

London Development Agency

As one of nine regional development agencies in the UK, the London Development Agency (LDA) is responsible for delivering the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy and for supporting his vision for London to be a sustainable world city with strong, long-term economic growth, social inclusion and active environmental improvement.

Overview

Most of the LDA's annual budget is used for grants to help businesses in the Capital, to create employment and develop skills, and developing London's places and infrastructure. About 30 per cent is spent on procurement of goods, works and services, such as consultancy, environmental projects, construction and refurbishment works, print and publicity.

The LDA has continued to embed responsible procurement into its buying practices, and its programmes continue to deliver sustainable improvements for London's people, businesses and infrastructure. Direct interventions have also been made in the £75m European Social Fund skills funding round, the RE:NEW housing retrofit initiative and development projects. Support for SMEs has continued through the application of CompeteFor and a wide range of business support activities.

LDA by numbers

- 35,000 Londoners supported to find jobs and improve skills
- More than 2,600 placed in work
- 791 new homes built on LDA sites last year
- More than 19,000 people helped into jobs linked to 2012 Games
- 300 construction apprenticeships linked to 2012 Games
- More than 3,500 Personal Best graduates awarded volunteering qualification

Case study

London Development Agency: Going for gold – personal best

When the curtain rises on the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London, up to 70,000 volunteers will be helping to ensure the world's biggest sporting occasion goes without a hitch.

A number of these will have been recruited and trained through a programme supported and part-funded by the LDA.

The Personal Best programme has been created to help unemployed people back into the jobs market by giving them confidence, training and work experience through volunteering. It

is aimed in particular at those furthest from employment – the long-term unemployed, homeless, disabled and most disadvantaged.

And it is using the 'gold dust' of the Olympics by offering those who graduate from it the chance to apply for an interview to become a Games Maker. These volunteers will be essential to the Games' success, helping in a variety of roles, from spectator and language services to medical care. In addition, graduates from the programme will, if they register, form part of the London Ambassador volunteer scheme.



Personal Best participant
volunteering in London

LDA case study

'It's fantastic to see and hear how the Personal Best programme has enabled these people to find the confidence to go out and change their lives. This programme is helping us deliver an Olympic legacy now and I know that they are all inspiring me to go beyond my personal best every day and make sure we stage the most fantastic Games possible.'

Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games

Drawing on an idea first adopted at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, the £5.9m Personal Best programme was introduced in 2006 and tested in London before being extended nationally.

Participants are being recruited through outreach activities by Personal Best advisers and via referrals from JobCentrePlus. The training course is run at local colleges supported by the Skills Funding Agency. It comprises of 90 hours of tutoring and 30 hours of practical volunteering, and covers such issues as team and interpersonal skills, customer relations, public safety and emergency planning.

By December 2010, the LDA expects to have engaged with 20,000 people and registered 6,000, of whom more than 4,000 will have completed the course.



Table tennis athlete Darius Knight and canoeist Jess Walker were on hand to support PB graduates at the Indigo2 8 June 2010

Of these, 440 graduates so far have gone into employment. Another 650 are in further training and more than 900 have opted for additional volunteering.

Those who graduate receive a QCA Level 1 certificate at ceremonies at venues such as Wembley or the O2 Arena, often presented by Gold Medal Olympians such as Jonathan Edwards and Lord Coe.

Like the Games themselves, Personal Best has a high profile not only in the Capital but nationwide. For the LDA and its partners in the programme – the Mayor of London, JobCentrePlus and the Skills Funding Agency – it is seen as a vital way of ensuring London's communities are properly represented during the Games in volunteering roles, not just at the Olympic venues but at key points across London.

This programme is very much a leading-edge community benefits programme. It makes a positive contribution to the local community

'The Personal Best programme uses the 'gold dust' of the Olympics to help some of the most disadvantaged residents of London realise their dreams and ambitions, using volunteering as the route to work and other activities. There are some fantastic examples of individual achievement, with many graduates from the programme realising their own 'personal best'.'

Geoff Newton, LDA Director 2012

and supports individuals to train and develop their skills to help them into employment through volunteering.

It also goes a long way to meeting one of the Mayor's priorities of encouraging volunteering and involving people from the Capital's most disadvantaged communities. And it will leave London with a valuable legacy of trained and experienced volunteers for the future.



Above and left:

Participants from the PB Havering course volunteering at the London Marathon