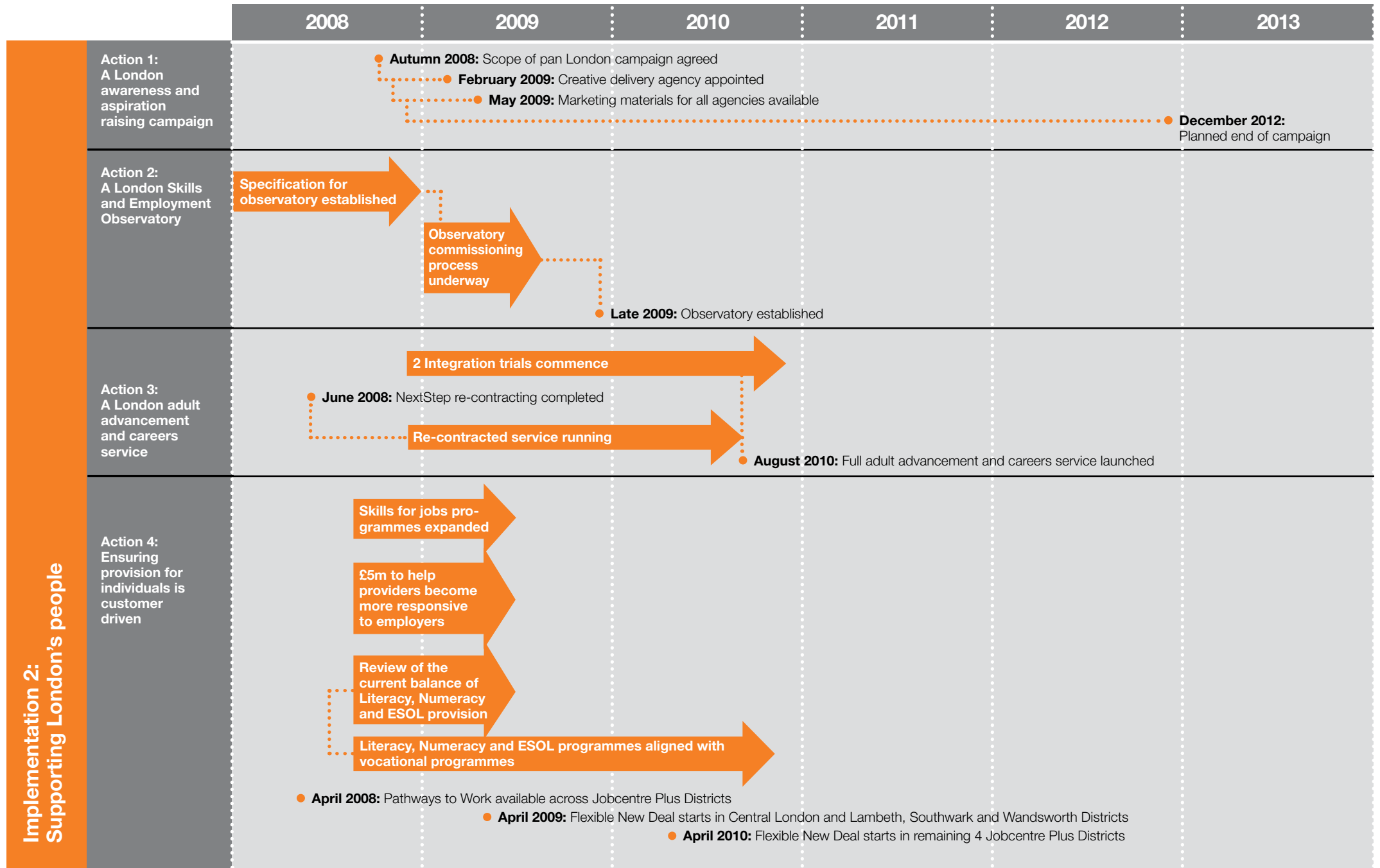
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Supporting London's people

Strategic Aim 2

Supporting Londoners to improve their skills, job and advancement prospects through integrated employment support and training opportunities.

Skills and employment strategy: 2008-2013
Implementation plan 2



Implementation 2:
Supporting London's people

14 This implementation plan sets out how the key public agencies in London will lead delivery of the Board's aim to better support Londoners. It focuses on the key actions that will be undertaken, rather than being an exhaustive description of the full range of activity.

Key actions to deliver this aim are:

Key action 1: A London awareness and aspiration raising campaign

Ensuring that all Londoners and London's employers recognise the importance of skills and raising aspirations across all communities in London remains a key challenge. One tool for achieving this will be a pan-London awareness campaign.

Action 1a: A pan-London campaign

The campaign will build on the current national LSC-funded 'In our hands' campaign, a multi-media campaign including TV and radio advertisements as well as direct contact with employers and individuals. To have their full impact, it is clear that such campaigns need to be matched by clear action 'on the ground'.

The Board wants to ensure that the new campaign works for London and that the efforts of all agencies are effectively harnessed to maximise its impact. The Board has asked the LSC to run a London-specific campaign, using a single cross-agency brand, which will build on the national campaign. Targeting both employers and individuals, it will be part of activities to promote a single brand in London that can be used for both skills provision and employment services.

The LSC will lead this project, with contributions from other agencies. It will develop the scope, specification and rationale for a cross-agency brand and for manifestations that can be used to harness all agencies' resources and present a unified London skills and employment message. Once commitment is secured from all agencies, the LSC will co-ordinate development of the brand and campaign. Existing and planned direct marketing by the LSC to promote Apprenticeships and Train to Gain will be a key building block for this work but the LSC will ensure that these campaigns are tailored specifically to London's needs. All agencies will need to ensure that their work to promote skills and employment operates under the single brand and is effectively co-ordinated. The LSC will also work to develop other direct marketing campaigns to promote skills and employment to Londoners.

The specification, rationale, scope and scale of plans for integrating existing activity and commissioning any new activity will be determined **by autumn 2008**. A creative agency will be appointed **by February 2009** and it is expected that marketing materials will be available for agencies to use **by May 2009**. The Board's campaign, jointly developed by the agencies and led by the LSC, will run alongside the national campaign and finish in 2012. The Board will expect the agencies to evaluate the impact of the campaign in London, including by looking at the number of additional employers involved in Train to Gain and Apprenticeships and the number of additional individuals improving their skills. In addition, focus groups will be held with individuals and groups of employers to identify which aspects of the campaign are having the greatest impact.

The campaign on its own will not be sufficient: it will need to be a part of an integrated skills and employment system that includes effective outreach services.

Key action 2: A London Skills and Employment Observatory

Accurate, credible and coherent information on how the London economy and labour market are changing must be the base from which individuals, employers and providers make decisions about skills and jobs. To draw together the existing fragmented sources of such information into a coherent, user-friendly form, the Board's Strategy calls for a London Skills and Employment Observatory.

Action 2a: Establishing the Observatory

The Board has asked the **LDA to lead the development** of the new Observatory. The Observatory must draw on the information and intelligence provided by SSCs, which currently lead nationally on such data. It must also draw on other sources of data, including learndirect, the LSC, Jobcentre Plus and local authorities. The LDA will draw up the specification for the Observatory, working closely with providers of information as well as potential customers, during 2008. It will begin the commissioning process in early 2009 and **establish the Observatory in late 2009**.

Key action 3: A London adult advancement and careers service

The Board wants a London-wide adult advancement and careers service, pulling into one place the wide range of support available to Londoners, using a single brand to provide a 'one stop shop'. It must be proactive (reaching out to people, rather than waiting for them to come forward), flexible and accessible. The support offered must be based on what people need to improve their pay and job prospects, rather than organised into silos. Such support is likely to include skills, job vacancies, preparing job applications, childcare, housing and transport among other needs.

The Government is committed to establishing such a service across England by 2010. The Board will drive it forward further and faster in London and make sure that the national vision works for the capital. The following actions will ensure delivery of an effective adult advancement and careers service for London.

Action 3a: London trials of integrated employment and skills services

The Board is committed to the integration of skills and employment services across London, and more of its plans for this are set out in Implementation Plan 3. **Two trials of integration of skills and employment services, which will include testing out elements of the new adult advancement and careers service, will begin in London from late 2008.** One trial will be focused on people who are workless, trialling Skills Accounts, Skills Health Checks and improved referrals to training. It will operate in Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth and central London. This will be led by Jobcentre Plus and the LSC, working in partnership with the LDA and local authorities.

The second trial will focus on aiding progression for those in work. It will work with community and outreach groups, Union Learning Representatives, as well as with employers. This will be designed by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Mayor's Office, in partnership with the LDA and LSC.

Both trials will run for two years and their effective design and delivery will be critical in ensuring that the full service, **to operate from August 2010**, works effectively. We also need to ensure that lessons from these trials of what works and what doesn't work are shared immediately across the whole of London.

Action 3b: Interim nextstep service

Nextstep services are currently being re-contracted. The re-contracted services will **run from late 2008 until the launch of the full adult advancement and careers service in August 2010.** The service is funded by the LSC, who are leading the re-contracting process. The Board will ensure, through the LSC, that the interim service is an effective stepping stone to the full service.

Action 3c: Full adult advancement and careers service

The full adult advancement and careers service will be launched (as part of a national roll-out under a single brand) in 2010. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) that will replace the LSC will have primary responsibility for it. The Board will work with central Government to ensure that the national design and branding has a London focus. The Board and the Mayor's Office, including through the LSC/SFA and LDA, will ensure that the lessons from the interim nextstep service and the adult advancement and careers service trials are effectively built into the full service for London. Exercising the influence of the Board and the Mayor so that the national framework has enough flexibility to deliver a London focus will be critical.

Key action 4: Ensuring that provision for individuals is customer-driven

To help more Londoners into work and encourage them to progress, the Board wants to ensure that skills provision is focused on enabling people to develop economically valuable skills – skills that improve people's pay and job prospects. It is not enough for people to gain a qualification if they still lack the skills that employers need – they will be better qualified, but not better off. Provision must be flexible, customer-focused and deliver equality of opportunity. The Board also wants to ensure both that integration of employment and skills services is much more effective (more detail is included in Implementation Plan 3) and that people are supported to progress.

Action 4a: More employment-focused provision

To achieve this, the Board wants the LSC to lead this work. They will build on programmes such as Skills for Jobs, which bases payments to providers on the number of people helped into work not just the number of qualifications gained, and the lessons from the 11 Employability Demonstration Projects, which supported colleges to be more employer-focused.

However, it is not enough to have stand alone programmes. As well as these programmes, the Board wants to ensure *all* provision is better at meeting employers' needs. Provision needs to be more clearly linked to work experience or work trials so that people have much clearer pathways into work.

The Board looks to the LSC to work with providers and to achieve this by:

- expanding programmes such as Skills for Jobs in 2008/09 and, through this, supporting providers to identify best practice.
- targeting the £5 million supply-side development funding effectively in 2008/09.
- working at a local, regional and national level with Jobcentre Plus and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to better integrate skills and employment services.

18 To do this, the LSC will also use the two trials of integrated employment and skills services to start to model how this approach can work. This will include the trials of Skills Accounts, which put purchasing power in the hands of individuals. **The trials are due to begin in late 2008.**

In addition, the Board supports the LDA's work to change its target regime so that its labour market investment is focused on the outcome of helping people into sustainable employment, moving away from the process targets previously imposed by central Government. This focus on outcomes will help to ensure that LDA-funded employment and skills provision is focused on employment and employability and its success measured by the number of people who find work as a result, rather than by compliance with processes or solely qualification attainment. **This new focus will apply to all new LDA labour market investment.**

Achieving this is dependent on the success of Implementation Plan 3.

The Machinery of Government changes² will also have a significant impact on how skills and employment services can be integrated. The Board is working with Government to shape the emerging arrangements.

Action 4b: Improving literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision

The Board wants the LSC to lead work to ensure that more literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes are delivered alongside or integrated within vocational programmes. This will help to ensure that such programmes better support the development of employability skills. **The LSC will work to align literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes with vocational programmes from August 2008 to July 2010.**

To achieve this, **the LSC will also review the current balance of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision in 2008/09.** For example, there is currently a low take-up of numeracy programmes but a very high latent need – fewer than 50% of Londoners have the numeracy skills expected of those who have completed primary school. The awareness campaign described in Action 1a will aim to raise demand, with people accessing

provision through demand-led funding mechanisms, including Skills Accounts. Best practice also needs to be shared from the new LSC-funded Employability Skills Programme, of which numeracy is an integral part and where take-up of numeracy has almost matched that of ESOL.

Action 4c: Clear progression opportunities

Achievement of basic and Level 2 skills forms an increasingly critical platform for employability and the LSC is already working to develop a coherent framework made up of flexible progression pathways, which will allow incremental achievement to Level 2. However, the Board wants to ensure that people are supported to progress through to intermediate and higher level skills too. The Board also wants people who already have Level 2 skills, including those in work, to have a clear progression route. Individual Learner Plans with a clear employment outcome (where appropriate) can be effective in helping individuals identify their route into employment and, through Action 4a, the Board is ensuring that the LSC is supporting providers to make provision more work focused.

It is important that there are clear progression routes for people in work that are not just focused on individuals gaining the next level of qualification but on developing skills that will enable them to progress in work.

The adult advancement and careers service will be important in ensuring that people are aware of these progression routes and that support does not stop once people enter employment but continues, for example, through training funded through the Train to Gain programme. Intermediaries including Union Learning Representatives will play an important role in raising demand from those in work.

Action 4d: Rollout of Flexible New Deal and Pathways to Work

Jobcentre Plus will introduce Flexible New Deal, which will deliver a more adaptable and personalised service to its customers. This will tap into the experience and expertise of not only Jobcentre Plus, but also of the public, private and third sectors.

In London Jobcentre Plus will introduce the new programme in stages. This will mean **Flexible New Deal will be introduced in seven London boroughs** (Islington, Camden, Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth) **from April 2009** and in remaining boroughs **in April 2010**.

Pathways to Work delivers an enhanced package of extra support and opportunities for new and repeat incapacity benefit customers with health problems and disabilities. This **programme will be available across London from April 2008** and will be delivered by external providers in partnership with Jobcentre Plus.

Notes

² These are the funding and organisational changes proposed in the Government's White Paper '*Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver*'.

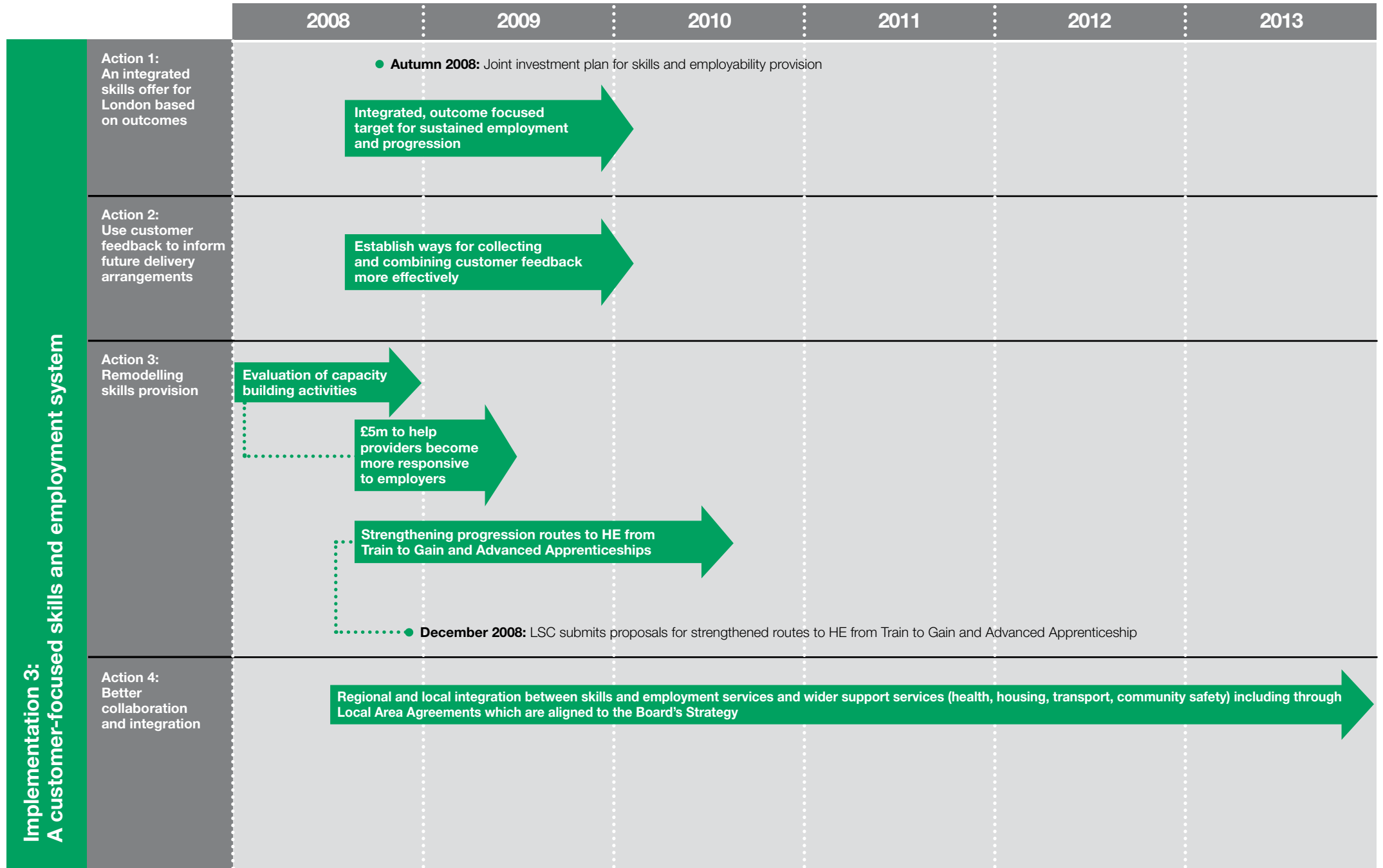
Implementation Plan 3:

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Customer-focused skills and employment system

Strategic Aim 3

To create a fully integrated, customer-focused skills and employment system.



Implementation 3:
A customer-focused skills and employment system

22 This implementation plan sets out how the key delivery agencies will implement the Board's aim to better integrate skills and employment services. The Board considers effective integration of skills and employment services to be the main priority of its Strategy. Our aim is to build a system that provides help based on the needs of its customers – employers and individuals – rather than on agency lines, and that focuses on outcomes.

The key actions to deliver this aim are:

Key action 1: An integrated skills offer for London based on outcomes

The Board's main aim of effective integration will take time to achieve, but the actions in this plan show how we will take the steps to do it. It is clear that to create an integrated skills offer public agencies need to fundamentally change the way they work together.

Action 1a: Joint commissioning based on outcomes

The first stage is a **joint investment plan produced by the LSC and the LDA for skills and employability provision in 2009/10**. The plan

will show how these organisations are employing their funding to respond jointly to the Board's Strategy. It will show how they plan to better work together to provide services based on an individual's needs and judged by their impact on sustainable employment and progression outcomes. It should also set out how coherence will be achieved with other funding, including European Social Fund money. **This plan will be produced in autumn 2008.**

It is critical that other key funders and deliverers of skills and employment services, including Jobcentre Plus and local authorities, are a full part of this integration process. The Board will work with key delivery agencies to develop plans for further integration of services. This will include:

- definition of the scope of integration and on which organisations this will impact;
- development of a model for what needs to be achieved;
- mapping of existing services against the model;
- decisions about the objectives of each relevant organisation in achieving the overall vision; and
- provision commissioned to meet identified needs.

London is involved in two trials of integration of skills and employment services from late 2008, more details of which are included in Implementation Plan 2. These trials are cross-agency and will be key to identifying what strategies work for integration and what the potential barriers are. These trials should be used to inform further work about integration. The trials will build on the lessons learned from the two London City Strategy Pathfinders.

Action 1b: Targets that support sustainable employment and progression

The structure of agencies, the funding settlement and the targets decided by central government have a major impact on what is delivered in London. While the LDA is a London-focused organisation, the LSC, DWP/Jobcentre Plus, HEFCE and others are national organisations and their targets are set within a national framework. Currently targets are for individuals either moving into work or gaining qualifications.

The Board acknowledges that it needs to work closely with central government departments to obtain a settlement and targets for London that meet the needs of Londoners and London

employers. This will include working with the Government on its ‘shared ambition’ of helping people gain sustainable employment and achieve a recognised qualification to ensure that this is reflected in the LSC and Jobcentre Plus target regimes. The Board wants to see all agencies focused on the goal of improving sustainable employment and progression outcomes for Londoners, as accepted by the Government in its Leitch Implementation Plan.

Implementation Plan 2 sets out how the LDA is refocusing its labour market investment on the outcome of sustainable employment for Londoners. This replaces the focus on process and inputs previously required by central Government. Other agencies are also taking steps to refocus – for example the LSC’s Skills for Jobs programme detailed in Implementation Plan 2 – but there is clearly much further to go.

The Machinery of Government changes mean that the LSC will be replaced by a Skills Funding Agency in 2010. This will be a funding and not a planning body. The Board will work with central government departments to influence the changes and ensure that the future funding settlements,

arrangements and targets for London are in line with the distinct needs of the capital.

Key action 2: Use customer feedback to inform future delivery arrangements

Developing more responsive provision will require a better understanding of the customer experience – for both employers and individuals.

Action 2a: More effective ways of obtaining customer feedback

There are currently a number of mechanisms for collecting customer feedback – both from learners and employers. Providers carry out destination surveys and employer satisfaction surveys and this is in addition to national level surveys such as the Learner Satisfaction Survey. However, this information is not pulled together consistently, making it difficult to gain a picture of what this means for London.

The Board expects that existing mechanisms will be used to collect information about the customer experience and the impact of provision on employment and pay outcomes in a more coherent

way, and that this information will be used in the development of provision. **In addition the Board will look to agencies to bring this information together at a regional level in 2008/09 and commission additional information if required.**

Key action 3: Remodelling skills provision

Building a more demand-led skills system will involve changing the way that provision is funded and delivered. Providers need to engage more effectively with employers and have the capacity to respond to employers’ needs. Some providers are already very capable of doing this and of capitalising on the opportunities provided by the increase in funding which is demand-led. The critical driver of this will be moving from block grants to putting purchasing power in the hands of individuals, through Skills Accounts, and of employers, through Train to Gain. Some providers, however, may need support to make these changes.

Action 3a: Improving the responsiveness of providers

The Board wants to see a London-wide change management programme to help colleges and other types of providers to make the organisational changes necessary to become more responsive. Accordingly, it has asked **the LSC to lead this work and around £5 million has been allocated for this purpose in 2008/09**. The programme of support will be developed using the 2007/08 evaluation of capacity-building activities as a starting point. It will be aligned with the national programme delivered by the new Learning and Skills Improvement Service, but tailored to ensure it is relevant for London.

The programme is not just for colleges and other existing LSC providers but will also support new providers and providers from the private and voluntary sectors.

In order for this activity to have an impact, providers will need to change the way they do business. The LSC will monitor the programme very closely and include enough flexibility within the programme to be able to make any required changes.

Action 3b: Strengthen progression routes from further to higher education

The Board expects continued growth in the numbers of students progressing to higher education through vocational routes. The five Lifelong Learning Networks in London can play a role in supporting this growth. There needs to be clearer progression routes available from Train to Gain and Advanced Apprenticeships into higher education. To make the networks more effective, HEFCE, the LSC, the relevant SSCs, and further education and higher education providers need to work together. **The LSC will lead this work and make proposals to the Board by December 2008 on how the work can best be taken forward.**

Key action 4: Better collaboration and integration

Achieving integration across all services – not just across skills and employment but also across other areas including health, transport and housing – is crucial.

Action 4a: Involvement of local authorities

Involving local authorities in integration across services is essential and Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships can play a key role in this. The Board expects that local strategies and Local Area Agreements will support the implementation of the Strategy and be used as a vehicle to link and coordinate services. Agencies, including the LDA, will play a key supporting role. This work will build on existing arrangements and partnerships and will provide an effective link between regional and local strategies.

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