

# **Wandsworth Lifelong Learning Employer Engagement strategy**

**July 2009**

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## Introduction

This document sets out Wandsworth Lifelong Learning's strategy for working with local employers to develop a skilled workforce that meets the need of the local economy and improves the opportunities available to learners in the borough. Lifelong Learning has a track record in engaging with employers through its Business in Education Partnership (BEST), Train to Gain and Apprenticeship teams. Currently over 770 businesses provide work experience for 1500 placements on Lifelong Learning programmes.

This strategy has been prepared with the Lifelong Learning Team and in consultation with the Lifelong Learning Development Group and Corporate Training Strategy group. It will be circulated to providers, employers and other agencies for further comment throughout 2009. This strategy should be read with other Wandsworth Lifelong Learning plans, in particular, the Skills for Life Strategy and the E-learning Strategy.

## How the plan works

Wandsworth Lifelong Learning (WLL) is part of the Council's Children and Young People's Services Division. Its Employer Engagement Strategy is one of a number of strategies and plans that support the Adult and Community Learning Development Plan which contributes to the wider Children and Young People's Plan (CYYP), the Employment and Skills Strategy and the Community Strategy which are all available on the Council's website.

Employer engagement is led by WLL in consultation with London Central Learning and Skills Council and Wandsworth Lifelong Learning Development Group (LLDG) which represents partners from Further and Higher Education, other Council departments, schools, libraries, Prospects, Jobcentre Plus, voluntary and community sector groups.

### **Monitoring and Review**

WLL will establish an employment sub group to review progress throughout the year and respond to any new priorities as they emerge, recommending further action where necessary.

Partner organisations will also carry out their own internal monitoring and review. All employer engagement work must meet the quality guidelines and the standards of the Common Inspection Framework and WLL will support staff and providers to ensure that this is achieved.

## Our Vision

Our vision is that Lifelong Learning will become integral to the business development of local employers. We will continue to develop relationships with local employers in order to

understand and supply the needs of the local economy and labour market: In particular, Wandsworth Lifelong Learning will:

- Support employers in developing their employees' skills in the workplace;
- Ensure our offer provides up-to-date training and learning leading to qualifications that offer real value to employers and learners alike;
- Provide a bridge from the school to the work through the work of the business and education in partnership team;
- As an employer, we will lead by example and provide work experience and job opportunities.

In conjunction with Wandsworth's Employment and Skills Strategy, we will particularly focus on working with employers to address the 7 wards in Wandsworth with the highest numbers of worklessness:

- Latchmere
- Roehampton
- Queenstown
- West Hill
- Furzedown
- Tooting
- Graveney

## Key Developments to date

A range of initiatives contribute to employer engagement in Wandsworth primarily Train to Gain, Apprenticeships and projects funded by the LSC/European Social Fund. A full list is appended, key projects include:

**Train to Gain:** delivering NVQ qualifications to 200 learners in the workplace, alongside supporting employees' needs for support with literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

**Apprenticeships:** a programme in partnership with Westminster Council to increase training and employment opportunities for 72 young people and adults.

**ESF Personal Best Programme:** a partnership led by Wandsworth covering Merton, Sutton Southwark and Croydon to deliver a programme of personalised accredited training, mentoring and support, using the 2012 Olympics as a motivator, to 1000 unemployed and economically inactive adults.

**ESF NEET Projects:** two projects are aimed at 55 young people who are not in employment education or training (NEET) or potentially NEET.

**Wandsworth SEEN:** providing improved access to work experience placements, employment and self employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and difficulties.

**BEST 'Get Ready' project:** activities to support school pupils' readiness for work experience and the world of work.

**'Deafinitely Employable':** film produced to raise awareness of contribution deaf young people can make in the workplace. Wandsworth LLL BEST team is working with Nightingale Care Home, Pizza Express, Boots the Chemist and Mermaid Conference Centre.

**Mentoring programmes:** employers are trained in online mentoring to provide support to students in Wandsworth schools. To date 150 mentors have been trained

In addition, Wandsworth is actively promoting **Local Employer Partnerships (LEPs)**. Part of the LEP function is to put together customised packages for local employers to recruit claimants through Job Centre Plus and can also provide ongoing support for training once in a job through initiatives such as Train to Gain. In addition to leading Wandsworth's Train to Gain programme, WLL in conjunction with other Wandsworth agencies, for example the Wandsworth Employment and Skills Partnership, plays an important role in promoting the LEP and initiatives such as Train to Gain to local employers.

Wandsworth is also promoting the 'London Employer Accord', a co-ordinated offer to participating employers which levers in public sector resources to make it attractive for them to provide employment opportunities for individuals that are excluded from the labour market. In particular, we are using the Apprenticeships programme to encourage employers to offer more work experience opportunities to young people with low qualifications. Wandsworth (with Lambeth and Southwark) is also part of an 'Integrating Employment and Skills Pilot' which started in 2008 and is trialling the development of a new nationwide Adult Advancement and Careers Service.

As one of the largest employers in the borough, Wandsworth Council has signed an LEP and is encouraging its partners, suppliers and subcontractors to do the same. It has also signed a Skills Pledge.

## Priorities 2009-12

- **Meeting the government's challenging Skills for Life targets to equip all learners with the essential literacy, numeracy and ICT skills they need to compete effectively in the labour market.**

*Our Online Test Centres at the Professional Centre in Tooting and City Learning Centre in Southfields have been developed for learners to achieve accreditation at all levels in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Nearly 400 people have achieved accreditation to date*

*and we expect to achieve at least the same number of qualifications over the next 3 years.*

- **Continuing to develop programmes that provide learners with vocational training and work experience.**

*We will continue to expand our funding base and partnerships to enable us to continue to develop programmes that meet employer and learner needs and ensure that our projects and plans are developed based on the latest market intelligence. We will build on our success in obtaining funding from the European Social Fund and submit further proposals under the 2007-13 Framework when the next call for bids is announced. We will also continue to develop volunteering opportunities as outlined in our Volunteering Strategy (available on the Lifelong Learning website).*

- **Increase employer engagement in targeted programmes**

*We will develop and test different approaches to engaging employers. For example, employers fall into several different categories: eg strategic and operational partners, supporters offering work experience, customers who require learning delivery on-site, customers who require learning delivered off-site, customers who require IAG.*

- **Increase the numbers of an appropriately skilled and qualified workforce**

*Regular, open communication between learners, providers and employers is essential if we are to build and grow a skilled and qualified workforce. Lifelong Learning will facilitate productive and creative relationships between these different stakeholder groups to ensure that skills and qualifications are developed to meet the needs of local employers.*

- **Build on the success of our workforce development initiatives including Train to Gain and Apprenticeships**

*Wandsworth is piloting a number of workforce development projects, including the 'Integrating Employment and Skills Pilot' which started in 2008 and the development of a new Adult Advancement and Careers Service, which will be rolled out nationally.*

- **Contribute to the Council's Corporate Training Strategy**

*Lifelong Learning is continuing to build capacity to develop Train to Gain as part of the Council's Corporate Training Strategy and leads a steering group of representatives from several Council Departments: Adult and Community Learning, the Council's Training and Assessment Centre, the Training and Assessment Centre based at Linden Lodge School, City Learning Centre, Central Personnel, Curriculum and Professional Development and Adult Social Services. Train to Gain has also proved popular with the Council's supply chain and partners. Plans are in place to develop new marketing materials to promote the Council's delivery of Train to Gain to Council employees, partners, other public bodies and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs).*

- **Raise the profile of lifelong learning amongst employers and employer networks**  
*We will draw up a specific Lifelong Learning marketing strategy to target employers which will 'join-up' all our learning project – emphasising the role of Lifelong Learning as a 'one stop shop' for their workforce development needs. It will incorporate the experience of our successful Business and Education in Partnership team which has an excellent track record in working with employers and young people as well as our more recent Apprenticeships and Train to Gain experiences.*
- **Make the most of the learning and employment opportunities relating to the Battersea Power Station Development and 2012 Olympics and Paralympics**  
*Wandsworth's Head of Lifelong Learning and 14-19 Developments is a member of the Battersea Power Station Development (BPSD) Advisory Group. Wandsworth Lifelong Learning is leading with Wandsworth Economic Development Office the Borough's delivery of its Personal Best programme which covers 5 other nearby boroughs and is jointly funded by the LSC and LDA. It has been specifically created to take advantage of the interest and excitement generated by the 2012 Olympics, Paralympics and Cultural Olympics and offers a programme of accredited training and work experience.*

## Summary of priorities 2009-12

Wandsworth Lifelong Learning overall priorities	Links to employer engagement objectives
<p><b>1. Increase the number of learners gaining qualifications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Increase the numbers of an appropriately skilled and qualified workforce</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers in Wandsworth</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Increase employer engagement in targeted programmes</li> <li>◀ Build on the success of our workforce development initiatives including Train to Gain and Apprenticeships</li> <li>◀ Make the most of the learning and employment opportunities relating to the Battersea Power Station Development and 2012 Olympics and Paralympics</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Lead and manage high quality learning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Contribute to the Council’s Corporate Training Strategy</li> <li>◀ Increase the numbers of an appropriately skilled and qualified workforce</li> <li>◀</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Widen participation in learning from pre-school to retirement and beyond</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Raise the profile of lifelong learning amongst employers and employer networks</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Links to other key strategies and initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Contribute to overall improvements in the delivery of Lifelong Learning strategies</li> <li>◀ Identify how engaging employers will contribute to learning and employment opportunities at the Battersea Power Station Development and the 2012 Olympics</li> <li>◀ Include employer engagement measures to contribute to the promotion of sustainability throughout Lifelong Learning</li> </ul>

## Consultation and review

Providers and learners have been involved in the preparation of this plan through the Lifelong Learning Development Group. The Employer Engagement Strategy underpins the Adult and Community and Lifelong Learning strategies and contributes to the Children and Young People's Department Plan, in particular Priority 5 which highlights the improvement of post-16 learners' educational achievements; increasing the number of young people in employment, education and training and promoting employment programmes for parents and carers.

Lifelong Learning carries out an annual learner survey and holds regular focus groups with learners to ensure that their feedback informs plans for future learning.

## Feedback section

Are there other priorities or actions you think should be added to the Employer Engagement Strategy? Is there anything in it you would not include? Please tell us what you think in the box below.

Additional actions/priorities are:

Other comments:

Please return this form to:

Karen Tolton, Professional Centre, Franciscan Road, London SW17 8HE

Email: [ktolton@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:ktolton@wandsworth.gov.uk)

Your name

Organisation (if appropriate)

Address

Postcode

**Thank you!**

## **Appendix 1: The local context: meeting need – stimulating demand**

### *Wandsworth Lifelong Learning*

Wandsworth Lifelong Learning (WLL) is part of the Children and Young People's Department of Wandsworth Council. It includes Adult and Community Learning, Family Learning, 14-19 Developments, Business and Education and also manages a range of training and employment projects. Adult and Community Learning provides an entry point for a large number of learners who can access Skills for Life, employability and IT training in a range of community settings that are non-threatening and provide important routes back into learning and training.

WLL works with a wide range of partners including colleges, libraries, schools and community groups to deliver learning to approximately 10,500 adult learners each year. In 2008, it won contracts to deliver Train to Gain, Apprenticeships and to establish a dedicated supported learning and employment network for people with learning disabilities and difficulties. With funding from the European Social Fund, WLL established skills and employment projects for residents in the more deprived wards of the borough and between 2009-11, it will be working as part of a European partnership to develop training and tools to assist self-employment.

### *The London Borough of Wandsworth*

Wandsworth is the largest inner London borough and reaches from Vauxhall in central London to the edge of Richmond Park to the west – including five miles of frontage onto the River Thames. Wandsworth has five distinct town centres: Clapham Junction, Balham, Tooting, Wandsworth, Putney and smaller district centres at Earlsfield, Southfields, and Roehampton. It is largely residential (with some dense areas of employment) and has many different types of housing from the leafy suburbs of Putney to the inner-city housing estates of Battersea.

WBC Policy Unit's Priority Area Overview, January 2007, identifies Latchmere as 'being the most deprived ward by quite some distance' in the borough. Queenstown and Roehampton are the next most deprived sharing similar deprivation indices, followed by Tooting. These areas are particularly targeted in the borough's Employment and Skills, Community and Lifelong Learning strategies.

Wandsworth is a young borough with an expanding population, the largest growth is expected in the riverside wards where largescale housing development continues. In 2007, Wandsworth's total population was just over 281,800 compared with 272,200 at the time of the 2001 census. Wandsworth also has a much higher proportion of younger adults than other boroughs – 48% of its population compared with 28% nationally and 36% in Greater London.

Wandsworth has an increasingly ethnically diverse population, 26.3% of its residents are from BME groups compared with 20% in 1991. Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership reports that 13.7% of the economically active population are people with disabilities.

### *Employment and skills in Wandsworth*

50% of the working age population in Wandsworth is qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above. This is twice the

national average and a likely product of the high number of professionals who choose to live in Wandsworth. However, 13% of the working age population has no qualifications, the same as the national average. *The Wandsworth CYP* reports that: “the overall economic position in Wandsworth is good. The employment rate is one of the best nationally. However, unemployment rates vary significantly across the borough, with a higher than average proportion of claimants living in the Roehampton and Battersea areas. The Census also reveals that these areas have a high proportion of dependent children living within workless households, correlating with areas of significant social housing. Overall in Wandsworth, 22% of all children live in workless households.

The Learning and Skills Council Central London 2007 Needs Assessment outlined a number of skills gaps in Central London. These include:

- ICT, particularly Microsoft products and networking
- web design and wider communications technologies
- hospitality and catering
- construction industry (employers are demanding “a general increase in skill levels and qualifications”)
- professional and business services
- retailing.

## Appendix 2: Glossary

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
BPS	Battersea Power Station
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CIF	Common Inspection Framework
CLC	City Learning Centre
FE	Further Education
FL	Family Learning
FLLN	Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
ILP/R	Individual Learning Plan/Record
LBW	London Borough of Wandsworth
LCLSC	London Central Learning and Skills Council
LLDG	Lifelong Learning Development Group
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
OTL	Observation of teaching and learning
PSAD	Putney School of Art and Design
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
SCC	Southfields Community College
SoW	Scheme of Work
STC	South Thames College
WFL	Wider Family Learning
WLL	Wandsworth Lifelong Learning

### Appendix 3: Wandsworth Lifelong Learning's current employment and training related projects

#### Job Search Support to Address Long Term Unemployment

Programme	Description	Geog. focus	Lead / partners	Resources	Beneficiaries/impact	Milestones	Dates
ESF Underspend - Job Search support	Job Search support to long-term unemployed.	Wands-worth	WLL + SCC & Peabody Trust.	£140,000	(a) 140 programme starts (b) 55 participants moved into employment		Aug 07 – 31 Mar 08

#### Overcoming Barriers to Employment, Vocational Training And Learning

Programme	Description	Geog. focus –	Lead / partners	Resources	Beneficiaries/impact	Milestones	Dates
ESF Personal Best Programme	Programme of personalised accredited training, mentoring and support, using the 2012 Olympics as a motivator. Targeting unemployed and economically inactive adults who are furthest from the labour market. Targeting unemployed and economically inactive adults who are furthest from the labour market.	Wands-worth, Merton, Sutton Southwark & Croydon	Lead: WLL; WBC EDO. Partners: Merton Ad.Ed, Sutton College, SCC, STC, Croydon Council, PECAN, Southwark College, WBC Training & Assessment Centre.	£800,000	(c) 1000 people over 2 years  (d) 80% of participants expected to achieve Level 1 Personal Best qualification, and 30% expected to progress to employment.		Nov 08- Oct 10
ESF NEET Projects	2 projects aimed at young people who are not in employment education or training (NEET) or potentially NEET.	Wands-worth	WLL and other partners		(c) 55 participants on FlexLearn & Earn programme  (d) Lower percentage of NEET young people in Wandsworth		Sept 08 – Aug 09
Wandsworth SEEN	Providing improved access to work experience placements, employment and self employment opportunities for People who find it difficult to enter the labour market due to disability or learning difficulties	Wands-worth	WLL with STC, Deaf First, Wandsworth Mind, Share Community, Generate, Thrive,	£140,000	(c) Target of 50 clients to be engaged in work experience or employment.	90 learners have been engaged in the first few months of	Sept 08 – Aug 09

Programme	Description	Geog. focus –	Lead / partners	Resources	Beneficiaries/impact	Milestones	Dates
	.		Thomas Pocklington Trust, Platform 1 and Adult Social Services.			the project.	
BEST 'Get Ready' project	Activities to support school pupils' readiness for work experience and the world of work.	Wandsworth Schools	Wandsworth Education Business Partnership		5 Wandsworth schools engaged		2007-08
'Deafinitely Employable'	Film produced to raise awareness of contribution deaf/hearing impaired young people can make in the workplace.	Oak Lodge School, Wandsworth	Wandsworth BEST, working with Nightingale Care Home, Pizza Express, Boots the Chemist and Mermaid Conference Centre.		Commitment and on-going support to students on work experience from range of local employers.		2007-08
Mentoring programmes	Employers trained in online mentoring, in order to provide support to students in Wandsworth schools.	Wandsworth schools	Wandsworth BEST		(c) Bank of 150 mentors trained and 75 students took part.		2007-08
Teenage mums	Customised work experience placements provided for 12 teenage mothers	Wandsworth	Wandsworth BEST and Teenage Pregnancy Team		(c) 12 young mothers engaged		2007-08
Online Test centre	On-line Test Centres developed at the Professional Centre in Tooting and City Learning Centre in Southfields, for learners to achieve accreditation at all levels in literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Wandsworth	WLL and CLC		Since opening in April 2005, there have been 80 passes at Level 1 and 298 passes at Level 2.		April 05 onwards
Adult Learners' Week	<i>Annual national week to raise the profile of Adult Learning. This year there will be a number of programmes that reflect the current economic and employment market.</i>	Wandsworth	WLL		<i>(c) Courses are free and open to all.  (d) Increased take-up in adult learning courses in the borough. Increased confidence and motivation for people to participate in jobsearch activities.</i>		9-15 May 09

### Creating Job Opportunities and Sustaining Employment

Programme	Description	Issue	status	Geog. focus –	Lead / partners	Resources	Beneficiaries/impact	Milestones	Dates
Train to Gain	Delivery of NVQ qualifications in the workplace, alongside supporting employees' needs for support with literacy, numeracy and ESOL to upskill the existing workforce			Wandsworth	WLL - Partners: WBC Training and Assessment Centre, Training and Assessment Centre at Linden Lodge School, CLC, Central Personnel, Curriculum and Professional Development and Adult Social Services.	£300,000	(e) 200 learners  (f) Better skilled, more highly motivated and effective workforce		31 <sup>st</sup> July 09
Apprenticeships	Establishment of Apprenticeship opportunities for young people and adults to increase training and employment prospects			Wandsworth, Westminster	Wandsworth Lifelong Learning, in partnership with Westminster Council.	£210,000 in first year	(e) 72 people (36 in Wandsworth and 36 in Westminster)	1 <sup>st</sup> cohort of learners starting in Mar 09	1 Nov 09
Wandsworth SEEN	Providing improved access to work experience placements, employment and self employment opportunities for adults with disabilities and learning difficulties			Wandsworth	Wandsworth Lifelong Learning in partnership with South Thames College, Deaf First, Wandsworth Mind, Share Community, Generate, Thrive, Thomas Pocklington Trust, Platform 1 and Adult Social Services .	£140,000	(e) Target of 50 clients to be engaged in work experience or employment	90 learners have been engaged in the first few months of the project	Sept 08 – Aug 09
<i>LDA Skills for Life</i>	<i>Bid submitted to increase the number of employees with improved skills for life.</i>	<i>Upskilling the existing workforce</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Wandsworth, Westminster and Sutton</i>	<i>WLL in partnership with Westminster Council, Sutton Council, and training providers RW Rechere and PECAN.</i>	<i>£820,000</i>	<i>(e) To support training programmes for 560 individuals</i>		<i>Outcome of bid expected April/May 09</i>

## **Wandsworth Lifelong Learning Employer Engagement strategy**

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