The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has launched a new advisory group to focus on the Council’s work with the voluntary and community sector (VCS). The LSC Advisory Group will bring together experts from across the VCS to advise the LSC on policy and help strengthen the LSC’s links with VCS partners. It will ensure that the LSC is implementing its ‘Working Together Strategy’, produced in 2004. Ten people working across the VCS have been appointed and will be members of the advisory group for three years.

Chairman of the LSC, Chris Banks said:

“I am delighted to announce the formation of the LSC Advisory Group. Its ten members, who have wide ranging experience, and are all experts in their fields, will provide valuable advice and guidance to the LSC on the way that we work with voluntary sector organisations.

“We are keen to engage more and work better in partnership with charities and other voluntary organisations that do such vital work in helping people in need. The group’s guidance will help us to work in partnership with these organisations to provide education and training opportunities to those who need them most”.

Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education said:

“I very much welcome the formation of the LSC Advisory Group to advise and guide the Learning and Skills Council in its relationship with voluntary and community sector providers. It is a clear acknowledgement of their vital role in helping us to deliver our learning and skills priorities and build prosperity with social justice. Third Sector providers can reach right to the heart of our communities and engage with the most disadvantaged individuals and families. It is because we recognise the sector’s particular commitment and skills that we are determined to increase its involvement in public service delivery. This is why we have announced a new action plan - Partnership in Public Services - which will not only provide important opportunities for the sector to work more
closely with the Government and its partners, but also strengthen its capacity to contribute to the way public services are designed, delivered and improved."

Shirley Cramer, Chief Executive of Dyslexia Action who will Chair the group said:

“The formation of this advisory group signals the LSC’s serious commitment to working more closely with the voluntary sector and I am thrilled to have been invited to chair it. We have a great team on board and will be working on improving the links between the sector and the LSC as well as encouraging better partnership working.”

The LSC recently ran a seminar organised by the Centre for Public Policy Seminars on ‘Realising the potential of the third sector for learning, skills and employment’. The seminar was attended by a wide range of groups interested in this debate including the Skills Minister Phil Hope MP. It examined the contribution of the Third Sector (voluntary and community organisations, social enterprise, credit unions, faith groups and others) to the economy, the contributions the sector can make to learning, skills and employment, and the most effective ways that it can be financed in order to realise its potential. The outcomes of the seminar will be used by the LSC moving forward to strengthen the work it does with the VCS.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

LSC Advisory Group – working together with the Voluntary and Community Sector
LSC Advisory Group will meet quarterly to advise the LSC on working in partnership with the VCS and implementing its Working Together Strategy (2004). The group works under the Equality and Diversity Committee and is part of the LSC’s National Council. It will be chaired by Shirley Cramer and will meet quarterly. The group’s first meeting took place on the 15th November at the LSC’s Grosvenor Gardens Offices in London.

Membership

The 10 members of the LSC Advisory Group are:

Shirley Cramer (Chair)
Chief Executive of Dyslexia Action, she serves on the National Board of the LSC and chairs the Equality and Diversity Committee.
John Harris
Workforce and Skills Development Co-ordinator at the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum, experience working in housing sector, mental health services and in child care.

Robin Hodgkinson
Training Manager for Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO) for ten years previously worked in local government and education sector.

Tim Ward
Works for Learning Curve, a voluntary learning consortia and has over twenty-five years experience in learning and training.

Andy Shields
Director of Work and Learning at St Mungo’s, he has worked with homeless people since the mid-1980’s in a variety of roles.

Deborah Dale
Director of Development at VC Train (South Yorkshire Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium), has worked in adult education for 20 years.

Jane Slowey
Chief Executive of Foyer since September 2004, and has been Vice Chair of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations since 2003.

Richard Williams
Chief Executive of Rathbone since July 2004 has worked in Further Education for 25 years.

Dr Cheryl Turner
Development Officer (VCS) NIACE, twenty years of teaching and research experience.

Lynne Bryan
Learning and Development Manager, the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, (NAVCA).

[For a picture of the group and further biographical information, contact the LSC Press Office]

The aim of the strategy is to enhance partnership working between the LSC and VCS allow for greater engagement between the two, so that both sides benefit. Through its agenda for change programme, the LSC is encouraging colleges to increase their partnerships with the VCS. To read the strategy in full, go to:

For further news on the LSC’s work with the VCS, please go to:
http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Whatwedo/Employer/VCS.htm
National Council
The National Council is the top-tier of policy and decision-making in the LSC, responsible for the overall strategy of the organisation. It is supported by the Adult Learning Committee (ALC), Young People’s Learning Committee (YPLC) and Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC). The new Working Together Advisory Group will work to the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Learning and Skills Council:
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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