

NEWS RELEASE

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

A Strategic Review is being carried out by the West Midlands Regional Assembly on behalf of the Region's Learning Skills Council. The Strategic Review is examining the Region's approach to post 16-education, training and skills.

The review panel has already held a series of meetings and received representations on the provision of skills and training across the Region. The timescale for the review has recently been extended to allow the evidence which has been received to be reviewed by an expert advisor to the panel. The panel is now anticipating publishing its report in April 2008.

Since the review commenced the government has announced a number of significant changes in national and local policies and structures relating to skills. These changes have included the Sub-National Review and planned changes in the way skills provision is funded.

The panel would be particularly interested in receiving representations from individuals and organisations on how the changes in national and local policies and structures will have an impact of skills provision within the Region.

The West Midlands has the largest proportion of people without any qualifications in England and only a small proportion of its workforce with qualifications at NVQ Level Three or above.

Cllr Jo Jones, Chairman of the Review Panel said: "Improving workforce skills and 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."

To find out more, please contact John Wright at the Regional Assembly on 0121 678 1054 or email j.wright@wmra.gov.uk

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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