

LANTRA

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Recruitment, Image &
Careers: Working in
Partnership to Raise
Awareness, Promote
Opportunity & Engage
Business

November 2010

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Registered Office:

Lantra, Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry, Warwickshire CV8 2LG

Registered no: 2823181 • Charity no: 1022991

Copies of this report are available from Lantra:

Web: www.lantra.co.uk

Tel: 0845 707 8007

Fax: 024 76 696732

E-mail: connect@lantra.co.uk

Write: Lantra, Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry, Warwickshire CV8 2LG

**Recruitment, Image and Careers:
Working in partnership to raise awareness,
promote opportunity and engage business**
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1 Introduction

This strategy document has been developed from research carried out with key partners within the sector, as part of the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) throughout 2005/06; work carried out by the Skills for Business Network (SfBN) on the provision of a Sector Skills 'Core Offer'¹; and Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and skill strategy developments within the UK. It builds on the previous Recruitment, Image and Careers strategy² and defines the strategic aims and objectives of this key programme of work for the sector and for Lantra as the Sector Skills Council (SSC).

The identification of key themes and activity for Lantra, its constituent businesses and key partners at local, regional and national level, provides the opportunity for a strategic approach to be developed, which will address the issues, therefore ensuring an adequate supply of new entrants to the workforce, who are equipped with the skills and competencies required by businesses in the sector.

1 SSC Information, Advice and Guidance project 2007/08: recommendations for the careers information service core offer by Sector Skills Councils; *D. Luddy 2007*

2 Recruitment, Image and Careers Strategy; *Lantra October 2003*

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2 Aim and objective

Lantra aims to:

- encourage people with the right skills, knowledge and attributes to enter and progress within the sector through an effective strategy of recruitment and careers information, advice and guidance that raises the profile of the sector.

To address this priority area for the sector, Lantra has developed a specific, strategic objective for recruitment, image and careers.

This states that Lantra will:

- promote entry routes and progression opportunities for a career in the environmental and land-based sector.

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3 Key activities

From the strategic aim and objective the following key activities have been identified and will be developed through Lantra's Careers Information Service (CIS) delivery model, business planning and work programmes and through the individual Industry Action Plans and partnerships:

- Promote effectively careers opportunities to the identified target audiences
- Engage, influence and inform governments, agencies and partners
- Provide information, and limited advice and guidance through a range of media
- Influence sector information produced by external sources
- Promote equality and impartiality in all sector careers information provision.

The context for these key activities is described in the following section.

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4 Context

Skills and labour market information³ and the subsequently developed Industry Action Plans demonstrate that all industries within the sector are facing some form of recruitment and retention difficulty. Many of the plans have identified the need to conduct research concentrating on the most appropriate mechanisms for reaching different target groups and for looking at occupational and career pathways and progression.

The issues surrounding the image of the industry/sector come through very strongly. The emphasis in the Industry Action Plans on the need to ensure that the appropriate advice and guidance is given to people, at whatever stage of their career they may be is clear, as is the need for more liaison, contact and engagement with providers of such careers information, advice, guidance and education.

With research showing that many students consider the land-based sector to represent poorly paid manual outdoor labour, and to be low prestige employment, it is of no surprise that 86% say they would not consider a career in the sector⁴. Aligned to this situation is the changing demographic climate of the UK, where the actual numbers of school/college leavers are diminishing; thus the pool of potential new entrants to the workforce is much smaller. Labour market information (LMI) tells us that many new entrants and potential career changers are older than 25 or 35, and that 80% of the workforce of 2010 is already in employment.. With government policy in place to ensure that all young people will need to be in either education or training by 2013, the sector must be prepared to take the opportunity to influence curriculum development and the impartial provision of information, advice and guidance, therefore providing the opportunity for young people to make an informed choice as to their future career direction.

Particular attention will need to be paid to the key transition points (year 10 - subject choice; year 12 - education, training and employment decisions; years 13 and 14 - higher and further education choices, training and employment choices). Providing a breadth of opportunities and the development and recognition of new learning pathways (e.g. the new diploma in England and the land-based curriculum in Scotland), will be vital to the success of any initiative and to raising the profile of the sector.

³ Sector Skills Agreement; *Lantra 2005-06*

⁴ Careers in Land-Based Industries; *Lantra 1999*

Provision and promotion of the sector's opportunities for learning will be a key factor. The pathways will need to be contained within a clear, concise framework, which is transparent to students, parents, teachers and employers so that it can be easily understood. By implication, therefore, there is a natural overlap between recruitment and careers, maintaining and developing a learning infrastructure, and ensuring quality learning experiences for potential new entrants. This maps directly into Lantra's strategic objective to ensure access to, and availability of, learning and qualifications that provide skills development appropriate to changing business and individual requirements.

There is therefore a distinct need for employers to develop partnerships with schools, colleges, and private training providers to offer quality work placements and experiences to support curriculum development and work-based learning. This will provide sector industries and individual businesses to be viewed as potential careers of choice in a competitive employment market.

Young people look for inspiration and advice from a variety of potential influencers including parents, teachers, careers advisors, friends and employers, as well as using their perceptions of a subject and their own values and interests⁵. It is therefore imperative that any strategy takes into consideration the need to reach the various audiences from a number of different angles and through a range of media. In the case of parents, research suggests that quality of life is the most important factor for their child's choice of career, followed by personal fulfilment, career progression and helping others.

IAG provision in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales is based around an all age provision. However, in England the service is split between young people and adults. In respect of young people, the responsibility for commissioning IAG and the funding that goes with it, has devolved from the Connexions Service to local authorities, working through children's trusts, schools and colleges⁶. This makes the logistics of engaging the services complicated. However, the adult provision in England is in the process of being consolidated, with the present 47 nextstep services being reduced to 10 nationally. This will change further with the amalgamation with learndirect in 2010 and the creation of the Adult Advancement and Careers Service.

5 Prospects www.prospects.ac.uk

6 Youth Matters: Next steps; *DfES 2006*

With lifelong learning now firmly placed in the agendas of government departments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the sector's approach to recruitment and careers activity needs to incorporate all ages and all levels of achievement. With evidence suggesting that individuals who receive careers and learning guidance are more likely to progress in learning and employment⁷, with a high proportion of these improving their skills, it is clear that high quality IAG is vital to meet the government's ambitious targets to improve skill levels⁸. The involvement of SSCs in IAG is therefore seen as critical to challenging the skills shortages and changing people's perceptions of a sector. They provide a means to communicate the skills needs and qualification requirements directly to both individuals and intermediaries⁹.

The government's new focus on sustainable employment and progression comes at the same time as they attempt to raise the employment rate to 80%. To achieve this there will need to be a reduction in incapacity benefit claims by 1 million, as well as 300,000 lone parents and 1 million older people finding employment¹⁰. Success can only be achieved with the input of high quality labour market and occupational information, of which SSCs have been identified as being one of the main providers in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus and other partners¹¹. Further to this the expansion of the European Union and policies to increase diversity will provide new audiences and non-traditional groups to target.

Good quality Labour Market Information and intelligence (LMI) is a vital aspect in the provision of IAG. SSCs are ideally placed to provide sectoral LMI that is required to support the careers and employment services throughout the UK. As mentioned, this has been recognised in various government initiatives. For example, the Leitch implementation plan states, "Advice will be underpinned by high quality LMI and occupational information developed and maintained by SSCs, Jobcentre Plus and other partners"¹², whilst Skills for Scotland state, "we need high quality, robust and fully accessible labour market intelligence ...To underpin decision making and IAG services for employers and employees. We must build on using local and sectoral intelligence from a range of sources including the SSCs."¹³

However, two-thirds of practitioners do not find it easy to use and interpret LMI¹⁴. There is therefore a need to ensure that the information is interpreted on their behalf, not only through the provision of written information but also through CPD opportunities. LMI workshops have

7 Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our potential in the 21st Century - Inquiry into IAG Services in England; *Skills Commission 2008*

8 Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our potential in the 21st Century - Inquiry into IAG Services in England; *Skills Commission 2008*

9 Toolkit for developing an IAG model; *SSC IAG Network 2006*

10 In work, better off: next steps to full employment; *DWP 2007*

11 Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our potential in the 21st Century - Inquiry into IAG Services in England; *Skills Commission 2008*

12 World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch review of skills; *HMSO 2007*

13 Skills for Scotland: A lifelong skills strategy; *Scottish Government 2007*

14 SSC IAG Project: Bringing Industry and IAG Services Together final evaluation report; *Impact Research 2006*

in general been well received and have in many cases materially affected the quality of information (and potentially advice) given to clients. Workshops have also significantly altered some advisors' views and attitudes towards sectors they have learned about. With delegates cascading their learning on average to between 8 and 13 other work colleagues¹⁵, the utilisation of such events can be deemed to be a cost-effective way of disseminating information and understanding of the sector.

The SSC IAG Project was initiated to develop the systems and capacity of SSCs to deliver effective IAG services. This has evolved with the production of a core and network IAG offer to prove the potential of SSCs to work together for a common purpose and to collaborate on activities that will be most useful to IAG advisors. The offer sets out exactly the services that SSCs are able to supply and support, initially the new Adult Advancement and Careers Service in England, but also other careers services throughout the UK. This offer in effect provides SSCs with the opportunity to influence and inform the sector information provision and places SSCs at the heart of the IAG process.

By ensuring the availability of good, factual and impartial information on career opportunities and learning routes to all, aimed at specific target audiences, and by ensuring that all those involved in giving careers advice and guidance to such persons do so in a factual and objective way, Lantra will aim to encourage the development and dissemination of relevant materials and establish mechanisms to influence the guidance service, making them aware of the opportunities the environmental and land-based industries can afford potential entrants.

15 SSC IAG Project: Bringing Industry and IAG Services Together final evaluation report; *Impact Research 2006*

5 Engaging partners

Partnerships and collaboration with key organisations within and outside the sector and with business itself will continue to underpin any recruitment, image and careers strategy. This will require working closely with the advice and guidance agencies across the UK: Connexions, nextstep agencies, Learndirect and the Jobcentre Plus network in England, Careers Wales, Careers Scotland, and the Northern Ireland Careers Service, together with organisations which promote education-business links in all four countries. Lantra will aim to engage these and other partners such as government departments and agencies in specific project activity, or to support work which meets the objectives of both organisations, through the work of the Industry Partnership Managers, and the Research and Development and Regions and Nations directorates.

The development of the SSC IAG network has provided Lantra with the opportunity to enhance its position with many of these advice and guidance agencies, providing the opportunity to influence and supply sector approved labour market and occupational information. It is therefore essential that Lantra continues to participate as an active member of the network and sign up to the 'Core Offer'.

Engaging businesses and employers in recruitment and careers work is also vital to the success of the strategy. The fact that industry has identified the significance of recruitment and careers (often acting individually or in collaboration with similar organisations to produce careers materials, hold 'taster' events and provide curriculum support) demonstrates industry's ownership of this key area and their willingness to invest in addressing the issue. Strengthening such collaborations and ensuring connectivity between Lantra and key partners is a main activity resulting from this strategy.

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6 Operational activity

In defining the key activities arising from this strategic approach to recruitment and careers across the sector, Lantra has formulated the following specific work programmes to deliver the aim and objectives:

- Influence and inform the information, advice and guidance services (e.g. Careers Wales, Careers Scotland, Connexions, Northern Ireland Careers Service, Learndirect, nextstep agencies, Jobcentre Plus etc.) and other providers of sector information with current LMI and occupational information
- Reinforce information surrounding target markets/audiences through collating existing research and information or conducting further research activity
- Actively promote careers and opportunities in the sector, through a range of media and appropriate events
- Provide quality work placement/experience/learning mechanisms and programmes, and links with curriculum and education programmes, with guidance for both those providing the experience and those undertaking it.

This activity will focus on specific target audiences:

- Providers of information, advice and guidance
- Young people (under 25) and their parents
- Career changers
- Non-traditional entrants
- Migrant workers.

In developing this strategy and working towards its delivery, Lantra has dedicated a post specifically to recruitment and careers development, located within the Research and Development directorate. A Careers Information Service delivery model and operational plan will be formulated to deliver against these programmes, in line with the 'Core Offer' developed as part of the SSC IAG project. Actions identified as strategic in nature will be led by Lantra and, through the Industry Action Plans and links with businesses and business representative organisations, activities attributable to industry and business itself, which help meet the strategic aims and demonstrate investment in such activities, will be agreed.

Recruitment and careers is now regarded as an integral element of Lantra's regional project activity and is intrinsic to the research and marketing strategies. By adopting this operational approach Lantra, sector businesses and key partners will be able to facilitate the funding of recruitment and careers activity and ensure that this key work programme area becomes actively marketed and promoted. Through the strategic approach outlined, and by working in partnership to deliver against the key objective, the employment opportunities of the sector and its profile will be raised.

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Lantra

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council supporting skills, training and workforce development for businesses in the environmental and land-based sector. We are committed to helping everyone access the training, qualifications, skills and knowledge they need for business success and to develop their career.

We are an independent, UK-wide organisation that is owned and managed by our industries, which are grouped around land management and production, animal health and welfare and environmental industries.

We lead the way in understanding our industries' future skills and business needs. We work together with trade organisations, unions, training providers, governments and many more to maximise investment in skills.

www.lantra.co.uk
connect@lantra.co.uk
024 7669 6996

LANTRA Environmental and land-based skills

Telephone: 024 7669 6996 Facsimile: 024 7669 6732 Email: connect@lantra.co.uk
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Registered office: Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry CV8 2LG



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