

NEWS RELEASE



Date - 16th April 2007

Ref. 2007022 Skills Review

Region's approach to Post-16 Education, Training and Skills

With the largest proportion of people without any qualifications in England and only a small proportion of its workforce with qualifications at NVQ level 3 or above, the question is asked why is the West Midlands falling behind on work force skills?

This is the subject of a Strategic Review, being carried out by the West Midlands Regional Assembly in conjunction with the Region's Learning and Skills Council, which is looking into the Region's approach to Post-16 education, training and skills.

Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of the Regional Assembly said: "Improving workforce skills and in turn the performance of our businesses is critical to the future success of the West Midlands. As well as providing a clearer picture of the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations and structures involved in delivering work-related education and training, this Review should give us a better understanding of how skills issues impact across the Region in terms of both policies and strategies and geography."

David Cragg, Regional Director for the Learning and Skills Council in the West Midlands, added: "This Strategic Review comes at just the right time, giving us a detailed snapshot of where we are, how well organisations are working together and what we need to do to deliver the employer-led training that will serve the Regional economy's needs."

“It is increasingly recognised that providing opportunities to gain skills and qualifications to Level 3 is key to recruitment and retention of employees, thus maximising the potential profitability of businesses.

“This Review will look carefully at the various Level 3 routes and the outcome of that process will inform future policy as to how we can plan and fund programmes that precisely meet the particular skills needs of the regional economy.”

As part of the Review process individuals and organisations interested in the skills agenda are being asked to get involved and submit evidence by 31st May 2007. This can be done either by putting together a written submission or giving verbal evidence at one of the panel hearings or discussion events. To find out more, please contact Dagmar Waller at the Regional Assembly on 0121 678 1054.

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For further information contact:

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Notes to editors:

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.

5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk