

Functional Skills Support Programme

July 2009

Functional Skills Support Programme monthly bulletin



Introduction

Welcome to the Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP) bulletin. This will be published on a monthly basis, with the aim of providing you with key programme news and developments for the FSSP in the post-16 sector.

We hope you find this useful, and if you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to us, on the contact details at the bottom of the bulletin.

Contents

- Introduction
- What is FSSP?
- Accessing Support
- FSSP is Changing
- Key Events
- FSSP Developments
- The Future...
- Want to Know More?

What is FSSP?

The FSSP is designed to prepare practitioners, leaders and managers to deliver functional skills, from developing applied learning to adopting a whole-organisational approach to functional skills implementation. The programme has been designed and is delivered in partnership with National Strategies (NS). It comprises the development and publication of support materials, training materials, customised training and network support. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has charged the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and the National Strategies (NS) with leading work to design and develop a programme of support for the introduction of functional skills. LSIS has commissioned a contractor to deliver the strands of the programme for the post-16 sector while NS are supporting delivery in schools.

The FSSP is available free of charge to all schools and post-16 education and training centres and supports CPD. It covers colleges and independent training organisations, as well as secure estate schools and adult and community settings.

FSSP is changing

The FSSP is undergoing a transformation, with a view to launching a new, enhanced programme in September 2009. Improvements will include:

- A regionally tailored and structured approach to delivering support to practitioners/providers built on regional needs and networks
- Increased use of current sector practitioners to deliver support
- Bespoke training, which is sector driven and responds directly to individual needs
- Improved support to build networks and facilitate knowledge sharing
- The establishment of web-based communities of practice
- Developing projects which will support practitioners to develop solutions to functional skills challenges that can be shared with the sector
- Increased support of leaders and managers
- A new functional skills website and helpline (see the final section for details)

Key FSSP events

Induction events

We have run a series of induction events, designed to brief existing and new FSSP trainers on changes to the programme, and induct potential new trainers.

The induction events have been a resounding success. Over 100 trainers and practitioners attended the events and provided a wealth of experience which will help shape the new FSSP in future.

Regional network events

Regional network events are currently being run across the country. These are free half day sessions, which can be booked for the morning or afternoon. They provide practitioners and managers with the latest information available on functional skills and the national support programme for the final year of the pilot, along with an opportunity for practitioner networking and planning.

Event dates that have been run include:

Regional Network Events	Dates	Location
Northern		
North East	06/07/2009	Durham University
North West	13/07/2009	Leyland Hotel near Preston
Yorkshire and Humberside	07/07/2009	Huddersfield University
Central		
Eastern	10/07/2009	Cambridge Regional College
East Midlands	16/07/2009	EMFEC (Nottingham)

West Midlands	07/07/2009	Solihull College
Southern		
South West	14/07/2009	Exeter University
South East	07/07/2009	Reading University
Greater London	09/07/2009	Kings College London

If you have not already registered and would like to attend an event, please contact your region by referring to the regional contact details in the last section of this bulletin.

FSSP Developments

This section contains a collection of FSSP-related developments and news stories.

Launch of consultation on functional skills qualifications criteria

The QCA has launched a public consultation on the draft criteria for the functional skills qualification. QCA wants to hear from everyone with an interest in functional skills, from employers to schools and FE colleges and from sector skills councils to universities. Responses should reach QCA by 31st August

[See the functional skills section of the QCA website](#)

Year 3 Functional Skills Pilot information

Over 2,000 centres are already on board the QCA's functional skills pilot and they are now looking for centres wishing to join year 3 of the pilot. To join the pilot, email functionalskills@qca.org.uk.

Functional skills and GCSEs

On Thursday 2nd April, the new criteria for English subjects, mathematics and ICT GCSEs were published.

[See the functional skills section of the QCA website](#)

New functional skills case study booklet published

The QCA have published a new functional skills case study booklet which provides an overview of functional skills and contains 10 case studies which illustrate how different education institutions are delivering functional skills within the pilot.

Go to ["Delivering functional skills - lessons learnt from the pilot"](#).

The future...

A number of key activities are planned for the FSSP over the coming weeks:

- A comprehensive review and development of training materials
- Beginning the process of identifying further development projects
- The development of a new FSSP website
- The continued recruitment of new trainers

We will keep you updated on developments and our progress in transforming the programme.

Accessing support

Support can be accessed through our helpline number or e-mail address, highlighted in the section below.

Want to know more?

Details of all the FSSP support can be found under “Programmes” on the LSIS Excellence Gateway website:

<http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=functionalskills>

Helpline number

0844 335 2938 (Open from 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, excluding Public Holidays)

The helpline is available to answer functional skills queries, including requests for information, training enquiries and general enquiries.

Helpline Email address: **helpline@fssupport.org**

You can reach us on either the Helpline number/e-mail or by emailing a regional team member, details of which are listed below.

Regional team contact details

Region	Regional team contact email address
North East	northeast@fssupport.org
North West	northwest@fssupport.org
Yorkshire & Humber	yorkshireandhumberside@fssupport.org
East Midlands	eastmidlands@fssupport.org
West Midlands	westmidlands@fssupport.org
Eastern	eastern@fssupport.org
London	london@fssupport.org
South East	southeast@fssupport.org
South West	southwest@fssupport.org

Trainers

If you are interested in becoming a trainer please email **info@fssupport.org**