

NEWS RELEASE

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WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ENDORSES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POST-16 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS

WEST Midlands Regional Assembly members have endorsed recommendations made in a review examining post-16 education, training and skills.

This review was requested by the Regional Learning Skills Council (LSC) and carried out by the Assembly looking at how skills, education and training could be improved within the Region.

A critical recommendation in the review was that current regional organisations involved in skills should concentrate efforts on achieving the aims of the Skills Actions Plan.

Cllr David S Smith, chairman of the Assembly said: "The review emphasised that the action plan was a significant step forward in delivering further improvement of skills within the West Midlands. It is essential that changing governance arrangements in the Region do not result in a failure to take this forward."

Among the 13 recommendations endorsed by the Assembly include; the need for the government to take the lead in ensuring that by 2013 diplomas are not seen as a second class level of attainment; employer organisations should encourage their members to develop their own apprenticeship schemes and to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to young people and colleges and training providers in rural areas should develop closer partnership links with universities to enable the provision of higher level technical qualifications.

The Review found the Region has already significantly improved its performance in a number of key areas such as the proportion of people completing apprenticeships and the number of employers participating in the Train to Gain scheme. Overall the West Midlands Region has risen in the national league table.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. To read the full report of the review and the 13 recommendations made, visit www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?186=86.
2. The Regional Skills Action Plan was produced at the request of Liam Byrne MP, Minister of State for Borders and Immigration and Minister for the West Midlands.
3. West Midlands Regional Assembly members met on Wednesday 23 April, where the review was approved.
4. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
9. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk

For any additional information please contact Jay Rana, press officer on 0121245 0181 or j.rana@wmra.gov.uk

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