

Policy, Qualifications & Standards Division

Policy Briefing

Who Does What (3)? A Guide to the Main Education Agencies and Bodies and What They Do

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Who Does What? An A – Z Guide to the main agencies and bodies in the world of education and training

Introduction

This is the third edition of the Who Does What Guide in as many years. As with previous editions, it tries to identify the most prominent agencies, bodies and government departments involved in the planning, funding and quality management of post 14 education and training, and to explain in simple terms what they do.

Of course there will always be other bodies that could be included and other details that could be added but hopefully this Guide captures the essence of who is doing what out there in the world of post 14 education.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact to come out of this survey is just how many bodies have either been created or have significantly changed their remit or responsibilities since Labour assumed power in 1997. 'Standards not structures,' 'autonomy to the front line,' 'local empowerment,' may have been the mantras but the reality appears to be different.

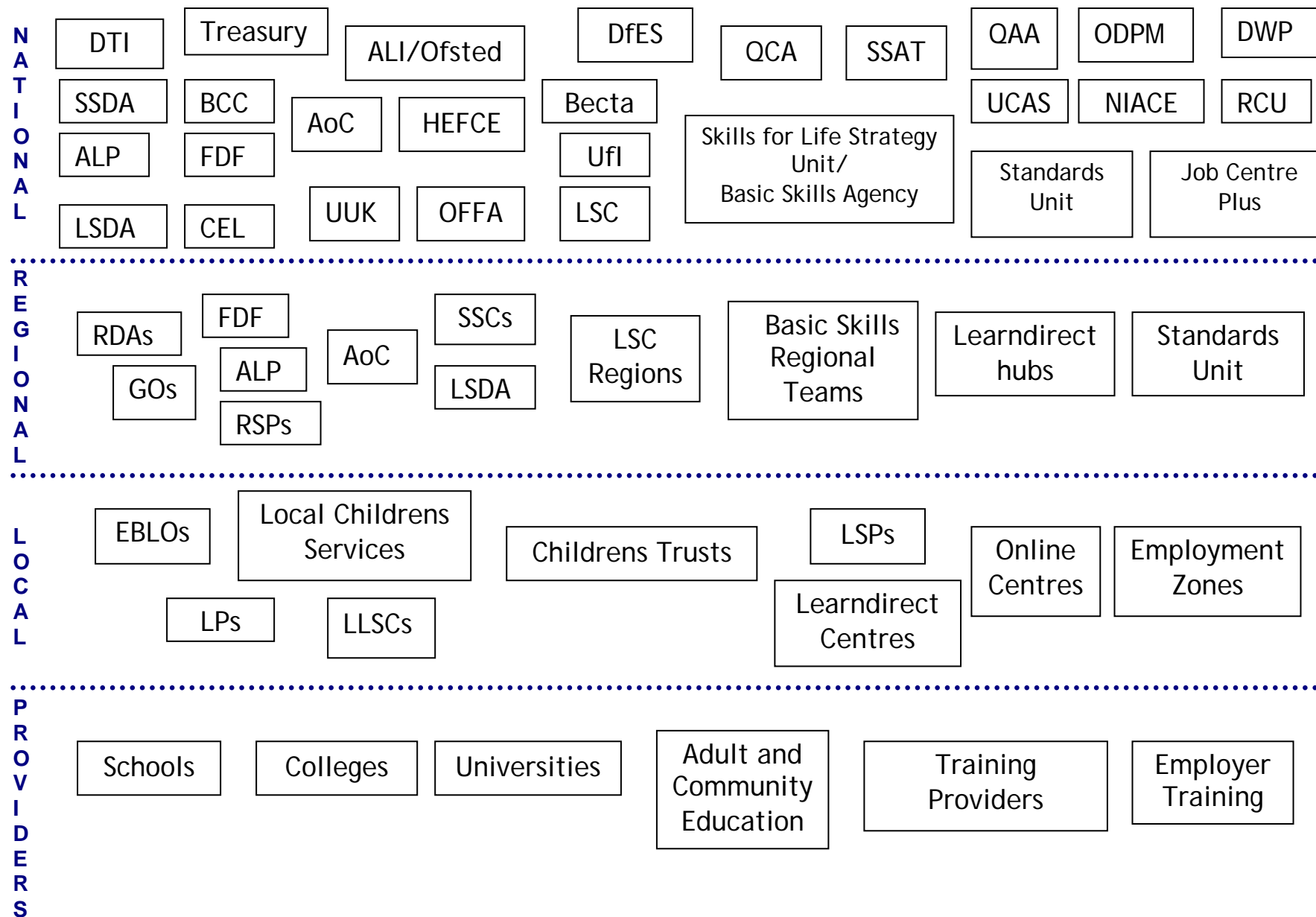
In this Guide at least, of the 42 bodies listed, 23 owe their creation to Labour policies or initiatives over the last eight years. The Learning and Skills Council, Regional Development Agencies, the Skills for Business Network, the University for Industry and many others have all emerged offering varying degrees of local involvement but with strong central remits since 1997.

Nor have the bodies that existed prior to 1997 been static. Government departments such as the DfES, DTI and DWP have shifted responsibilities continuously while bodies such as Ofsted, the Training and Development Agency for Schools and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust are currently assuming new responsibilities, reflected in the case of the latter two in new names.

Nor is the next wave of change far off. A Quality Improvement Agency will be formally launched in April 2006 bringing in its wash further change to the Learning and Skills Development Agency and the DfES Standards Unit while, most significantly of all, the integration of children's services under the 2004 Children's Act and the 2005 Youth Green Paper will bring enormous change to structures at a Local Authority level. Local Area Agreements, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, Children's Trusts are already upon us.

It follows from this that other questions apart from 'Who Does What?' should be asked such as 'Who pays for what?' 'Who brings the most value?' and 'Where are the overlaps?' The current policy contention is that Government should be smaller and interfere less but as a recent masterly OECD study on 'Modernising Government' indicates, it is the nature rather than the extent of Government intervention that counts.

The Changing Post-14 Order



Glossary

ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
AoC	Association of Colleges
ALP	Association of Learning Providers
BSA	Basic Skills Agency
BCC	British Chambers of Commerce
Becta	British Educational Communications and Technological Agency
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FAB	Federation of Awarding Bodies
FDF	Foundation Degree Forward
GO	Government Office
GTC	General Teaching Council for England
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IRU	Implementation Review Unit
JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications
LA	Local (Children's Services) Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NIACE	National Institute for Adult Continuing Education
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for HE
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RSP	Regional Skills Partnership
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Ufi	University for Industry
UUK	Universities UK

Aimhigher

Launched as an integrated national programme on 1 August 2004 on the back of two existing programmes, Aimhigher aims to widen participation in HE 'by raising the aspirations and developing the abilities of young people (aged 13 - 30) from under represented groups.' Jointly funded by the DfES and HEFCE, Aimhigher operates through nine regional partnerships and 45 area partnerships across England. Activities include summer schools, taster days and mentoring schemes organised through Area Steering Groups and Regional Forums. NFER is conducting a national evaluation of the programmes.

Key Fact: Aimhigher area allocations run to July 2006. Following a consultation earlier this year, the National Partnership Board is currently considering future directions for Aimhigher along with indicative funding allocations for 2006 - 08, including the potential for some funding to go direct to schools and colleges

Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)

A non departmental public body established under the Learning and Skills Act 2000, ALI began inspecting in April 2001. It covers three strands of inspection: education and training funded by the DfES and including education for people over 19 in FE, work based learning for people over 16 and Ufl based provision; education and training funded by other Government Depts including training of service people under the MoD, New Deal and learning in prisons; and privately funded training provision under commission from private companies. ALI also offers education and training services both in the UK and abroad. Full details can be found in the Chief Inspector's Annual Report. ALI has a Board and a directorate and manages some 140 lead inspectors and 600 associate inspectors.

Key Fact: The DfES is currently consulting (up to 4 November 2005) on proposals to bring ALI into a single wider inspectorate under Ofsted, potentially to be in operation from April 2007 onwards

Association of Colleges (AoC)

Created in 1996 by colleges themselves, the AoC is the representative body for FE colleges in England and, through association, in Wales and Northern Ireland as well. Such colleges serve over 4m of the 6m learners participating in post statutory education and training and the AoC works in close partnership with Government and other partners in ensuring the best forms of provision are available. AoC services to member colleges include professional development, information and support in institutional management, governance, curriculum development, business development and funding. Much of this is delivered through regional offices.

Key Fact: AoC's 'Manifesto to Government' during this election year highlighted four objectives: improved quality, choice and relevance in learning for all young people; adult learning and skills for all; fair funding policies; regulation appropriate to risk

Association of Learning Providers (ALP)

The 'voice of independent learning providers' throughout the UK, the ALP is a subscription organisation with some 400 members committed to raising the quality of work based learning. Apart from working with policy makers and skills funding agencies, the ALP provides support and development for its members. The ALP is run by an elected Board of Directors who give their time voluntarily.

Key Fact: ALP publishes Countdown, a weekly newsletter covering developments in work based learning

Basic Skills Agency (BSA)

Set up in initial form in 1975 and subject to various reviews ever since including most recently in 2000, the Basic Skills Agency is "a national ideas and innovation organisation, focusing on finding practice worth sharing and disseminating it effectively." Although funded by the DFES and the Welsh Assembly, the BSA is an independent organisation, Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. Its Strategic Plan 2005 - 08 identifies three priorities: improving speaking and listening skills; maintaining and improving basic skills at transition points in people's lives; engaging the disengaged in improving their basic skills. Details on the and other activities can also be found in the BSA's Delivery Plan 2005 - 06 and Basic Skills magazine

Key Fact: The Agency awards a three year Quality Mark to schools (and in Wales to post 16 providers as well) that reach a minimum standard in teaching literacy and numeracy. Currently 20% of schools have it and the current target is for 35% of primary and 20% of secondary schools in England to achieve the Mark

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)

A non political, non profit making organisation, owned and directed by its members, the BCC represents more than 135,000 businesses and is thus a 'truly representative voice for UK business.' Much of this is through its national network of quality accredited Chambers who not only promote the growth of businesses in the regions but also provide one of the largest training networks in the country. Collectively, the BCC provides a powerful voice on issues to do with commerce, business and skills.

Key Fact: The BCC produce a Quarterly Economic Survey, based on responses from over 7,000 businesses, and viewed by many as an important indicator of trends in business and the economy

British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta)

Established in 1998 and operating UK wide, Becta provides advice, guidance and support services to schools and colleges in particular, to support the Government goals of embedding ICT in pedagogy, curriculum and institutional structures. It was granted a more strategic partnership role with Government in a revised remit in 2003 and is currently working with Government on the implementation of the e learning strategy. Becta's 2004 - 07 Corporate Plan has five 'strategic elements:' influencing the strategic environment, building models and promoting standards,

developing skills and capabilities, developing advice and support networks, and improving the quality of supply of content and infrastructure.

Key Fact: Becta provides a fascinating regular update on technical developments, trends and issues known as TechNews. It is also developing a self review framework for institutions to identify where they are in 'ICT Maturity.' This was announced by Ruth Kelly at BETT 2005.

Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL)

Launched in October 2003 as a key national agency within the Success for All initiative, the CEL is responsible for helping to enhance and support leadership and management across the learning and skills sector. This translates to five strategic aims; to improve the overall standard of leadership in the sector, to improve leadership of provider performance, to improve the diversity profile of sector leaders, to address succession issues, and to improve the quality and impact of research on leadership. The CEL operates as partnership between Ashridge, LSDA, Lancaster Management School and the Open University.

Key Fact: The Centre has recently published a research Report on 15 senior leaders in the sector. It identified eight 'significant themes' in getting to the top with "establishing and maintaining credibility" as the highest rated theme.

Children's Trusts

Children's Trusts have been created "to address the fragmentation of responsibilities for children's services." 35 pathfinder trusts were launched in July 2003, most areas are expected to have one by 2006 and all by 2008. Intended as partnerships between different services rather than as formal legal entities, they will sit within Local Authorities with the Director of the Children's Services accountable for the education, health and social services provided by the trust. Children's Trusts will encourage multi disciplinary teams to work together, sharing intelligence and assessment on children and young people's needs and commissioning services and support where necessary.

Key Fact: Although the 2004 Children Act does not legislate for trusts per se, Local Authorities are required to have in place arrangements that produce integrated working at all levels by 2008.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

The DfES is responsible for children's services, education and lifelong learning in England. The Dept has five core objectives defined by Public Service targets: safeguarding children and improving the prospects for young people; raising standards and tackling attainment gaps in school performance; ensuring all young people are prepared for skilled employment or HE; tackling the adult skills gap; and raising and widening participation in HE. The work of the Dept is led by a Board and seven Directorates; the throughput to the regions is managed by nine regionally based Government Offices. Full details of the Dept's work can be found in the 2005 Annual Report. Its policy context for the next three years can be found in The Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, released in July 2004.

Key Fact: *The Dept is on course to reduce its staffing levels in two stages, 2006 and 2008, as it adopts the modernising principles of being smaller, more strategic and less centralised. It also aims to meet its efficiency target of £4.3bn in annual efficiency gains by 2007/8*

Department for Trade and Industry (DTI)

For many centuries the Board of Trade, the DTI was created in its more modern form in 1970 and with a current remit to promote enterprise, innovation and creativity, it clearly works closely with the DfES. The DTI is leading the drive of 'prosperity for all' by trying to create the best environment for business success in the UK. Its 2005 - 08 Business Plan lists three strategic objectives: supporting successful businesses; promoting science and innovation; ensuring fair markets.

Key Fact: *The Dept manages a number of activities that are important to the world of education and training including the Manufacturing Advisory Service, Business link, RDAs, , the HE Innovation Fund and science and innovation*

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Created after the 2001 general election, the DWP is responsible for the Government's welfare agenda and welfare to work strategies including the New Deal, Jobcentre Plus, pensions and disability legislation. It is responsible for five Public Service targets, two of which are directly relevant to education and training: ensuring the best start for children and ending child poverty by 2020 is one and promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age while protecting the position of those in the greatest need is the other.

Key Fact: *The DWP is going through a massive modernisation programme as it copes with conducting 10m welfare related transactions a day*

Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB)

Formed in 2000 by the four largest vocational Awarding Bodies (ABs,) FAB is a membership body representing organisations that award vocational qualifications in the UK. It provides a forum for ABs collectively to consider developments in vocational qualifications and to lobby on key issues. FAB is a company Limited by Guarantee and led by an Executive Group with a Chairman and Secretariat.

Key Fact: *Since May 2001, FAB has extended its network and now has well over 70 members*

Foundation Degree Forward (FDF)

Created after the Government's 2003 White Paper 'The Future of Higher Education,' FDF's role is to work in partnership with educational institutions and other organisations to support the development of foundation degrees. Its current mini Strategic Plan lists five aims, three of which are core to foundation degree development: to establish a network of expertise in foundation degree validation, delivery and development; to work in partnership with employer and professional bodies to meet sector requirements; to work with learning providers to establish a

validation and quality assurance service. FDF has a Management Board and regional team.

Key Fact: FDF's regular Journal 'Forward' provides full details and updates on foundation degree developments

General Teaching Council for England (GTC)

Established under the Teaching and HE Act 1998 and operative from 2000, the GTC is an independent professional body for teaching in England. Under the 1998 Act, it has three principal functions; to maintain a register of qualified teachers in England; to enable the teaching profession to regulate itself; to advise Government and other agencies on issues affecting the quality of teaching and learning.

Key Fact: From April 2002, the GTC became self financing, generating its own income from a registration fee. This is eligible for tax relief and is currently set at £30. After much discussion, Ruth Kelly confirmed in Sept 2005 that teachers working in Academies will have to register

Government Offices (GOs)

GOs represent central Government in the regions. Set up in 1994, there are nine GOs, one for each English region. They help bring together and implement at a regional level programmes of activity from ten Whitehall Depts. Programmes include raising standards in education and skills, regenerating communities, reducing unemployment and fighting crime. In 2000 a Regional Co ordination Unit was set up as "the corporate centre" of the GO network. This and the GO network come under the Office of the Deputy PM and the extent of their work can be seen on the new national entry website, launched in June 2005.

Key Fact: The 2004 Pre Budget Report announced a review of GOs as they move towards a more strategic role and take a lead, for example, in helping create Local Area Agreements (LAAs.). Further details on this more 'focused role' role for GOs are due to be announced shortly

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Created following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, HEFCE is responsible for distributing public money for teaching and research to universities and, where appropriate, colleges in England, and for ensuring accountability and promoting good practice. The money is received in the form of a grant which comes with a list of priorities from Government at the end of each year. At present this grant totals just over £6bn. Its 2003 - 08 Strategic Plan identifies four core strategic aims: widening participation and fair access; enhancing excellence in learning and teaching; enhancing excellence in research; enhancing the contribution of HE to the economy and society. HEFCE has a Board and a regional network.

Key Fact: HEFCE is consulting on its 2006 - 11 Strategic Plan in the context of tuition fees for the first time. This Plan is due to be published in April 2006

Implementation Review Unit (IRU)

Launched in April 2003, the IRU is the “first ever independent scrutiny unit to cut red tape and reduce bureaucracy in schools.” Its remit comes from the signatories, both Government and Professional Associations, to the National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workloads. It has a panel of 12 practitioners and meets with Ministers twice a year to report on progress. It is funded by the DfES and is working closely to support the ‘New Relationship with Schools.’ Details are in the IRU’s Annual Report 2004/5.

Key Fact: The IRU has recently helped produce a ‘Reducing Bureaucracy’ handbook for Local Authorities complete with an 8 page Regulatory Impact Assessment Form

Innovation Unit

Established three years ago as part of the DfES, this is a small unit of educationalists dedicated to encouraging and supporting innovation in school education. Currently focusing on three themes: workforce reform and higher level teaching strategies; leadership of School Federations, and the ‘SMART’ use of resources, its website contains a number of innovative projects that it is currently supporting. Much of its work stems from the ‘Power to Innovate’ mechanism issued under Section 6 of the Education Act 2002 which enables the Secretary of State to grant exemptions for schools and Authorities that wish to develop innovative practice.

Key Fact: The Unit is currently commissioning a series of ‘next practice’ projects aimed at moving best practice on to a higher level

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

A small organisation, reconfigured three years ago, the JCQ provides the focal point for the dissemination of data and the development of common procedures and policies for the major Awarding Bodies across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Apart from publishing collated ‘awarding’ figures from members, the JCQ also acts on their behalf in issuing analysis and insights into the figures along with common policies and procedures for the conduct of exams.

Key Fact: Each year, JCQ collates the collective results for more than 26m exam scripts and items of coursework

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

Established in 2001, the LSC is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16 year olds in England outside HE. Operating through a central office and 47 local offices, the LSC also now has a regional operational tier. The current Government grant to the LSC for the provision of post 16 learning is £9.3bn linked to six priorities: making learning truly demand led; ensuring appropriate opportunities for 14 - 19 learning; transforming FE; strengthening the role of the LSC in economic development; strengthening the LSC’s regional capacity; improving the skills of public sector workers. The LSC has a National Council and two Statutory Committees and works closely with Government and a number of other Government funded bodies.

Key Fact: *The LSC has recently put forward a programme of rationalisation and modernisation as it embarks on an 'agenda for change' programme*

Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)

Originally the Further Education Development Agency and before that the Further Education Unit, LSDA was launched with a new remit and focus in November 2000. Over the last five years, LSDA has played a leading role in research, policy direction and support for the whole learning and skills sector. It works across the UK and has a Board and regional teams. Much of its activity can be seen in its various reports and publications including the regular Briefing Newsletter.

Key Fact: *From 1 April 2006, the LSDA will evolve into two separate organisations. Policy and strategic work will develop into the Quality Improvement Agency, existing programmes, research, training and consultancy will continue under the Learning and Skills Network (LSN)*

Local Authorities/ Local Children's Services

In 2004 the Children's Act was passed, the Government launched a 10 year strategy for local government and the New Relationship with Schools was identified; each is having considerable impact on Local Authorities. The Children's Act places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to produce 'a single, strategic, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people' enshrined in section 17 of the Act as The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP.) This will subsume the LEA Education Plans (EDPs) and should be ready by April 2006. The Act places other duties on Authorities such as the creation of Children's Trusts by 2008, the creation of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and the appointment of Directors and Lead Members for Children's Services. The DfES has appointed Directors for Children and Learners (DCLs) in a number of the regional Government Offices and is advertising for up to 30 regionally based Children's Services Advisers (CSAs) from April 2006. The 10 year strategy covers four broad themes: leadership; citizen engagement; service delivery; relations between central, regional and local government while The New Relationship with Schools aims to give them more autonomy to determine their own improvement priorities.

Key Fact: *The driving force behind the proposed integration of children's services under Local Authorities is the five 'wellbeing' outcomes for children defined in the 'Every Child Matters' Green Paper as be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well being*

Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

LAAs are 'voluntary, three year agreements between central government, local authorities and their partners,' intended to ensure national outcomes are delivered through local priorities and backed by a single funding pot. LAAs were identified in the Government's 10 year Vision for Local Government launched in 2004 and have been piloted in twenty authorities since April 2005.

Key Fact: *A further 66 Authorities in England will pilot LAAs from April 2006 with a full national roll out set for 2007*

National College for School Leadership (NCSL)

First announced by Tony Blair in October 1998 and launched in November 2000, the NCSL is responsible for developing and sharing best practice in school leadership and management practice. It has 3 core areas of activity: leadership development including the well known National Professional Qualification for Headship; research, development and online learning; and networks and information. The College has a leadership team, a governing council and is revising its Corporate Plan.

Key Fact: Following the completion of an End - to End Review in 2004, the NCSL was given a revised set of priorities by Ruth Kelly in December 2004. Included in this was an emphasis on middle leaders, new and aspiring head teachers, school bursars and leadership working across children's services

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

Founded in 1921, NIACE is a non governmental organisation working across England and Wales to promote the interests of adult learners and potential learners. Its objectives include increasing the total number of adults participating in formal and informal learning, particularly those who may have had limited opportunities in the past; ensuring that the quality of learning is of the highest quality; and influencing decision makers responsible for policies which affect adult learning. It is a membership organisation with some 500 corporate members and works closely with related bodies and agencies. It carries out a number of projects and research and produces Papers, Reports and Updates on the field of adult learning. It is a Registered Charity and Limited by Guarantee.

Key Fact: This year, NIACE has been sponsoring a major Committee of Enquiry into adult learning in FE. This Report will be presented to the Minister for Further education in mid October 2005

Office for Fair Access (OFFA)

Established under the Higher Education Act 2004, OFFA is an independent, non departmental public body. It was set up to ensure that the introduction of higher tuition fees has no detrimental effect on widening participation. From 2006, HE providers can charge variable fees up to £3,000 pa but only if they submit an access agreement showing how they will safeguard and promote fair access through bursaries and other outreach work. OFFA is responsible for monitoring and approving these access agreements and for promoting fair access.

Key Fact: The submission date for access agreements for 2007/8 has been extended from Sept 2005 to 31 March 2006

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

Established in 1992 to undertake inspections of schools in England, Ofsted has gradually extended its remit. In 2001, it gained responsibility for inspecting all 16 - 19 education and for the inspection and regulation of early years childcare, including childminders, while this year it was announced that children's services inspection functions would transfer to Ofsted, and, pending consultation, those of the Adult Learning Inspectorate as well. Apart from inspections, Ofsted undertakes

a full programme of subject and thematic reviews which form the basis of national reports to Government. Details on these and other activities can be found in Ofsted's Departmental Report and the Chief Inspector's Annual Report. As part of its commitment to meet annual efficiency savings of some £40m by 2007/8, Ofsted is restructuring into three central and three regional divisions.

Key Fact: From Sept 2005, and following the Education Act 2005 which was passed in April, Ofsted is introducing a new inspection regime of shorter, sharper, less notice and more focused inspections led by HMI and based around a school's own self evaluation

Qualification and Curriculum Authority

Established under the Education Act 1997 as a non departmental public body, QCA 'maintains and develops the national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and exams; and accredits and monitors qualifications.' It works closely with other regulators in Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA,) Wales, the Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACCAC) and N.Ireland, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA.) It also works closely with a wide range of other bodies and oversees in particular the accreditation of qualifications into the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and the work of the 100+ Awarding Bodies. It is funded by Government and accountable to a Board appointed by the Secretary of State. Its current Annual Report identifies six key result areas for 2005 - 08.

Key Fact: Since April 2004, QCA has also been responsible for the National Assessment Agency (NAA) and through that, the programme for modernising the testing and examination system

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

Established in 1997, the QAA provides 'an integrated quality assurance service for UK HE' along with advice and guidance on related matters to Government and other bodies. It is an independent body, funded by subscriptions from providers of HE and through contracts with HE funding bodies. While each HE institution is responsible for ensuring the quality of their provision, QAA monitors and reviews this through a process of institutional review in universities and academic review in those FE colleges where HE is offered. Full details are provided in the Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in HE. QAA's latest Strategic Plan for 2006 - 2011 is due to be published early in 2006.

Key Fact: Earlier this year, QAA linked up with UCAS to offer for the first time a guide about academic standards and quality for applicants to HE

Quality Improvement Agency (QIA)

First announced by Charles Clarke in June 2004 and due to be launched in April 2006, the QIA is being set up to 'simplify and bring coherence to quality improvement' in the learning and skills sector. Intended to be a small strategic body, largely staffed through transfers from the LSDA, the QIA will be an executive non dept public funded body, funded largely through the DfES. It will commission quality improvement materials and services, promote and support good practice,

set up regional networks, provide an authoritative voice on quality standards and expectations and generally “provide a national focus” for quality improvement. A further Progress Report on the QIA is due in November 2005.

Key Fact: The QIA is leading on the development of a three year Quality Improvement Strategy for post 16 learning outside HE; this will be published in June 2006

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

RDAs were established under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 and set up in eight English regions in April 1999 and in London in July 2000. Under the Act they have five statutory purposes: to further economic development and regeneration; to promote business efficiency; to promote employment; to enhance skills relevant to employment; to contribute to sustainable development. The Act further requires RDAs to develop a strategic vision for their region which they provide in the form of a Regional Economic Strategy (RES.) : RDAs took on the management of Business Link services in April 2005. Since 2002, RDAs have been funded through a Single Programme budget, known as a ‘Single Pot’ but with contributions from six Government Depts.

Key Fact: Since April 2005, RDAs have been working to a new ‘Tasking Framework’ rather than a set of defined milestones. Under the Framework, RDAs have to show in their Corporate Plan 2005 - 08 how they will address priorities identified in their Regional Economic Strategy and contribute to the delivery of Public Service targets

Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs)

First proposed under the 2003 Skills Strategy for each of the English regions, RSPs are co ordinating bodies brought together by RDAs. Their remit is to “agree how the delivery of adult skills, workforce development, business support and labour market services” can be brought together to support Regional Economic Strategies. Bodies in the Partnerships include the RDA, local LSC, Jobcentre Plus, the Small Business Service and the Skills for Business Network. Working principles were set out in joint concordat agreed in July 2004 and due to reviewed in 2006.

Key Fact: RSPs are reporting back this autumn on 4 regional delivery issues; brokerage services, 14 - 19, integration with HE and Level 3

Skills for Business Network

This comprises the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs.) Set up in April 2002, the SSDA is a non departmental public body, a Company limited by Guarantee with a remit to fund, support and champion the network of SSCs. SSCs are independent, UK wide organisations developed by, and representing the interest of, employer groups in industry or business sectors. They are licensed by Government and supported by public funds to provide leadership and strategic action on their particular sector’s skills and business needs. Twenty three are in place and the last two are under development. The March 2005 Skills Strategy set the Network five performance targets for up to 2008: to reduce skills gaps by 30% and skills shortages by 30%; for 10% more public/private organisations to have introduced higher performance work practices; for 10% more employees to

receive job related training; for 75% of employers to be aware of the Network; for all SSCs to have Sector Skill Agreements:

Key Fact: SSCs have been given a key role in helping design 14 - 19 specialised Diplomas, post 19 vocational qualifications and in helping to draft Sector Qualification Strategies as the Government seeks to respond to the concerns and skill needs of employers

Skills for Life Strategy Unit

Formerly the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit and now known as the Skills for Life Strategy Unit, this Unit is responsible for implementing the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy in England. It sits within the DfES but works across relevant Whitehall Depts and is overseen by a Cabinet Committee. It leads developments on national standards and qualifications for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, raising teaching standards in literacy and numeracy and for co ordinating and promoting activities in the field through its regional presence. It works closely with a number of Skills for Life partners including local LSCs, the Basic Skills Agency, NIACE, learndirect and the Union Learning Fund.

Key Fact: The Government has invested £1.6bn from April 2003 - March 2006 with the target of helping 1.5m adults improve their skills by 2007.

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)

Formerly established as the City Technology Colleges Trust in 1987 and from 2003, the Specialist Schools Trust, the Trust has recently extended its remit to include academies as well. Currently therefore, the Trust represents and supports 2,400 specialist schools and 27 academies and is working towards the target set in the Five Year Strategy that by 2008 all secondary schools will be either specialist or academy. Part funded by the DfES, the Trust has five Directorates and is particularly noted for its support network, one of the largest support and professional development networks for schools in the world.

Key Fact: At the end of Sept 2005, the Trust extended its remit to include academies and appointed Lord Levy, who has played a key role in fund raising for academies, to become its President

The Standards Unit

Started in November 2002 and formally launched in March 2003 to support themes two and three in the 'Success for All' Strategy, the Standards Unit sits within the DfES and has particular responsibility for improving teaching and learning across the learning and skills sector. The backbone of its work is the development of Teaching and Learning Frameworks, a series of learner resources and teacher guidance materials for key curriculum areas. Four frameworks were launched in September 2004 and a further four in September 2005 covering land based, maths, health and social care, and ICT. In each case the Framework is developed and trialled with practitioners and supported through regional networks and accredited Subject Learning Coaches. Four more frameworks will be launched in September 2006.

Key Fact: *The Unit is aiming by 2007/8 to have improved teaching and learning inspection grades in priority curriculum areas and to have reached 105,000 teachers and 2m learners*

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)

Formerly the TTA, the TDA is an executive non departmental public body of the DfES. It is responsible for the training and development of the whole school workforce and, from 2006, for workforce remodelling. Almost 1m people work in schools in England, 430,000 as teachers and the rest as other staff and the TDA's revised role reflects this widening of the school workforce. The TDA has 4 strategic aims, agreed by Ministers and set out in its 2005 - 08 Corporate Plan. These are to ensure schools have an adequate supply of newly qualified teachers; to help schools develop the effectiveness of their support staff; to enable schools to develop the effectiveness and skills of their teachers; and to support schools in the training and development of their workforce. The TDA produces an online newsletter and has a revamped website.

Key Fact: *The TDA was granted an expanded remit in March 2004, adopted a new name on 1 Sept 2005 and publishes a 3 year strategy early in 2006*

The Treasury

The Treasury plays a central role in delivering the long term economic goals of the country. These are maintaining economic stability; increasing employment opportunities for all; creating a fairer society; and investing to build world class services. As such, and under this Chancellor in particular, the Treasury has taken a close interest in the world of education and training. This interest has stretched to include skills and enterprise, science and manufacturing, business links and regional regeneration. The Chancellor has commissioned a number of significant Reports in these and other areas over recent years many of which are reported on in the annual Budget and Pre Budget Reports. The next eagerly awaited Report is on UK Skills. The Treasury also monitors how Whitehall Depts are performing against Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets.

Key Fact: *The Chancellor announced in July 2005 that the next spending review, originally due for 2006, would be shifted back to 2007 and become part of a major Comprehensive Spending Review*

UCAS

UCAS is a charitable organisation that provides application and support services for entry to UK universities and colleges. Funded by fees from 325 member institutions, UCAS also provide data analysis and interpretation, and guidance and support information on UK university entrance trends and developments. Some 516,714 applicants were processed for 2005 entry, increasingly using the online Track service to track progress. UCAS also manages the summer Clearing system and the spring UCAS Extra system and is responsible for the UCAS tariff system which apportions points and confirms the comparability between different types of qualifications for entry to HE. UCAS's Corporate Plan 2004 - 07 identifies four strategic objectives.

Key Fact: *UCAS is aiming to have migrated to online applications for 2006 entry*

University for Industry (Ufi)

Established in 1998, Ufi Ltd advertises itself as “the largest Government supported e- learning organisation in the world” offering ‘anytime, anyplace learning’ for individual adults and businesses.’ Ufi services are offered through a national network of over 2,000 learndirect centres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and 6,000 online centres in England. Since 2000, 1.3m learners have enrolled on some 3m learndirect courses, 75% being online. Centres can be found in shopping areas, sports and community halls and High Streets. Ufi also runs a Government funded national learning advice service. Its Strategic Plan 2005 - 2010 contains 3 objectives; deliver progression and achievement to contribute fully to national public priorities; sell training to smaller employers; provide impartial advice on all learning and career opportunities.

Key Fact: *Ufi received a revised remit from the Secretary of State in December 2003 with responsibility for managing and funding the Ufi being transferred from the DfES to the LSC in August 2004*

Universities UK

Founded in 1918 and formerly the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP,) Universities UK promotes and supports the work of UK universities and acts a voice for Vice Chancellors. Its Corporate Plan 2004 - 07 lists five objectives: influencing stakeholders; providing informed policy and analysis; co ordinating sector agencies; providing member exclusive services; enhancing its own operational efficiency and effectiveness. UUK is a company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status, it has a Board and is supported through members ‘ subscriptions. A key role is played by its various Strategy Groups which work with other Government agencies and other bodies to help promote universities’ interests and capacity.

Key Fact: *Professor Drummond Bone has recently taken over the Presidency of UUK from Professor Ivor Crewe*

University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC)

Established in 1999, UVAC is a not for profit organisation that champions vocational learning from the further and higher education sector. Currently with some 100 members, UVAC has a Board and works with a number of Government bodies and corporate members to promote higher vocational learning.

Key Fact: *UVAC has recently set up NVC, a national vocational award service to provide accreditation, support and development for public institutions and private organisations without degree awarding powers*