



delivering the national strategy
for improving adult literacy and
numeracy skills

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*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulation 1999.

Introduction

What are literacy and numeracy skills?

You may have heard them referred to as Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy skills, basic skills or Skills for Life. Whenever these terms are used they mean:

the ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.

There are over 3 million workers with poor literacy and numeracy skills employed in organisations like yours. This does not mean that they can't read or write at all, but that their skills are insufficient to meet the demands of the 21st Century. The increasing use of technology and ever-higher standards in quality, productivity and health and safety mean that every worker must have minimum levels of skills.

Unfortunately, it isn't good enough to learn one job any more; workers are required to be more flexible than ever and to be trained to take on new procedures quickly. If employers are to achieve growth and compete on the international market then they need a skilled workforce, able to adapt to change and innovation.

What do the levels of literacy and numeracy mean?

National standards for literacy	At this level, adults will be able, for example, to:	School level equivalent	Vocational level equivalent
Entry 1	Read and obtain information from common signs and symbols	Level 1 (age 5)	No equivalent
Entry 2	Use punctuation correctly, including capital letters, full stops and question marks	Level 2 (age 7)	No equivalent
Entry 3	Organise writing in short paragraphs	Level 3 (age 9)	No equivalent
Level 1	Identify the main points and specific detail in texts	Level 4 (age 11)	Level 1 Key Skills/NVQ
Level 2	Read and understand a range of texts of varying complexity, accurately and independently	GCSE A*-C (age 16)	Level 2 Key Skills/NVQ
National standards for numeracy	At this level, adults will be able, for example, to:	School level equivalent	Vocational level equivalent
Entry 1	Recognise and name common shapes such as rectangles, circles, cubes etc	Level 1 (age 5)	No equivalent
Entry 2	Read and understand information in simple diagrams and charts	Level 2 (age 7)	No equivalent
Entry 3	Add or subtract using three-digit numbers	Level 3 (age 9)	No equivalent
Level 1	Recognise and use fractions, decimals and simple percentages	Level 4 (age 11)	Level 1 Key Skills/NVQ
Level 2	Find the mean, median and mode and use them as appropriate to compare two sets of data	GCSE A*-C (age 16)	Level 2 Key Skills/NVQ

The levels

This table sets out the levels of the national standards for literacy and numeracy, with examples of the sorts of tasks that adults can carry out, together with their school and vocational equivalents.

You can see that a worker with writing skills at Entry 2 (the skills of the average 7-year-old) will struggle to complete documentation, such as accident report forms and quality monitoring, accurately. A worker who has number skills at Entry 3 (the skills of the average 11-year-old) will not be able to cope with large numbers, percentages and fractions. For example, errors in stores, accurate measurement and calculation in engineering or building companies are frequently caused by inadequate skills.

This costs time and money, not to mention lost orders and accidents.

If you consider that,

'A worker needs to be at Level 2 for most jobs to be available'¹ and employers want employees who are able to cope with the fast changing demands of the workplace, then the skills levels of over 3 million workers must be raised.

¹*Institute for Employment Studies.*

This **Employer Toolkit** is intended for use by Human Resources, Personnel or training staff and will provide the tools required to take a whole-company approach to help improve the literacy and numeracy skills of the workforce. The reading, writing, communication and number skills of workers can be improved. This **Toolkit** is designed to help you achieve this in your organisation.

The **Employer Toolkit** allows you to choose from the following tools, all ways of improving skills in the workplace:

- **Route Maps** to lead staff through the **Toolkit** and the process.
- **A presentation** for Board members or other management and supervisory staff. This will have all the information about workplace literacy and numeracy that you need to raise awareness and get staff on board.
- **Tools for identifying** literacy and numeracy needs in your organisation.
- **Tools to develop** the best model of support for your organisation.
- **Tools for evaluating** progress.
- **Information** about some ways to explore these issues further and who to contact for help, advice and support.
- **Funding** information.
- **Resources** – books and materials for you and your employees to use.
- **A video** about literacy and numeracy in the workplace.



Employer Route Map

Starting point

awareness of literacy and numeracy skills:

Depending on the nature of your organisation, you might want to start with the **'presentation'** to raise awareness about the need for good literacy and numeracy skills. This should take about 15 minutes and you can use it to inform the Board, Human Resources staff, training, supervisory and team leader staff.

Phase 2

identifying the needs in your organisation:

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The next phase would be to identify:

What skills are needed in your organisation – you can choose from the tools included to identify these across the whole company.

- 1. The Top Ten Skills at Work** – 4 checklists for reading, writing, number, speaking and listening, to allow you to identify the critical skills required by company procedures and jobs.
- 2. Company Skills Checklist** – this allows you to estimate the quantity and type of problems you may have with poor skills.
- 3. Job and Task Analysis** – you can use this framework to identify the exact skills and the levels required for specific jobs.

You also need to identify the skills levels of the workforce. Do they match your needs? You can choose from these worker-centred approaches:

- 4. Employee Screening** – you can use existing screening procedures like interviews and application forms as well as new, specially-designed screening and assessment tools to identify workers' skills gaps.
- 5. Personal Skills Checklist** – self-assessment for employees.
- 6. Referral Routes** – internal identification of individuals.

Phase 3

delivering the training:

3

Once you have good information about the skills required and the training required, you can decide on the best model of delivery for your organisation. Each of the tools is described and has a Case Study to show how other employers have tackled similar training needs:

1. Intensive courses
2. Job coaching/mentoring
3. Integrated training
4. Open learning and learndirect

Phase 4

evaluating the training:

4

If you decide to deliver skills training you need to make sure that it has been effective. The **Toolkit** offers you two key ways to monitor and evaluate it:

- **Qualitative evaluation**

- 4.1 Feedback from workers – recording views on the effects of training.
- 4.2 Feedback from supervisory staff – recording views on the impact of training.

- **Quantitative evaluation**

- 4.3 Measuring outcomes in the workplace – recording changes to wastage, rates, productivity, etc.
- 4.4 Recording data about attendance, accreditation and progression.



Employee Route Map

As a member of a Human Resources, training or supervisory team, you will have to inform and motivate employees. It is important to recognise that initiatives that will benefit the company will also benefit the employee. Improved job efficiency for the worker leads to increased job satisfaction and job security, better skills lead to greater flexibility and can lead to promotion. Employees can achieve qualifications that are recognised and valued by employers. These may also offer the employee greater choice and higher earnings.

The **Toolkit** can help you to meet the needs of employees who missed out on education and qualifications first time around and who have lacked the confidence or the opportunities to take part in training since they left school.

Starting point – screening and initial assessment

Employees can carry out self-assessment or take part in screening procedures, carried out either by the employer or by a provider. This can highlight skills gaps and lead to an individual training plan for the employee. After further initial or placement assessment to discover levels of literacy and/or numeracy, employees can go on to the next step.

Next step – training and support

Employees can take advantage of training developed to meet their needs and the demands of the job. This can be delivered in a variety of ways, both in-house and with a provider, but should always include diagnostic assessment and feedback that is clear and motivational.

Finally – qualifications and progression

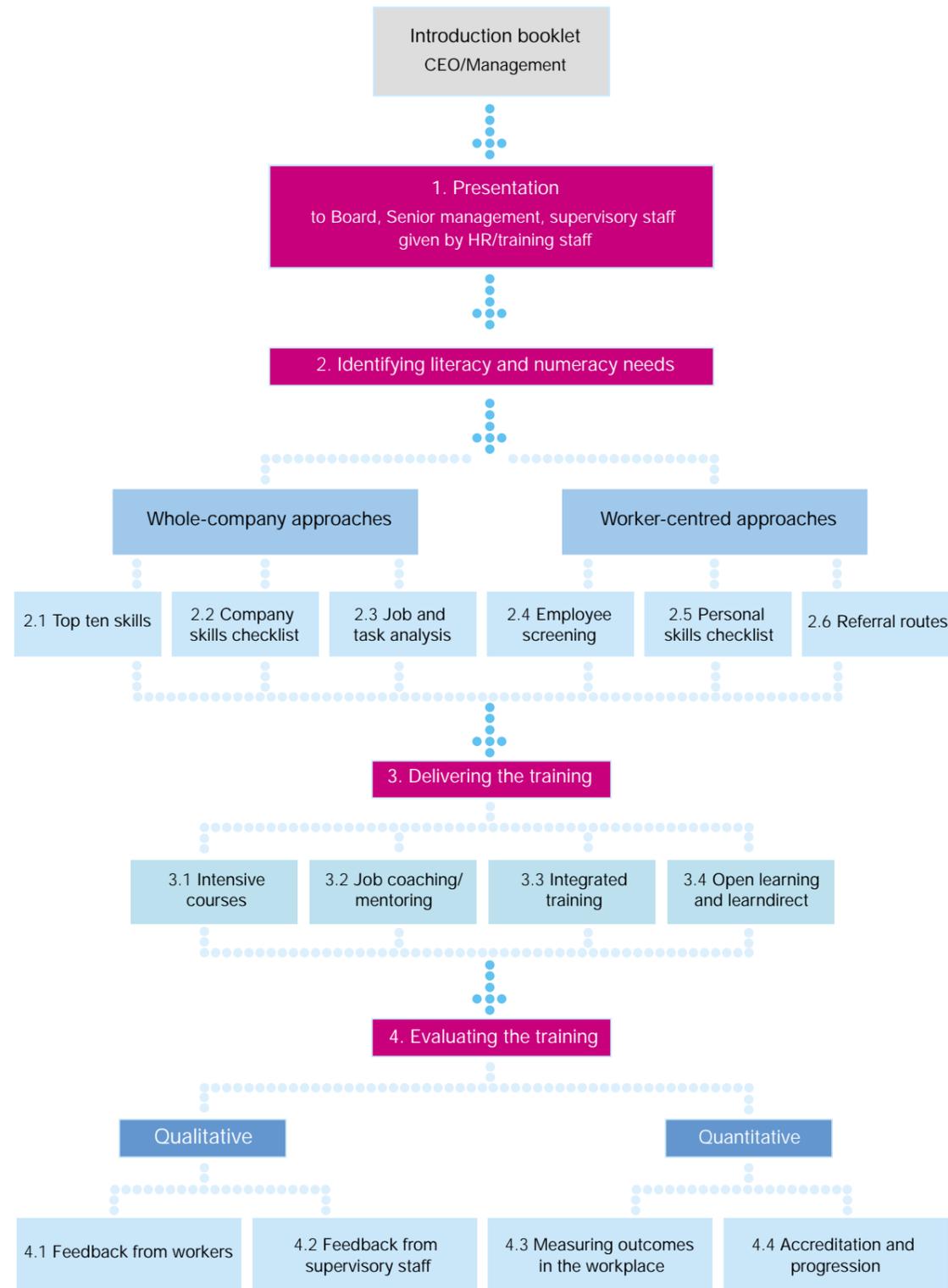
There is a range of accreditation available for adults. In literacy and numeracy there are qualifications at each level, including the new National Tests at Level 1 and Level 2. These skills will also support training for Key Skills and National Vocational Qualifications at Levels 1 and 2.

'It is tremendously worthwhile. It raises morale, empowers staff and gives them the confidence to learn again. They are much happier, have opportunities to move to the career they want and we have a much more motivated workforce.'

David Fleetwood-Walker, Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford.



ROUTE MAP



PHASE 2

Tools for identifying literacy and numeracy needs in your organisation

This section contains tools that show you how to assess the level of need for basic skills support in your workplace.

The range of tools is intended for use in all sectors of employment. Select tools that best suit the circumstances of your organisation. You need to:

1. Assess the literacy and numeracy demands of working procedures in your organisation.
Then
2. Screen and assess workers to identify any gaps in their literacy and/or numeracy skills.

For the first you can choose from:

Whole-company approaches

- 2.1 The Top Ten Skills at work**
- 2.2 Company Skills Checklist**
- 2.3 Job and Task Analysis**

For the second you can use:

Worker-centred approaches

- 2.4 Employee Screening**
- 2.5 Personal Skills Checklist**
- 2.6 Referral Routes**

Note: You may wish to use these tools to identify literacy and numeracy needs in your workforce. However, you do not have to use these tools yourself. You can get expert advice and services from local providers like FE Colleges, who hold the Quality Mark for Post-16 Literacy and Numeracy. Contact your local Learning and Skills Council for details, or look in the information section of the **Toolkit** for websites and details of funding and support.

Training models

- 3.1 Intensive courses
- 3.2 Job coaching
- 3.3 Integrated training
- 3.4 Open learning and learndirect

Quality providers of training

If you do form a partnership with a provider to help you deliver skills training you need to ensure that they meet the highest standards. High quality providers will offer you **free** access to:

- Impartial advice and guidance on how to improve employees' skills.
- A confidential report based on a diagnostic assessment which identifies their strengths and weaknesses in literacy, language and numeracy.
- An individual learning plan that identifies realistic milestones and targets.
- A relevant programme of learning that matches the individual's aims and aspirations to his/her current abilities and future potential.
- On-going feedback and support that is clear, meaningful and motivating.
- Nationally recognised qualifications that are valuable to learners and valued by employers.
- Timely information and encouragement to help proactive progression to other education, training or employment opportunities.

PHASE 3

Tools to develop the best model of support for your organisation

There are several models of delivering literacy and numeracy skills support from which to choose:

Do It Yourself

If you have the skills and knowledge within your own organisation, you may choose to deliver the training yourself. You could also use the providers described below to train key staff from within your own organisation in identifying literacy and numeracy need, and build delivery into your organisation's training plan.

Use a Provider

On the other hand, you can use a local provider, such as a local college, to help you with identification and training. If you do, you need to look for quality providers to guarantee expert and customised guidance and support. Your local Learning and Skills Council and the Brokerage Scheme (see the Information Section) can give you this information and help you set up the partnership.

You can, of course, set up partnerships and do a mix and match of both approaches. The Case Studies show how companies have used a variety of ways to carry out skills training.

Your choice of training model will depend on a number of factors:

- The level of need in your workplace.
- How you are going to organise your basic skills programmes.
- The size of your firm.
- The availability of local providers of literacy and numeracy training.
- The model you feel will be most acceptable to your workforce.

4

PHASE

Tools for evaluating the training

It is important to evaluate basic skills training to ensure it is having the desired effect. Both qualitative and quantitative data are important and should be planned into the training programme from the beginning:

- **Qualitative data** will allow you to see the impact on workers' confidence and ability to work independently.
- **Quantitative data** will allow you to measure accurately the impact on 'hard' information, such as productivity.

This information is useful to evaluate the impact of basic skills training on your organisation and to ensure that adequate provision is funded and delivered in the future.

Qualitative evaluation

- 4.1 **Feedback from workers – recording views on the effects of training**
- 4.2 **Feedback from supervisory staff – recording views on the impact of training**

Quantitative evaluation

- 4.3 **Measuring outcomes in the workplace – recording changes to wastage rates, productivity, etc.**
- 4.4 **Recording data about attendance, accreditation and progression**

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Information and guidance

You can use the following tools to help you in a number of ways. If you want to examine the written documentation in use in the workplace, find out more about the levels of literacy and numeracy needed by your employees, or consider ways of expanding support then these could help you get started.

The tools in this section include:

Reviewing documentation and procedures

5.1 Readability – including a worked example

5.2 Health and Safety and COSHH documentation

5.3 ISO 9002 – including a worked example

5.4 Investors in People

Sources of support and funding

5.5 Local Learning and Skills Councils

5.6 The Brokerage Scheme

5.7 The Trade Union Congress

5.8 Networking with other organisations

5.9 Guide and directory to funding literacy and numeracy provision

5.9 Guide and Directory to funding literacy and numeracy provision



A Guide to funding adult literacy and numeracy learning programmes – 2001-2002

The *Guide* gives information on how different literacy and numeracy provision can be funded, including some general guidance for those thinking of applying for funds. This introductory *Guide* is available on www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus or from DfES Publications on 0845 60 222 60. There is guidance available from the grant-making bodies themselves included in the *Guide* and organisations are advised to contact these bodies if they wish to apply to them for funding.

The Directory of funding sources for adult literacy and numeracy provision – 2001-2002

This *Directory* is also available on the above website. Some of the funding bodies listed in the *Directory*, such as the Learning and Skills Council and the European Commission, have budgets that are larger than others. However, it is not always easy to access these funds and smaller organisations may find it beneficial to enter into partnerships.

The *Directory* is structured so that it opens with two tables, one showing sources of funds by type of provider and the second by type of activity. Private companies and organisations and workplace literacy and numeracy training are clearly identified. You can find these on www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus

Note: Private sector employers that train their own workforce in adult basic skills will particularly want to note that, in 2001-2002, the Learning and Skills Council will only be able to give them funds if they have already have a sub-contracting arrangement with a local college or if they have been funded as part of a work-based learning contract. New arrangements will be in place from 2002-2003, which will allow employers to receive funds direct from their local Learning and Skills Council.

Some examples of funding case studies

1. Direct Funding from the Learning and Skills Council

A large employer, with a substantial training provision, has recently applied for funds to the National Contracts Service of the Learning and Skills Council. The application is for training that falls outside the provision which an employer is expected to supply to employees. The funding is for provision to help those employees who require additional support and/or recognised qualifications in the important areas of basic literacy and numeracy.

Since April 2001 organisations can be considered for funding directly from the Learning and Skills Council, subject to their ability to comply with the overall quality and audit requirements for receipt of Learning and Skills Council funding. The National Contracts Service works with an Employer and local Learning and Skills Council(s) as appropriate.

National Contracts Service, 101 Lockhurst Lane, Coventry, CV6 5SF
Tel. 024 7670 3406.

2. College delivery in the workplace

A small manufacturing employer on the South coast was keen to provide access to basic skills training as part of a recognised staff development programme for its employees. The employer contacted the local college for provision. The college was able to claim funding, per employee taught, from the local Learning and Skills Council.

The employer worked with the college to provide basic skills provision. This was provision that took place within the workplace and which was specifically orientated to the workplace and day-to-day needs of employers. Even though this was classed as 'employer dedicated' provision, the Learning and Skills Council provided funding at its standard rates. The provision was delivered at a time that suited the interests of the employees.

On completion of this staff development programme, a significant number of employees chose to continue with their literacy and numeracy training, deciding to enroll onto further courses provided directly by the local College.

3. Ufi/learndirect provision

A production factory based in the South-West recognised the value of training and development: as new systems and processes were introduced, staff were increasingly being required to be able to adapt quickly if production time was not to be lost. However, as the line operated for 24 hours it proved difficult to arrange suitable training sessions.

To address this, the company decided to look at new methods of learning and opened a small learning centre where a range of learning materials are readily available, including on-line learning packages. The training manager initially contacted the local Ufi Hub Manager, who explained to him how the flexible learndirect provision was able to provide on-site support for basic skills development at a time and pace that suited both the employer and the employee.

The Ufi Hub Manager established that potential funding for this provision was available from the Learning and Skills Council via the Hub itself. This included the employment of a specialist basic skills tutor through the local college.

4. Funding using Trade Union Project Funding

Assisted by a visiting local Trades Union learning representative and a local college tutor, a manufacturing company based in the West Midlands identified significant basic skills needs within its workforce.

The Union Learning Fund paid for the training of a Learning Representative in the workplace who was then able to carry out assessments of basic skills needs in the workforce.

Using individual learning plans, provision was planned and then delivered in the workplace. Often the provision related directly to topics of immediate workplace relevance such as Health and Safety, instruction manuals and everyday company documentation.

The college representative was also present in the workplace to identify and suggest any further work that would be better delivered in the college. To ensure that the employer could see the benefits of this work, to both the employee and company as a whole, the learning representative and the college tutor tracked and monitored progress. This information was also made available to the local Learning and Skills Council for audit and quality monitoring. Some small-scale research in the factory recorded a significant improvement in basic skills.

5. Funding using the European Social Fund

A college in East Anglia set up a European Social Fund Project with a number of partner organisations to provide a mobile skills training service in a mainly rural area. Within this project, European Social Funding covers 45% of the costs including services and administration; partner colleges claim funding for learners from the local Learning and Skills Council (there is a requirement that at least 10 % of funding comes from public sources). Employers contribute some match funding by allowing employees time to contribute to the training delivery. Contracts were set up with all partners before the project began, and delivery hours were clearly stated on staff timesheets.

A number of short courses are offered including basic skills training. The facility is open to staff employed in SMEs and unemployed people, as a route to filling skills shortages in the area. The most popular courses are the information technology training programmes, which do not necessarily lead to a qualification, although the option is available.

6. Partnership Basic Skills Provision.

A large employer in the East Midlands worked with a local college, the local Learning and Skills Council, the local Chamber of Commerce, and the City Council to establish a Learning Centre for employees and local people. The centre was awarded the BT Beacon Award for Lifelong Learning in 2001. The employer provided the centre and the equipment, the College provided staffing and delivery, and the management was shared between the 2 main providers.

Taster courses and full qualification programmes are available, mainly in the area of information technology, but basic skills assessment and support are also included. The centre is open at accessible times, including weekends, and employees are encouraged to include families in the learning opportunities which offer access to modern information technology facilities. These facilities are also used for national initiatives such as BBC Webwise.

Other sources of information about literacy and numeracy and advice on funding:

The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit

For information about other workplace literacy and numeracy initiatives go to:

www.readwriteplus.gov.uk

To receive further copies of the **Toolkit** call 08080 0763 763

The Basic Skills Agency

www.basic-skills.co.uk

For information and publications about workplace literacy and numeracy and the Brokerage Scheme

Ufi/learndirect

www.ufi.com

Information about learndirect centres and literacy and numeracy products available to workers

The National Learning and Skills Council

www.lsc.gov.uk

National Office
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT
Tel: 0845 019 4170
Fax: 024 7686 3100

For information about support and funding available to companies and organisations from 47 local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs)

The National Training Organisation National Council

london@nto-nc.org

For information about National Occupational Standards and literacy and numeracy initiatives

The Workplace Basic Skills Network<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/wbsnet>

The Workplace Basic Skills Network is a national organisation dedicated to workplace language, literacy and numeracy provision. It is a membership organisation based at Lancaster University. It builds professional capacity in workplace basic skills through the *dissemination and sharing of good practice* and the provision of *continuing professional development* for practitioners. The Network's flagship '*Breaking Down Barriers 1*' (BDB1) Certificate course for basic skills practitioners provides an essential starting point from where its participants can gain an understanding of how to adapt their existing skills of teaching language, literacy and numeracy, to meet the training needs of workers in today's changing organisations. The Network also delivers a range of other professional development courses to meet employers' needs. It provides *advice, guidance and consultancy* for its members, and is supporting the development of *regional workplace basic skills networks* in partnership with a range of agencies and providers. Members, who receive a regular bulletin and discounts at *Network events* around the UK, are drawn from a wide range of training provider organisations and other agencies and organisations concerned with workplace learning, and include employers and unions in all sectors.

Workplace Basic Skills Network

CSET

Lancaster University

Lancaster

LA1 4YL

Tel: 01524 593405

Fax: 01524 844788

email wbs.net@lancaster.ac.uk

Appendix 1

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ED: Simon Norton
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Sussex

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Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire

Chair: Patrick Upson
ED: Lynda Purser
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Northampton NN3 6BJ
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Leicestershire

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Meridian East, Meridian
Business Park
Leicester LE19 1UU
Tel: 0845 019 4177

Local Learning and Skills Council areas and contacts

Nottinghamshire

Chair: Duncan Sedgwick
ED: Rob Valentine
Castle Marina Road,
Castle Marina Park,
Nottingham NG7 1TN
Tel: 0845 019 4187

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Beech House, Witham Park
Waterside South,
Lincoln LN5 7JH
Tel: 0845 019 4178

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Birmingham and Solihull

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ED: David Cragg
Chaplin Court, 80 Hurst Street,
Birmingham B5 4TG
Tel: 0845 019 4143

Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Chair: Chris Swan
ED: Alan Curless
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The Black Country

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Binley Business Park
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South West Region**Devon and Cornwall**

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