

News Release

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BASIC SKILLS BOOST PLANNED FOR LONDON DOCKLANDS

Foundations are being laid for a significant boost to basic skills training provision in London Docklands following the recent publication of a report by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) for the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC).

Appraising the role of existing facilities in the area for adult training in literacy, numeracy and other related basic skills, the report calls for greater co-ordination between training centres and the development of a comprehensive strategy for improving basic skills in London Docklands.

Bob Pringle, Head of Education and Training at the LDDC said:

"The task ahead is to develop a pioneering strategy which will both address the requirements of local people and improve the quality of what is on offer. This would be done in conjunction with the local authorities, the basic skills providers in London Docklands and the recently created Training and Enterprise Councils.

"The integration of basic skills training with vocational training programmes and ultimately with employment opportunities will also be a key issue."

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"While the Corporation cannot replace the role of the Local Authorities, it can assist in providing more robust local basic skills training and is now taking a leading role in seeing this happen," he adds.

A post dedicated to basic skills was created within the Education and Training Team at the LDDC eight months ago. Simon James, the LDDC Basic Skills Officer, is currently organising five open-consultation "Strategy Days" between November and May of next year where local authority policy-makers, trainers and their trainees will have the opportunity to put forward their views in the formulation of the strategy.

A £45,000 Basic Skills in Docklands Small Grants Fund is also planned while further initiatives by the LDDC include the development of educational software and material resources for use in training centres and improved support for voluntary agencies. The Corporation plans to spend a total of £200,000 on basic skills provision in the current financial year and other projects are in development.

Bob Pringle said: "Basic skills training is the key to enabling local people to climb onto the first step of the training and - ultimately - the employment ladder. It can also assist those in employment to progress to better jobs. This is a vital element in the Corporation's overall strategy for the lasting regeneration of London Docklands for the benefit of all who live and work here."

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) was established by central government in 1980 as the national agency for adult literacy, numeracy and related basic skills in England and Wales. The Unit also has an important role in the development of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

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2. It is estimated that 20 per cent of the population in London Docklands may need help to improve their basic skills. In addition, a substantial number of ethnic minority adults in the area also require help with English language at a variety of levels.

3. Dates for Strategy Days

Friday, 30 November 1990	"Improving Staff Access to Training, Advice and Support"
Friday, 25 January 1991	"Improving the range, quality and accessibility of basic skills materials"
Friday, 1 March 1991	"Supporting Priority Groups"
Friday, 12 April 1991	"Developing ESOL and Language Support"
Friday, 10 May 1991	"Developing Compacts"

4. The Basic Skills in Docklands Small Grants Fund will run for three years with a specific theme in each year.

The theme for 1990/91 will be literacy, in 1991/92 it will be numeracy and in 1992/93 it will be English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Within each yearly theme, applications are invited from training organisations which serve residents of the Urban Development Area, for sums of up to £500 to spend on open days and exhibitions, reports and publications or staff training.

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