Statement of Priorities – Key Messages

Young People

- We will continue to build upon our major successes in supporting increased levels of participation in education and training by 16 – 18 year olds well above planned volumes. We are on track to meet the stretching targets for participation in 2015.
- We are also reducing year on year the numbers of young people not in education employment or training.
- Key actions in support of our work to increase participation include the extended guarantee of a learning place to 16 and 17 year olds, the review and development of the learner offer, and curriculum development like rolling out Diplomas.
- Work with both Departments to develop the Framework for Excellence to support a common performance management system across all post-16 providers, so that it can be piloted for use in school sixth forms by September 2009
- The new Foundation Learning Tier covering all provision below Level 2 and the increased availability of high quality local provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is designed to reach out to young people facing multiple disadvantages.
- Focus on strong local 14 – 19 partnerships and consortia involving schools, colleges, training providers and employers to help young people to navigate their way through the system ensuring they can access a wide range of opportunities.

Employment and skills

We have 4 key pillars to support our plans on employment and skills:

1. Train to Gain

By 2010 we will be investing £1 billion per annum in Train to Gain.

- Colleges – and training providers - are key to ensuring that small businesses take advantage of recently announced measures for small and medium sized businesses that will add additional flexibility and enable more workers to access training.
- The changes include funding for modules of qualifications; flexibility in the funding available for those who already have a level 2, and more funding for level 3. As well as an extension of the successful leadership and management training programme to include small businesses with between 5 and 10 workers.
- For businesses of all sizes - the service will increasingly be geared towards the needs of employers through targeting key qualifications in sectors through sector qualification strategies and the sector compacts agreed with Sector Skills Councils which will introduce a range of flexibilities to ensure that continue to be responsive to needs.

2. Integrating Employment and Skills / Skills for Work

- Following the policy set out in Work Skills published in June 2008 we will work with Job Centre Plus to jointly commission provision for people seeking to move into employment.
- In particular we are trialling new approaches in three regions that will ensure that we link pre-employment training into in-work provision such as Train to Gain, supporting progression, sustainable employment and career development.
• For the first time, a new joint PSA target has been set between DWP and DIUS to move more people into sustainable employment. This is a further incentive for us to work closely with Jobcentre Plus, through initiatives such as LEPs, to join up our employment and skills services so we can successfully support people as they enter employment.

• The flexibility of programmes such as the Foundation Learning Tier and learning funded through the European Social Fund is essential to getting to those who are most excluded.

3. Adult Learner Responsive Provision / Developmental Learning
• A new adult advancement and careers service will be introduced in 2009. This will offer universal high-quality information and advice on skills and careers. This service will provide support for the delivery of Skills Accounts which will be rolled out across England in 2010.

• Progression Pathways within the Foundation Learning Tier will become part of mainstream provision and we will ensure that each area has an adequate offer of progression pathway provision.

• The wider value and importance of learning for its own intrinsic value is recognised and we will maintain in 2009/10 the annual budget available to support Adult Safeguarded Learning.

4. Apprenticeships / National Apprenticeships Service
The new National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) will operate across England from April 2009. Housed within the LSC (and then the SFA) it will be responsible for delivering the increase in participation in Apprenticeships from 250,000 to 400,000 a year, the delivery of the Leitch target of one in five young people participating in an Apprenticeship, and the entitlement for all suitably qualified young people of an Apprenticeships place.

5. System Reform
These are our priorities.

• Sectors and Specialisation. The LSC will sponsor a range of programmes to support increased specialised training provision, including National Skills Academies, the Training Quality Standard, capital funding to support specialisation and innovation, and Innovation Pathfinders.

• Capital. The LSC will invest £2.3 billion to 2011 to support modernisation, reorganisation and the creation of world class facilities. Some capital funds will be opened up to private sector providers.

• Framework for Excellence (FfE) / Quality. We will secure continuous improvement across the sector through implementation of FfE across the sector. Revised Minimum Levels of Performance will be applied. We will work with local authorities to apply new approaches to quality assuring provision in school sixth forms.

• Vocational Qualification System Reform. Sector Qualifications Strategies will be defined by Sector Skills Councils, identifying from August 2009 those qualifications that are priorities for public funding.

• Simplification. We will implement a range of measures - including single contracts and fairer funding systems - in pursuit of simplifying systems and processes in the interests of learners and businesses.

• Self Regulation. The LSC will support self regulation in and by the sector.

• We will explore through pilots the potential for greater Flexibility in Target Delivery and Multi Year Budgets.