

annual progress report 2005

BUREAUCRACY REDUCTION GROUP



The Bureaucracy Reduction Group for further education and training

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Foreword

When I took up post as Chair of the new Bureaucracy Reduction Group in November 2005, almost the first two items I was presented with were the draft of this progress report, and the draft of the report by the Better Regulation Executive about how front line staff see bureaucracy. These brought home to me the size of the challenge I have accepted.

My predecessors Sir George Sweeney and Sir Andrew Foster took a long hard look at the ocean of bureaucracy in the post-16 learning and skills sector, identified the big icebergs, and set some challenging targets. I was heartened to see from the emerging progress report that the Learning and Skills Council, the Inspectorates and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority were all tackling these with energy. They had already made significant progress in some areas such as simplifying inspection and audit. They had plans which would yield further results in the next two years in areas like management information, funding and qualifications simplification.

But then I looked at the report on burdens as seen by college staff, and found that most had yet to feel the benefits and many were sceptical about our ability to conquer bureaucracy. In some ways they are right. We can never eliminate bureaucracy. Administration is necessary for efficiency and to safeguard public funds. But I believe we can minimise unnecessary bureaucracy.

I saw further heartening signs. The Government is determined to crack bureaucracy as a key step to improve public services. The Department for Education and Skills' Minister, Bill Rammell MP, has specific responsibility to reduce bureaucracy across all education sectors. The Prime Minister and the Chancellor are taking a personal interest, and pressing Government and its agencies to set and meet challenging targets. Finally, I saw that there is a universal consensus in the sector to make cutting bureaucracy a top priority.

This report provides an account of what some of the key sector organisations have done so far to tackle the issues already identified. However, that is just a starting point for the new Bureaucracy Reduction Group. Our first big task now is to ensure that the policy and system design changes in hand really do deliver reduced bureaucracy at the front line. That is why the Bureaucracy Reduction Group has been strengthened, by inviting all of the main delivery partners and staff representative organisations to join it as full members.

Our second big task is to make sure that our targets cover all of the important issues, and are both realistic and challenging. To this end the Group met in February 2006 to discuss the Better Regulation Executive report, set fresh priorities and targets, and produce an action plan which we will publish in early summer 2006. It became clear at its first meeting in November 2005 that the new Group has a real appetite for this work. We depend for success on the commitment of all the sector partners, and I am sure that we have this.



Caroline Lewis,
Chair of the new Bureaucracy Reduction Group

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Executive summary

- 1.1 This report covers progress in reducing bureaucracy in the post-16 further education and training sector since the first Bureaucracy Review Group report published in June 2004.
- 1.2 In response to the first report, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Inspectorates and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) all agreed actions and targets to reduce bureaucracy in four key areas.
- 1.3 The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) introduced their new streamlined, risk based inspection regime during 2005. They will achieve the intended 25% reduction in inspection days over the course of the inspection cycle just begun. Further gains are expected from co-ordination of inspection activities with other agencies.
- 1.4 The Department for Education and Skills has also announced plans to create a single inspectorate for services relating to children, young people and adult learners. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills will be operational from April 2007 bringing together into an enlarged Ofsted the children's social care remit of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service inspection remit of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration, and the inspection remit of the ALI. This will further reduce bureaucracy for those who deliver such services, including further education (FE) colleges.
- 1.5 The LSC have simplified their audit requirements for colleges and providers. They estimate that this will now save the sector some £12m annually in staff time and audit costs.
- 1.6 Under its *agenda for change* programme the LSC has consulted on major simplification to funding and planning. It began introducing these in the autumn 2005 planning round. The LSC is also streamlining its own organisation.
- 1.7 Some 40 organisations led by the Department and the LSC have made steady progress on improving how management information is shared across the sector, through the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) programme. Early fruits are an agreed framework for data sharing, published in November 2004, and the UK Register of Learning Providers, launched in August 2005. Common data definitions for learners, providers, participation and achievement will be rolled out to the sector during 2006. A Learner Registration Service incorporating a Unique Learner Number will be trialled for 2006/07. Arrangements for enabling learners and providers to access learner information collected by schools, colleges, awarding bodies and universities and thereby create learner records will be developed over the next couple of years.
- 1.8 The LSC has introduced a strong internal challenge process which has significantly reduced the amount of change in its management information requirements from colleges and providers in 2005/06, and plans further, bigger reductions in 2007/08.

- 1.9 The QCA has streamlined its process for accrediting qualifications. In May 2005 QCA began to roll out a simpler online system for awarding bodies with a good track record. It allows them to get qualifications accredited in five working days compared with an average of eight weeks in 2004/05.
- 1.10 QCA have also consulted on a streamlined process for recognising 'centres'. The common standards and systems proposed would allow data sharing and remove the need for colleges and providers to supply similar data to several awarding bodies. QCA expect to begin phased implementation from autumn 2006 and have it fully in place by September 2007.
- 1.11 Under the Framework for Achievement the QCA will pilot new accredited unitised qualifications from January 2006. This will allow credit accumulation and transfer, which will benefit learners and employers. Improvements to the open qualifications website from March 2006 will include the additional details such as grading and assessment data and progression routes which will give learners, employers, colleges and providers significantly improved information about qualifications. QCA, the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and the LSC are joint partners in the Framework for Achievement.
- 1.12 In response to recommendations by the Better Regulation Task Force, the Better Regulation Executive (BRE), and others, the Department will do the following:
- a) In early 2006 it will start to measure bureaucracy in the sector using a standard methodology for Government. This will enable realistic targets for reducing bureaucracy to be set and progress to be measured on a comparable basis across all activities, educational sectors and public services generally.
 - b) From summer 2006 it will provide a web portal with an easy to use template which allows stakeholders to raise examples of unnecessary bureaucracy. The portal will be based on the current BRE portal but tailored for education sectors.
 - c) Early in 2005 the Department conducted and published impact assessments for the Skills and 14-19 Strategies. It has gone on to develop an impact assessment process to minimise bureaucracy, as an integral part of the more detailed design of policies and programmes. During 2006 the Department will refine this process and work with sector partners to embed consistent processes in their organisations. This will ensure that bureaucratic impact is considered continually at all stages from policy formulation to final implementation, whichever organisation is leading a particular stage.
- 1.13 In spring 2005 the Secretary of State agreed with the Chairs of the LSC and QCA to create a new Bureaucracy Reduction Group (BRG) for the post-16 sector. The reason was the need to evolve from identifying problems and setting targets to achieving those targets. The new BRG comprises representatives from all of the key sector stakeholders, including those organisations which must lead and implement change. The new membership and terms of reference are available on the website.
- 1.14 The new BRG met in November 2005 and agreed to meet again in February 2006 to develop a new action plan, which it aims to publish in early summer 2006. This will take account of all of the research and reports produced during 2005, and of policy developments across the sector.

2

Reducing bureaucracy

The Bureaucracy Reduction Group

- 2.1 Reducing bureaucracy is crucial to improving public services by ensuring that as much as possible of available public funding is spent on front line delivery, not administration. In May 2005 the new Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, Bill Rammell MP, was given a specific responsibility for reducing bureaucracy across all education sectors.
- 2.2 Independent groups of stakeholders have been established to control existing and new bureaucracy in each of the three main education sectors¹. For post-16 further education and training, the Secretary of State created a new Bureaucracy Reduction Group (BRG) in November 2005. This evolved from the Bureaucracy Task Force led by Sir George Sweeney (2002-2004) and the Bureaucracy Review Group led by Sir Andrew Foster (2003-2005).
- 2.3 The new BRG includes the key sector organisations which must design and implement change. This is an important transformation from the previous group led by Sir Andrew Foster, which comprised senior managers from learning providers. The change has been made because the work of the BRG now needs to move from analysing the problems of bureaucracy and setting targets for reductions, to managing the achievement of those targets. However, the voice of the 'front line' has not been diminished. All of the previous members still serving have agreed to join the new BRG.
- 2.4 The new BRG reports to both the Secretary of State and to the Chair of the LSC. This is another important change, because the LSC spends some £10.5bn of public funds each year on the delivery of services through other organisations, and has the main direct relationship with colleges and providers.
- 2.5 The new BRG came into being on 1 November 2005 with the appointment of Caroline Lewis, a former college principal, as Chair, and the invitation of a wide range of sector stakeholder organisations to appoint members². It met for the first time on 30 November.
- 2.6 In his first reports³ in 2004 Sir Andrew Foster identified four strategic priorities for reducing bureaucracy, and agreed targets with key sector partners. The priorities and targets were to reduce management information demands by 40%, the administrative burden that the qualifications system imposes on providers by 30%, the burden of inspection by 25%, and to simplify the funding and audit systems.

¹The Higher Education Review Group, and for schools the Implementation Review Unit. Both have published reports in 2005. See Annex C for references. ²Listed in Annex B. ³The BRG published its first report, *Annual Report 2004*, in June 2004. In November 2004 the BRG published *Action to Reduce Bureaucracy – a summary of responses to the Bureaucracy Review Group's Annual Report*. The reports can be seen at www.successforall.gov.uk under the Busting Bureaucracy pages.

- 2.7 In 2005 the Cabinet Office's Better Regulation Executive (BRE) led a joint project with the Department and the LSC to investigate the perceptions of front line staff in FE colleges about the bureaucracy they face, the causes and possible solutions. The report⁴ identified four main areas as particular issues for front line staff. These are planning and funding; data demands and collection processes; awarding bodies, audit and inspection; and communication. The report makes 26 recommendations for short and medium term change, and identifies six areas where longer term strategic change should be considered. Within these are 19 more specific suggestions. The new BRG discussed the report in November 2005 and will take account of the findings and recommendations when it develops its new action plan.
- 2.8 There is a high degree of consistency between the analysis and priorities identified by Sir Andrew Foster in 2004, the recent BRE report, the November 2005 report by Sir Andrew Foster on the role of FE colleges⁵, and other research. Thus many of the issues raised are already being addressed by initiatives which have not yet been fully implemented, and the effects of which have not yet been felt at the front line. The main vehicles for achieving these improvements have been the LSC *agenda for change*, which is tackling management information, funding and audit; the QCA/SSDA/LSC Framework for Achievement and related simplification steps which are streamlining the qualifications and awarding systems; the ALI/Ofsted move to a risk based inspection system, and the Managing Information Across Partnerships (MIAP) programme which is led by Department and the LSC, involves 40 key sector partners, and is addressing the wider data and communications issues. Progress on these is described in Chapter 3.
- 2.9 The Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) noted in its report *Less is More*⁶, that when the Dutch Government measured the costs of regulations it found that the level of protest about a particular burden does not provide an accurate indication of its relative costs. So we also need more careful measurement of bureaucratic burdens in the post-16 sector, both to review strategic priorities, to underpin realistic and meaningful targets, and to tell us whether we are making progress. Because of this the Secretary of State has agreed with the Cabinet Office that the Department will pilot for use in the public sector the methodology recommended by the BRTF for measuring administrative burdens. The BRG will quality assure the pilot in the post-16 sector, which will run until March 2006.

⁴*Reducing Burdens in Colleges of Further Education* – December 2005

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/reducing_bureaucracy_on_the_frontline/further_education/index.asp

⁵*Realising The Potential – A review of the role of Further Education Colleges* – November 2005

<http://www.Department.gov.uk/furthereducation/fereview/finalreport.shtml>

⁶*Regulation - Less is More. Reducing Burdens, Improving Outcomes* – March 2005

<http://www.brtf.gov.uk/reports/lessismoreentry.asp>

3

Progress by the sector partners

3.1 MANAGING INFORMATION ACROSS PARTNERS

- 3.1.1 The biggest single component of bureaucracy is the collection and handling of information. Many organisations in the learning and skills sector collect similar information, especially from colleges and providers and from and about learners. However, they tend to require different formats and timetables. This duplicates effort, hinders data sharing, puts unnecessary burdens on colleges and other providers, creates unnecessary costs and reduces the quality of services to learners and employers.
- 3.1.2 In 2002 the Department set up the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) group of some 40 key sector organisations to understand and rationalise data management in the learning, skills and education sectors. Key aims of the MIAP programme are to distinguish essential from non essential data, to agree common formats, protocols and systems which enable data to be shared, and to agree which organisations should have the prime responsibility for collecting and managing particular data. The general principle is “collect once, use many times, used by all”.
- 3.1.3 Different organisations lead the MIAP programme strands most relevant to their responsibilities. Details of the various initiatives appear in appropriate places in this report. With the support of key partners, it has been agreed that the LSC will now take responsibility for delivering the MIAP proposal, with the Department retaining the strategic overview. This will ensure that MIAP is taken forward alongside the LSC's *agenda for change*, the QCA's Framework for Achievement, and other key developments.
- 3.1.4 Some achievements to date from MIAP include:
- a) the publication of a data sharing framework, endorsed and supported by the 40 organisations, outlining the principles for effective data sharing;
 - b) the introduction of an initial UK Register of Learning Providers, in August 2005, containing over 8,500 records. This will build incrementally to provide a comprehensive listing of key information about publicly funded and private providers throughout the UK.

3.1.5 Imminent MIAP progress includes the development of:

- a) common data definitions, relating to learners, achievement and performance. The first tranche will be available for use across the learning and skills sector from spring 2006;
- b) a Learner Registration Service (LRS), through which a Unique Learner Number (ULN) will be issued for each learner. This will help to rationalise existing identification numbers across the sector to support improved data sharing. Prototypes and trials are planned for 2006/07 with volunteer providers and awarding bodies. The aim is to start full roll-out of a ULN in 2007/08;
- c) arrangements for improving the sharing of data held with schools, FE, HE, and Achievement systems, through a learner data interface. This will enable the development of e-portfolios and learner records, which will support improved learner choice, support and tracking. An initial model is expected to be in place during 2007/08, and the aim is to have a fully operation system by the end of the decade.

3.2 LSC AGENDA FOR CHANGE

3.2.1 In November 2004 the LSC launched *agenda for change*, a fundamental programme of transformation for the learning and skills sector⁷. It was developed in response to feedback from college principals on the areas that stood in the way of delivering on the 14-19 and Skills agendas. In August 2005 the LSC published the Prospectus, which sets out the LSC action plan in six main themes. The LSC will now align its work on *agenda for change* with the outcomes and recommendations of the reviews by Sir Andrew Foster and Lord Sandy Leitch.

3.2.2 Working with the sector the LSC has looked at how funding methods can be changed to support priorities with the minimum of complexity; how data collection can be simplified; and how the sector can achieve business excellence.

3.2.3 The LSC has recently announced a further theme to *agenda for change*, the LSC itself. In order to deliver the sort of strategic transformation it expects from its partners, the LSC needs to change too, improving functionality and the focus of staff resource. It will become a smaller, more dynamic, customer facing organisation delivering less bureaucratic but high quality strategic partnerships at local, regional and national levels.

3.2.4 *Agenda for change* initially focused on colleges. Since the publication of the Prospectus the LSC has been working with all of its partners to consider how the principles can be implemented across the wider learning and skills sector.

Funding and planning reform

3.2.5 The LSC published *Priorities for Success – Funding for learning and skills 2006–2008* in October 2005. This sets out the priorities for funding until 2007/08 and the allocations process. In December the LSC published information on the new proportionate, integrated and differentiated planning framework in *Priorities for Success*.

⁷The LSCs proposals are outlined in 'Learning and Skills – the *agenda for change*: The Prospectus'.

- 3.2.6 The *Priorities for Success* strategy poses challenges for the sector, such as increasing income generation, and closing the funding gap between colleges and school sixth forms. The LSC has arranged that the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) will provide support to colleges and providers from autumn 2005 to help their senior managers to implement the new approach to funding, and to implement the National Employer Training Programme (Train to Gain) and approaches such as 'assess-train-assess'. Improved data collection from school sixth forms will enable further steps to be taken to reduce the funding gap with colleges from 2008.
- 3.2.7 As part of *agenda for change* The LSC has consulted on a simplified funding methodology in which there is a core of guaranteed funding based on past performance to provide stability (perhaps 90–95% of the previous year's allocation), and a 'commissioned' element to provide for changing needs. Funding will be based on an agreed plan by the college geared to meet local employers' and learners' needs. The LSC is working towards introducing the proposals for the FE funding stream (which includes Local Authority providers of FE) and work-based learning at the beginning of the next Business Cycle in autumn 2006, impacting on 2007/08 allocations. The Secretary of State has indicated that she expects the approach to be extended to school sixth forms from 2008.

Information and data

- 3.2.8 Alongside trialling the simplified funding methodology and allocations process, the LSC will look at how it can rationalise the way it collects and uses data to improve efficiency and release more money to support front line services. This work is closely linked to the wider MIAP programme.
- 3.2.9 The data theme sets out the LSC's vision for radically streamlining the way in which information is used in the sector, by only collecting the data which providers need to manage their own business, creating a consistent set of data definitions and management information reports, and introducing the Unique Learner Number. During 2006/07 the LSC will prototype the Unique Learner Identifier, agree the first sector-wide standards and definitions, and by develop and prototype the concept of Data Partners.
- 3.2.10 The LSC has already implemented some improvements:
- a) The LSC has introduced a much more robust challenge process for the introduction of changes to the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). The effect of this last year was that there was very little change to the 2005/06 ILR resulting in near stability for providers and software suppliers. This is a significant improvement over the previous three years. The feedback, from colleges in particular, has been very positive and emphasises the importance of stability to all providers. For 2006/07 the LSC will maintain this challenge process and ensure that proposed changes are assessed against the principles of the data theme and the cost to institutions.

- b) Colleges and other providers send in data via a web portal. Over the past year the LSC has improved feedback to institutions in two key areas: FE success rates; and credibility and data quality. By automating key processes, summary reports are fed back to providers in 24 hours now, compared to taking several weeks previously. The success rates data is also supplied to Ofsted. This is a step towards ensuring that everyone uses the same information and has access to it at the same time. In the coming year the LSC will continue to improve on these advances by extending the number of reports and scope of the feedback.
- c) The LSC collects information from colleges only, about their staff, in the form of the Staff Individualised Record. They have undertaken a fundamental review of what is collected and why with the help of college HR staff. As a result they have removed the requirement to collect five fields (18% of the total) and plan a further significant reduction in 2006/07. And they are considering with Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) the most effective and least bureaucratic way to collect necessary data on college staffing.
- d) During December 2005 the LSC will publish definitions of data contained in management information reports used in planning and review discussions with providers. This will be a step towards bringing a clarity which colleges and providers have been asking for.

Improving quality

- 3.2.11 Colleges, schools and independent providers must improve quality and eradicate variations in performance, between and within their establishments. In 2006 the LSC will publish minimum levels of performance and will further develop a differentiated approach to improvement planning, where the LSC intervenes in inverse proportions to success. This will include placing greater emphasis on provider self-assessment. Funding and planning can then be linked more closely with quality.
- 3.2.12 Consistent high quality learning and skills development across the sector depends on first class leadership. The LSC will work with the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), the CEL, the Schools Leadership programme, LLUK and the Network for Black Managers to support colleges in developing the capacity they need. In 2006 this will include the agreement of Memoranda of Understanding to clarify the role of CEL and LLUK in supporting the transformation of FE by developing the workforce and leadership skills of the sector.

Business excellence

- 3.2.13 Good management is a key component of reducing bureaucracy. Colleges and providers can do much to help themselves by adopting efficient systems. In 2006/07 the LSC will introduce benchmarking and value for money measures to give a better understanding of performance. This is to help embed business excellence and sustainable development principles in the strategic, operational and frontline practices of all providers.

Audit Reform

LSC and new regularity audit framework

- 3.2.14 The LSC ran a significant annual programme of funding audits for colleges between 2001 and 2004. Adopting a risk based approach, this was restricted to 36 colleges in 2004/05. As a result, the LSC has been able to redirect £6m no longer spent on audit, to the front line. The LSC estimate that colleges have also saved £8m a year, as research suggested that colleges had each been spending about half a staff year on dealing with funding audit.
- 3.2.15 The funding audit had given both the LSC and colleges a significant amount of audit assurance, and its ending meant that audit assurance would need to be obtained through other approaches. The introduction of plan led funding and the need to gain audit assurance earlier in the year to meet the Treasury 'faster closure' agenda also required the LSC and the sector to consider how best to gain the level of audit assurance needed.
- 3.2.16 The new audit assurance framework was introduced in early 2005. It includes taking assurance from a number of audit and review sources, most of which were already in existence. The mainstay of the new framework is the regularity audit framework, which had been in place since 1993 and which was annual.
- 3.2.17 For 2005 the National Audit Office required the LSC to strengthen the regularity audit by adding an interim audit in March, at a new cost to the sector of around £1.8m in audit fees and senior staff time. For 2005/06 the LSC are relaxing the need for a mandatory interim regularity audit, again on a risk basis, allowing a statement on controls and governance from college governors instead. This should save the sector a further £500,000 per year.
- 3.2.18 Overall the LSC estimate net savings for the sector from changes in the approach to audit total around £12m annually.

3.3 MEASURING BUREAUCRACY

- 3.3.1 In May 2005 the Government accepted the recommendation of the Better Regulation Task Force that it should measure current levels of bureaucracy in order to set strategic priorities and realistic targets for reductions, and to understand and manage progress. Also that it should use a standardised methodology across Government to provide comparability.

- 3.3.2 The Better Regulation Task Force recommended use of the method used in Holland, the Standard Cost Model. This was designed to measure regulatory burdens imposed on business, where the main burden is about monitoring and reporting compliance. However, administration in the public sector is more complex, and in education and training involves setting and monitoring performance targets and outcomes, quality regimes, contracting and the use of public funds, planning and developing capacity and infrastructure, and arms length responsibilities in areas like equal opportunities.
- 3.3.3 The Department has volunteered to pilot a version of the Standard Cost Model for use in the public sector. It is important to be sure that the methodology works and is appropriate before adopting it as the standard for the education sectors and for public services generally. Therefore, there will be a small scale pilot in each of the three main educational sectors early in 2006.
- 3.3.4 The pilot in the post-16 sector will include the administrative cost of a sample of qualifications. This has been identified as a particular burden by Sir Andrew Foster's recent report on the future for FE colleges⁸, the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) report *Reducing Burdens in Colleges of Further Education*, and by other research. The BRG will quality assure the pilot in the sector. Volunteer colleges and providers will be sought via the Association of Colleges and the Association of Learning Providers.
- 3.3.5 If the pilot is successful, it is intended to measure administration across the sector, changes and reductions, starting from 2006.

3.4 GATEKEEPING TO MINIMISE NEW REGULATION

- 3.4.1 A key role for the BRG is to prevent the creation of unnecessary new bureaucracy. There are two main methods. First, formal Regulatory Impact Assessments are mandatory for all new policies and programmes. These use a framework developed by the Cabinet Office BRE. Second, the BRG invites lead organisations to its meetings to explain their design and implementation proposals.
- 3.4.2 Strategic level Regulatory Impact Assessments were conducted and signed by Ministers for the Skills Strategy and for the 14-19 Strategy in early 2005, alongside the respective White Papers. Lower level, more detailed assessments of administrative impact of the initiatives within all strategies are conducted on an ongoing basis as design and implementation proceeds. These are led by the most relevant sector partner organisation. In October the Minister of State told representatives from all three education sectors that he wanted the Department and all its associated agencies to conduct and publish regulatory impact assessments in a common manner. Impact assessments are required to be published and the Department is currently improving its website to make them easier to find.

⁸Realising The Potential – A review of the future role of further education colleges – November 2005, section 5.3.

- 3.4.3 Since the 2004 BRG Report was compiled the BRG has heard presentations from the QCA on their proposals to modernise the exams system, from the Department on the 14-19 reforms, and from the LSC on: learner fees; the Level 2 entitlement; the Adult Learning Grant; core data, the Individual Learner Record, and management information; funding of adult learning; Educational Maintenance Allowances; plan led funding; and *agenda for change*.
- 3.4.4 One difficulty in assessing new bureaucratic burdens is accurately estimating the administrative costs of programmes at the proposal or design stages. The BRG hopes that two elements will help here. First, the work to measure bureaucracy described above should generate a body of evidence which will enable new policies or programmes to be compared with existing ones with similar characteristics. Second, by using impact assessment as an ongoing process at key points during policy and programme development it will be possible to refine the assessments and to detect change and the need for re-consideration of design issues as early as possible. This process needs to involve all of the key delivery partners in a particular programme, and the BRG is ideally placed to see that this happens.

3.5 **SIMPLIFIED INSPECTION – OFSTED AND THE ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE**

Principles and progress

- 3.5.1 The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) introduced a simplified, risk based inspection regime for its sole remit providers⁹ from April 2005 and Ofsted and the ALI introduced similar new arrangements for FE colleges¹⁰ from September 2005.
- 3.5.2 The changes are intended to increase the contribution that inspection makes to improving performance whilst reducing the burden on providers. The main features are:
- a) inspection that is proportionate to risk;
 - b) a sharper focus on providers' self assessment, self development and quality assurance arrangements;
 - c) a significantly reduced number of inspection days per inspection and so a reduction in the burden on colleges and providers.

⁹ALI sole remit inspection covers LSC and joint funded work-based learning; Jobcentre Plus only providers of work-based learning; Jobcentre Plus private leads; learndirect; Personal and Community Development Learning; Information, Advice and Guidance Services; and LSC Small Inspection.

¹⁰Joint remit inspections cover General FE establishments; Sixth Form Colleges; Higher Education; Specialist Colleges; Teacher Training; Every Child Matters joint area reviews; and Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions.

- 3.5.3 The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) has been revised to reflect these changes. The CIF has been slimmed down with fewer questions. Consultation on the new CIF and for the new Schools Inspection Framework ran in parallel. The CIF applies to colleges and providers, and schools have a separate inspection framework, but a common evaluation schedule (i.e. a core set of common questions) has been produced for schools and colleges. This is designed to allow inspections to feed into joint area reviews of children's services¹¹. This is important because, for example, of the increasing blurring of sector boundaries as more under-16s visit colleges.
- 3.5.4 The underpinning guidance on how the framework applies to each type of provider has also been revised and a Memorandum of Understanding on inspection processes drawn up between the inspectorates and funding bodies.

ALI sole remit providers

- 3.5.5 For its sole remit work, the ALI has reduced bureaucracy by: using pre-inspection analysis to inform a future inspection; collating information about providers from the funding councils; using providers' self-assessment reports to inform the pre-inspection analysis; seeking the provider's views on what the inspection might usefully address; and reducing multiple interventions. The pre-inspection analysis involves categorising providers into three risk categories: low, medium and high.
- 3.5.6 As a result the ALI have reduced their own resource on their sole remit inspection by 25% in the current cycle. Some of this has been re-directed into good practice work.
- 3.5.7 The impact on providers (and colleges) is more difficult to estimate. The ALI published analysis *The Costs and Benefits of ALI Inspections* in June 2005 which estimated the average cost of an inspection to a work-based learning provider as £18,000 and to an FE college as £134,000. It is not clear how much of this would be saved because much depends on the behaviour of the provider or college.

Risk based inspection in colleges

- 3.5.8 The reduction of Ofsted and ALI institutional inspection days for colleges in the second (four year) cycle will probably be around 50% across the sector. Some of this is redirected into subject surveys (five a year) and annual assessment visits (one to every college).

¹¹A programme of joint area reviews of children's services began in September 2005, with a review of each local authority area in England to be undertaken by December 2008. Joint area reviews involve nine inspectorates and commissions, including Ofsted, the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Healthcare Commission, the Audit Commission, the Adult Learning Inspectorate and inspectorates for police, probation, prisons and courts administration. They assess how education, social care, health and criminal justice services taken together contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people, so for the first time giving an overall picture of services for children and young people. The local authority must publish the report locally, and must, consulting local partners, prepare and publish an action plan responding to the report.

- 3.5.9 For colleges there will be shorter notice of inspection and an annual visit to every institution to monitor performance levels and decide the scope and frequency of future inspection. Previously 6–12 weeks notice was given for college inspections, and this led to considerable preparatory work being undertaken in colleges. In September Ofsted introduced short notice inspections with three weeks notice, based on their practice in schools. Early indications are that this has been a positive move, with some colleges welcoming the shorter notice which reduces both the costs and the stress for staff of a longer period of preparation.
- 3.5.10 The first cycle of college inspections between 2001 and 2005 managed by Ofsted, working jointly with the ALL, was designed to establish a baseline standard for all colleges. Resourcing was relatively intensive to ensure that the majority of curriculum areas were inspected, as well as cross-college aspects such as leadership and management and achievement.
- 3.5.11 To reduce the burden of inspection on providers, a more radical review of resourcing was undertaken for the next cycle covering 2005 to 2009. The new principle is one of proportionality. Those colleges which are consistently high performing will be subject only to a 'light touch' or possibly (for outstanding colleges) no inspection; for those which are consistently under-performing inspection will be resourced more intensively.
- 3.5.12 Alongside proportionality, all colleges must remain publicly accountable for the quality of their provision on a regular basis, regardless of performance. To achieve this Ofsted have introduced Annual Assessment Visits (AAVs) for all colleges, normally of one day's duration, to monitor headline performance. Because the best colleges in the sector will, in effect, be 'self-regulating' with the prospect of no formal inspection, the AAV is critical in confirming that high standards are being maintained. If a previously outstanding college exhibits declining standards, the AAV can trigger a formal inspection. If other colleges categorised as good or satisfactory give cause for concern as a result of an AAV, an early inspection will be recommended. A previously 'satisfactory' college may demonstrate much improved performance since the previous inspection, indicating any future inspection can be safely postponed. All inadequate colleges from the previous cycle are subject to a full inspection two years after the date that this category was determined.
- 3.5.13 These principles ensure that inspection is risk based, is responsive to the dynamic of change in a college's performance and, for most colleges, involves a lower level of resource. It would be possible to release more colleges from a full inspection by revising downwards the threshold for those subject only to an AAV.
- 3.5.14 Because curriculum areas in good or better colleges are not inspected, Ofsted intends to make sure good practice is covered in its subject and survey work in the current cycle.

Joint planning between inspecting bodies

3.5.15 In July Ofsted and the ALI established a Joint Planning Group to co-ordinate inspections. Members include the LSC, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus, the Department for Education and Skills, and the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA – the inspection body for Higher Education) are observers. The remit of the Group is to develop a programme of joint college inspections which covers all LSC and DWP funded post-16 provision including Independent Specialist Colleges, adult and community learning, work-based learning delivered by colleges, Jobcentre Plus, learndirect and FE Teacher Training. The Group is also considering how best to assess risk. The QAA attend as observers because Ofsted and the ALI jointly inspect further education delivered in Higher Education Institutions and the QAA review Higher Education delivered in colleges on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

3.6 QUALIFICATIONS

3.6.1 Colleges and providers feel the qualifications regime to be a major source of unnecessary bureaucracy. The burden falls most heavily on colleges, because of the wide range of qualifications they offer.

- a) Recent research for the QCA undertaken by MORI (across 1000 centres which included colleges, schools and other providers), found that “there exists a level of burden in the current arrangements for centre recognition and qualification approval which needs addressing, specifically in regards to colleges. Centres typically describe current arrangements as time consuming, bureaucratic and repetitive”. Furthermore, MORI’s report stated that “support for change is also strong” and respondents’ “priorities for change... match the key Centre Recognition project proposals”¹².
- b) In the report *Reducing Burdens in Colleges of Further Education* college staff identified awarding body requirements as a major area of duplication of effort and drain on their time, and of excessive data demands. Key complaints were the difficulty in dealing with the large number of separate bodies, each with their own procedures; the need to keep equivalent data in different formats for these bodies; the need to supply data to different types of systems, some paper based and some IT based; timeliness of data; and difficulty in explaining the wide range of qualifications to learners and employers.
- c) A study in 2005 by the Department and the LSC to map demands for management information looked at six colleges and ten providers. It identified administration required by awarding bodies as one of four main drivers of bureaucracy, with the main issue being the format and definition of learner data.

¹²For more information on the MORI research, the full report can be found on the QCA website on the centre recognition project web-pages at www.qca.org.uk.

QCA and the MIAP programme

- 3.6.2 As discussed earlier, the QCA is central to the MIAP programme. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is leading work to generate common data definitions, including achievement, on behalf of MIAP partners. This takes into account consultation completed in autumn 2005 by the QCA on the concept of common data definitions and a new set of requirements covering all qualifications. Use of the same data fields for all learners will mean that data can be transferred easily, and once it is collected it can be used by other awarding bodies at any time during a learner's career.
- 3.6.3 Phase 1 of the Common Data Definitions Project covers 'simple' data, such as learners and providers. A detailed study on was completed in June 2005 and technical implementation is underway. Phase 2 covers more complex data such as participation and achievement, where definitions need to be developed from first principles because there is no common approach. Detailed consultation will be completed at the end of 2005 and also will be followed by a technical implementation phase. The partners plan that the definitions will be available for roll out across the different agencies in the second and third quarters of 2006.

Framework for Achievement

- 3.6.4 In 2004 QCA proposed a new national framework of units and qualifications underpinned by a system of credit accumulation and transfer¹⁹. QCA and LSC led a national consultation which was completed in February 2005 that indicated strong support for the principles of a simpler, more responsive, more inclusive and less bureaucratic Framework for Achievement (FfA).
- 3.6.5 The FfA will provide a simple structure by which the challenge (level) and volume (credit) of units and qualifications can be easily understood by learners and other users. The system of credit accumulation and transfer will enable learners to build up achievements over time regardless of location, and transfer them across qualifications and awarding bodies.
- 3.6.6 Key features of FfA have been deliberately designed to address those areas of the current National Qualifications Framework that were identified as contributing to unnecessary bureaucracy. In particular, the FfA is designed to reduce bureaucracy by:
- a) building on the streamlined recognition and accreditation systems described below;
 - b) utilising MIAP developments including the Unique Learner Number, Learner Achievement Records, and Common Data Definitions; and
 - c) providing opportunities to submit units directly to national database.

¹⁹New Thinking for Reform – see QCA website.

- 3.6.7 The FfA is also intended to recognise a wider range of achievement than the current National Curriculum framework and to be more inclusive.
- 3.6.8 Trialling for the FfA will begin early 2006 with learners expected to engage in programmes by the summer. The scope and size of the trials will gradually increase until summer 2008, when a major evaluation will be completed. Then, subject to the evaluation of the trial, the accreditation of a much larger number of qualifications into the FfA will begin. Qualifications in the majority of vocational areas should be accredited by December 2010.
- 3.6.9 The LSC will lead on trials of the FfA with providers in England from August 2006. However, there is a concern, amongst providers, that the FfA (a unit based qualification framework, underpinned by credit) could result in more complexity and bureaucracy – particularly with regard to the facility for providers to brigade units (from different awarding bodies) into coherent programmes. A key part of the LSC's involvement in the trials will be to examine further the impact of the FfA on providers to ensure that bureaucracy is not increased and that development costs are not passed onto providers. The LSC has already commissioned the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to undertake two studies of the potential impact of the FfA on providers and will use the outcomes of those studies to inform this strand of the FfA trials.
- 3.6.10 A reduction in the levels of bureaucracy for awarding bodies and learning providers taking place in the trials is expected to be realised from summer 2006. The impact on the rest of the sector will be felt from 2008 as the number and range of qualifications included increases. The benefits will become most apparent from 2010, when the vast majority of FE colleges and work-based learning providers will be delivering FfA qualifications.

Centre Recognition – Common centre approval

- 3.6.11 Centres (i.e. colleges and training providers) must be recognised and approved by awarding bodies to deliver their accredited qualifications or units. Currently there are up to 10,000 recognised centres in the UK.
- 3.6.12 There are differences in the requirements and processes awarding bodies use with centres, but much of the information required is very similar. Currently there is no organised sharing of centre data across the awarding bodies, inspectorates or funding agencies. All this is a burden for centres, which typically describe the current arrangements as “time consuming, bureaucratic and repetitive”.

- 3.6.13 In 2004 the four UK regulatory authorities began the Centre Recognition Project, which aims to establish a common process of clear, agreed requirements for centre recognition and qualification approval across all awarding bodies and for all centres. Furthermore, awarding bodies could then agree to accept each other's recognition and approval decisions (mutual acceptance). The main benefit would be to remove the need for centres to constantly re-supply the same or similar information to awarding bodies. Centres will not need to re-apply for recognition if they want to deliver a different awarding body's qualifications. Once approved, a centre will stay approved indefinitely unless there are identified quality issues that need to be addressed.
- 3.6.14 In November 2005 a consultation began on the detailed proposals, and will conclude in January 2006. Main proposals include:
- a) implementing a shared, yet tailored, approach to centre recognition and approval requirements across awarding bodies;
 - b) removing the need for centres to supply the same information to different awarding bodies;
 - c) ensuring a consistent approach to the duration and scope of centre recognition and centre qualification approval;
 - d) implementing a consistent approach to centre recognition and centre qualification approval visits;
 - e) implementing a common sanctions policy for centres;
 - f) providing the market with access to transparent fee details across awarding bodies;
 - g) utilising current or new infrastructure arrangements to provide an effective and efficient process and better communication and sharing of data across awarding bodies, inspectorates and funding bodies;
 - h) ensuring consistent quality standards across awarding bodies;
 - i) providing learners with information to help them make informed choices;
 - j) rationalising awarding bodies' post-approval monitoring arrangements and the impact these have on centres.
- 3.6.15 The proposals have been welcomed by centres and awarding bodies. Subject to the outcomes of the consultation the new process could be introduced in phases starting in autumn 2006, with all procedures in place by September 2007.

Accreditation of Qualifications

Web-based accreditation

- 3.6.16 The QCA accredits each qualification offered by awarding bodies. Between 1999 and 2002 the average time taken for accreditation was 48 weeks. QCA have steadily reduced this to eight weeks in 2004/05.
- 3.6.17 In November 2005 the regulatory authorities for England, Wales and Northern Ireland introduced a new online system through which awarding bodies will submit qualifications for accreditation. Web-based accreditation is expected to be fully in place for standard accreditation by March 2006. This will increase administrative efficiency and enable the time taken to be further reduced to a maximum of three weeks.
- 3.6.18 Awarding bodies such as City and Guilds have welcomed the web-based system. Shorter accreditation times enable them to respond more quickly to the needs of learners, employers and centres.

Five day accreditation

- 3.6.19 Until recently the average application required a 21-page document plus supporting attachments. In May 2005 the regulatory authorities implemented a simpler and less bureaucratic five-day accreditation process¹⁴ for these awarding bodies that can prove that they have robust arrangements for developing qualifications, and a good track record.
- 3.6.20 Applying online, these awarding bodies only have to complete five short sections. It is expected that all qualifications submitted under this process will gain accreditation within five days.
- 3.6.21 Five awarding bodies have gained access to the five-day process, a further five currently have applications in progress and four more have indicated that they will apply shortly. The regulatory authorities expect that by the end of 2006 all 115 awarding bodies may have either moved across to the new process or will be in the process of applying to do so.
- 3.6.22 Web-based accreditation and the five-day process should transform the way qualifications are developed and accredited across the UK. The new approach has been welcomed by awarding bodies, one of whose representatives said "In principle, five-day accreditation could be the most important QCA development for qualification accreditation within the last ten years."

¹⁴Visit the accreditation pages of the QCA website for further details of the 5-day accreditation system www.qca.org.uk.

The open qualifications website

3.6.23 By March 2006, the open qualifications website (www.openquals.org.uk), where each and every qualification available to learners is available for viewing, will be revised to include more information, such as the grading and assessment data, as well as information on key progression routes supported by the qualifications.

Working together to improve processes for schools and colleges

3.6.24 The National Assessment Agency (NAA), as a subsidiary body of QCA, was set up in April 2004 to work with schools, colleges and awarding bodies to deliver vital improvements and support to the exams system. The NAA is also responsible for the smooth running and delivery of national curriculum tests.

3.6.25 The NAA works with exams officers to deliver the right levels of training, resources and guidance to ensure an effective exams process is delivered in all centres, and that the time of those involved is used effectively.

3.6.26 Improvements include:

- a) A more secure service for despatch of exam scripts, externally marked coursework and language tapes, introduced in summer 2005. Over one million packages are moved every year and the service allows exams officers to track and trace packages of unique work.
- b) Web-based solutions to support activities such as centre delegated access arrangements and timetabling.

3.6.27 Future planned improvements include:

- a) Web-based solutions to improve information exchange between awarding bodies and exam centres.
- b) Work to bring professional recognition to assessment through the world's first Institute of Educational Assessors, and help for awarding bodies to recruit and retain examiners.

4

The new BRG and the way ahead

- 4.1 The new BRG met for the first time in November 2005. It agreed that it needs to review existing targets and progress, and publish a fresh action plan in early summer 2006. This action plan will take account of the findings and recommendations of recent research, and in particular of the Better Regulation Executive report of December 2005 *Reducing Burdens in Colleges of Further Education*.
- 4.2 In March 2005 the Better Regulation Task Force report *Regulation – Less is More* recommended that Government should provide “a robust mechanism for the submission of proposals for simplification by business and other stakeholders”. The Cabinet Office have provided a portal on the Better Regulation Executive website based on filling in a simple form (www.betterregulation.gov.uk). Proposals are then forwarded to appropriate departments for action. The Department for Education and Skills will develop a form tailored for the education sectors and make it available on their own website by summer 2006.
- 4.3 The BRG will monitor the sector suggestions which emerge and the responses by responsible organisations. It will use this to help develop proposals for inclusion in the deregulation Bill which the Chancellor announced in his pre-budget report in November 2005, to be published in autumn 2006, or in associated simplification plans for public services.
- 4.4 The BRG will monitor the projects to measure bureaucracy in the sector and use the emerging findings to continually review and update its priorities and targets.



Annex

Independent Bureaucracy Reduction Group for the Further Education and Training Sector

Terms of Reference

Remit, governance and scope

- 1 The Group will review the operation of existing policies and scrutinise the design and implementation of new policies to challenge unnecessary administrative burdens in the further education and training sector. It will do this in close co-operation with the key sector delivery partners. (Department for Education and Skills, Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Inspectorates.)
- 2 The Group will report to the Secretary of State, and to the Chair of the LSC, through its Chair. It will agree its detailed workplan with the keys partners. The group will be made up of reporting representatives from of the key bodies plus practitioners, Trade Unions, Associations and managers from the further education and training sector.
- 3 The Group may ask Ministers, senior officials and the LSC to think again about proposed policies and their implementation, if they are judged to be unduly bureaucratic. It will advise on effective implementation of existing policy and make public its opinions.
- 4 The Group's work will cover policies and procedures affecting all colleges and providers in the further education and training sector, including school sixth forms, and all organisations that impact on them.
- 5 The Group will ensure coherence with the work of the school's Implementation Review Unit and the Higher Education Regulatory Review Group.
- 6 The Group will ensure coherence with the wider work of reducing bureaucracy across Government led by the Better Regulation Executive, and take account of reports and recommendations of bodies such as the Better Regulation Task Force and oversee any national projects.

Methods

7 The Group will:

- a) develop and implement its own work programme, in agreement with the joint management and support group described at para 2;
- b) work with key sector partners to ensure there is a realistic understanding of the workload implications of both existing and new policies, including:
 - i. advising on the need for and overseeing relevant research and investigation; and
 - ii. overseeing work conducted in the further education and training sector in co-operation with the Better Regulation Executive to baseline the administrative costs of regulation throughout Government on the private, voluntary and public sectors;
- c) work with the Department, LSC, QCA, Inspectorates and other key sector partners to agree priorities and action plans to reduce administrative burdens and eliminate unnecessary administration in existing policies and programmes;
- d) oversee a 'gatekeeper' process to scrutinise the design and implementation of new policies and programmes in the sector and optimise their administrative costs, including:
 - i. challenging whether assessments of workload associated with plans for the implementation of new policy proposals are robust, and procedures have been kept as simple and streamlined as possible;
 - ii. challenging delivery partners responsible for programme design to have effective scrutiny processes in place;
- e) advise Ministers, officials and delivery partners throughout the sector on how any unnecessary burdens and bureaucracy can be eliminated or minimised;
- f) oversee a process whereby stakeholders in the sector can raise examples of unnecessary bureaucracy and, where appropriate, ensure that effective action is taken;
- g) act as the champion of light touch regulation, and a powerful voice for bureaucracy reduction. Members will maintain networks to their constituencies, so that the group is seen as the point of contact for reporting bureaucratic behaviour or procedures;
- h) collaborate with the equivalent groups for Schools and HE, especially in the context of regulation for 'mixed economy' institutions;
- i) collaborate with the Better Regulation Executive and other relevant cross Government bodies to deliver progress on the wider front;

- j) meet as a full group quarterly, but also raise issues and provide feedback as required;
- k) report to Department Ministers and LSC Chair, twice a year to take stock of progress and raise issues of concern directly with them;
- l) report annually to the Secretary of State on progress made and issues arising, including details of both successful and unsuccessful recommendations, and specific examples of improvements and efficiency gains.

8 The Group will be supported by a funded secretariat.

Membership

- 9 The Chair of the Group will be independent and appointed through an open competition by the Secretary of State. The recommendation will be made by a joint panel whose membership will be drawn from the Department, LSC and QCA.
- 10 The group will be made up of reporting representatives of the key bodies (Department, LSC, QCA and Inspectorates) plus practitioners, Trade Unions, Associations and managers from the further education and training sector.
- 11 The Group may be reinforced by secondees and advisers at its discretion.

Membership of the Bureaucracy Reduction Group

Name	Title	Organisation
Caroline Lewis	Chair	Independent
Paul Warner	Operations Manager	Association of Learning Providers (ALP)
Jos Parsons	Post-16 Division	Ofsted
Julian Gravatt	Director of Funding and Development	Association of Colleges (AoC)
Peter Brooke	Inspector	Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)
Isabel Nisbet	Regulation and Standards Division	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
Dan Taubman	National Education Officer	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE)
Peter Pendle	Chief Executive and General Secretary	Association of College Managers
Claire Dove	Principal	Blackburne House
Donald Rae	Assistant Chief Education Officer	Derbyshire County Council
Frank McMahon	Managing Director	YH Training Services
Karen Cook	Vice Principal, Finance and Resources Arts	Somerset College of and Technology
Paul O'Shea	Head	Sixth Form Colleges Forum
Malcolm Trobe	Vice President	Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
Mark Fisher	Chief Executive	Sector Skills Development Agency



Annex

References to key recent reports and links to websites

Action to Reduce Bureaucracy (a summary of responses from key partner organisations to the BRG Annual Report) published November 2004 can be found on the Busting Bureaucracy pages at <http://www.successforall.gov.uk>

Annual Report 2004 (Bureaucracy Review Group), published June 2004 can be found on the Busting Bureaucracy pages at www.successforall.gov.uk

Five day accreditation – information can be found on the Qualification Accreditation pages of the QCA www.qca.org.uk

Learning and Skills – the agenda for change: The Prospectus, published August 2005, is at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/Keyinitiatives/agenda-for-change_prospectus.htm

Less Regulated – More Accountable The Higher Education Review Group Annual Report, published June 2005, can be found at: www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/hereform/improvingregulation/index.cfm

New Thinking for Reform can be found at the QCA website, on the Framework for Achievement page under the heading Qualifications www.qca.org.uk

Priorities for Success – Funding for Learning and Skills 2006-2008, published October 2005, is at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/FundingLearning/priorities-for-success.htm

Reducing Burdens in Colleges of Further Education The Better Regulation Executive report can be found at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/reducing_bureaucracy_on_the_frontline/further_education/index.asp

Reducing Bureaucracy in Schools – Progress Made, Challenges Ahead, the second Implementation Review Unit (Schools) Annual Report, published July 2005 is at www.dfes.gov.uk/iru/DSP_ourfindings.cfm

REALISING THE POTENTIAL, A review of the role of further education colleges, published November 2005, is at www.dfes.gov.uk/furthereducation/fereview/finalreport.shtml

Regulation – Less is More The Better Regulation Task Force Report can be found at <http://brc.gov.uk/publications/lessismoreentry.asp>

D Annex

Glossary of abbreviations

Notation of years: financial years are indicated as 2005–06, academic years are denoted by 2005/06.

AAV	Annual Assessment Visit
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
BRE	Better Regulation Executive (part of the Cabinet Office)
BRG	Bureaucracy Review Group (2003 – June 2005) and Bureaucracy Reduction Group (2005 onwards)
BRTF	Better Regulation Task Force (Advisers to Cabinet Office/Government – led by Sir David Arculus)
BTF	Bureaucracy Task Force (for the further education and training sector – led by Sir George Sweeney)
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
CIF	Common Inspection Framework
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FE	Further Education
FfA	Framework for Achievement
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HR	Human Resources
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
LRS	Learner Registration Service
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MIAP	Managing Information Across Partners
NAA	National Assessment Agency
NETP	National Employer Training Programme (now called Train to Gain)
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Authority
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency
ULN	Unique Learner Number

The 2005 Annual Progress Report from the Bureaucracy Review Group can be viewed at the 'Busting Bureaucracy' pages of the Success for All website www.successforall.gov.uk

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