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LLUK research suggests teacher training target should be hit

Colleges look set to hit, and possibly exceed, a government target for ensuring that most of their teachers are fully trained, according to the most comprehensive staffing survey ever carried out in further education.

As part of its *Success For All* strategy launched three years ago, the government stated that all college lecturers must hold teaching qualifications by 2010. It also set an interim target of 90% of full-time and 60% of part-time teachers gaining qualifications by 2006.

According to the study by Lifelong Learning UK, the new sector skills council for teachers and other learning professionals, 95% of full-time and 62% of part-time teachers should have gained the qualifications they require by next year. This assumes that nearly 20,000 staff who had joined initial teacher training courses two years ago complete their courses successfully.

The study, based on staffing returns made by colleges in 2003/4, showed 28,556 (70%) full-time and 25,865 (47%) part-time teachers as qualified. In addition, a further 10,196 full-time and 8,915 part-time staff were working towards teaching qualifications.

Monica Deasy, LLUK's director of standards, qualifications and research, said it appeared that colleges and teacher trainers had risen to the challenge of making sure that the vast majority of teachers were fully qualified as all in the sector had hoped. "It is a clear sign that colleges and the staff working in them recognise the need for quality in order to improve the experience of learners," she said.

Researchers at LLUK spent four months poring over staff individualised records (SIRs) that FE colleges must complete annually for the Learning and Skills Council. The study reveals numerous facts and figures about the FE workforce that previously remained hidden.

Among the other findings are:-

- The FE workforce is predominantly female. Just 37% of all staff and 30% of part-time staff employed by colleges are men.
- The bulk of college staff are in their 40s and 50s. Just 19% are aged under 35, while 44% are aged 45 and over.
- Seven per cent of male employees hold management posts compared with 5% of women.

- Eighty-eight per cent of FE staff class themselves as 'white British', with 3.4% Asian and 2.9% black.
- Forty-six per cent of college employees work in jobs other than teaching.

The report, based on returns made by 360 colleges in England, is certain to be welcomed by employers in further education and the wider lifelong learning sector that regularly complain to LLUK about the absence of accurate workforce data.

"It is only through research of this sort that colleges can plan ahead effectively and hope to avoid skills gaps and shortages," added Monica Deasy. "The information will also be studied closely by local and national policymakers as well as those planning a career in lifelong learning."

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For further information contact Monica Deasy, director of standards, quality and research on 07714 703092.

A copy of the report *Further Education Workforce Data for England: an analysis of SIR data 2003/4* is available on the LLUK website (www.lifelonglearninguk.org).

Notes for editors

1. Lifelong Learning UK is one of 25 sector skills councils that make up the Skills for Business Network, set up by employers to raise skills levels among the workforce as a whole through better training and development.
2. The lifelong learning sector has more than one million employees across the UK working in community learning and development, further education, higher education, libraries, archives and information services and work-based learning.
3. The report *Further Education Workforce Data for England: an analysis of SIR data 2003/4* is based on staff individualised records completed by 360 colleges for the Learning and Skills Council. The records include more than 200,000 different sets of data.
4. The report shows the qualifications held by teachers and other staff, along with regional breakdowns for the gender and ethnicity of college employees, details of subjects taught and their length of service.
5. LLUK aims to encourage teachers, trainers, librarians and other staff to gain new skills and qualifications so that they offer a better service to young people and adult learners.
6. It also promotes lifelong learning as a career so that employers in the sector have less difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

7. In addition to developing sector-wide occupational standards, LLUK also produces labour market intelligence so that lifelong learning employers can identify skills gaps and shortages among their own workforce.