

NEWS RELEASE

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BARNSELY SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE REAPING REWARDS FROM PIONEERING PATHWAYS EDUCATION SCHEME

A groundbreaking scheme aimed at raising education standards across Barnsley and South Yorkshire – and at the same time providing local employers with a better-qualified workforce – is receiving substantial further investment from Europe to continue its good work.

Pathways to Success was launched in all South Yorkshire secondary schools in 2001 by Objective 1, the European Union funding programme that helps Europe's poorest areas to regenerate their economies and create jobs, working together with South Yorkshire's four local education authorities; Doncaster, Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield.

The South Yorkshire-wide scheme was initially backed by £18 million from the European Social Fund. This provided sufficient funding until the end of this year. Now the further injection of £10m from Europe means that *Pathways to Success* can continue to benefit all pupils between the ages of 13 to 16, from the most gifted to those in danger of leaving school with no qualifications. Barnsley schools are in line to receive a further £1.9 million to continue *Pathways* until 2006.

Frances Adams of Objective 1 said: "This European funding has had an enormous impact on local schools and education. It has allowed South Yorkshire's schools to develop a more flexible curriculum with vocational options that are more appropriate for many young people and introduce it in only two years. South Yorkshire is the only place in Britain using European funds in this way and we can be rightly proud of the lead we are providing to the rest of the country with this scheme".

Pathways to Success funds three strands of activity:

- *Key Skills* (looking to develop the way young people communicate, deal with numbers and work with IT),
- *Enhanced Curriculum* (encouraging young people aged 14-16 to go on vocational courses linking schools with local employers, at the same time improving access to higher education, training & employment)
- *Re-Engagement With Learning* (aimed at re-motivating young people who, for various reasons, have become disillusioned with the education system).

While retaining these three strands in the second phase of *Pathways to Success*, each local education authority has its own main focus and direction for the funds to respond to local need and priorities.

In Barnsley the focus is to continue to diversify the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to enable more young people to experience a wider range of work related experiences and to increase the quality and quantity of vocational qualifications available to pupils. Barnsley is keen to ensure that the new qualifications that become available reflect the changing economic and employment structures of the area in order to maximise the career chances of pupils and to help business by improving the supply of well qualified and highly motivated young people.

Barnsley's Chief Education Officer said: "Pathways to Success is enabling our schools to increase the range of vocational qualifications on offer both in school and with other partner providers. Indications show that these new vocational qualifications are having a positive impact on several fronts. They are improving motivation, raising the achievement levels of pupils of all abilities and enhancing young people's prospects for worthwhile careers."

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The Objective 1 Programme in South Yorkshire is a £1.8 billion investment programme that draws on over £700 million from the European Union's Structural

Funds that are provided to help Europe's poorest areas regenerate their economies and create jobs. South Yorkshire is one of those poorest areas with fewer businesses and fewer and less well-paid jobs than other European regions.

South Yorkshire was designated as an Objective 1 area, which is the highest category of European support, at the Berlin Summit in 1999 along with Merseyside, Cornwall and the Scillies and West Wales and the Valleys. The Objective 1 Programme in South Yorkshire was launched in July 2000 and runs until the end of 2006.

To date the Programme has committed over £395 million of European money to over 360 projects in South Yorkshire. Objective 1 funds are supporting the development of new businesses, helping businesses to innovate and grow, supporting the development of skills and training, supporting social enterprises, supporting the economic development of deprived communities in South Yorkshire, helping to bring forward the development of sites and premises for increased economic activity and helping to tackle both financial and transport bottlenecks that inhibit economic growth.

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