

# Provision: Viewpoint

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## East of England

assessment of current provision  
workshop outcomes



Facilitated by

**Summit** SKILLS

The Sector Skills Council  
for Building Services Engineering

**HORIZON**

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the sector skills agreement  
for building services engineering

# Sector Involvement in Training

This is a 'work in progress' document. The views listed throughout these pages were suggested by delegates at the ACP meeting in Stansted and will contribute to the Sector Skills Agreement for the East of England. The recommendation numbers relate to the ACP report.

## Use of training providers

Areas such as manufacturer training do not add to the formal qualification base of the sector. If formal mechanisms can be developed to recognise this kind of valuable training, skills development of this type can officially contribute to the sector's skills base.

### RECOMMENDATION 4:

Develop credit-accumulation transfer and quality assurance with manufacturers and private providers.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Formal accredited status for 'ad-hoc' training would help engage more employers and encourage progression to higher level training.
- Build on national and regional process being developed for credit issues – don't reinvent the wheel.
- Format back to the J2 – J22 from years ago.
- Diverse add-ons – try to work with key customers to agree a small group of qualifications – sell to other customers as 'what the leaders are doing'.

## Employer willingness to pay for training

40% of businesses would be willing to pay more for their training. The sector will need some convincing to fund more than they currently do.

### RECOMMENDATION 5:

Get the curriculum and training structure right so that employers can see the benefit and value in training.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Improved awareness across industry as to the relevance of NVQ vs technical certificate.
- Identify the risks if training is not carried out.
- To add bolt-ons to conventional programmes as an incentive to industry.
- Can we persuade employers to relocate staff to teach? Provider pays – gets industry relevant teaching.
- Promote and profile case studies of success.

## Employer spend on apprentice training

Considerable amounts of money (in this case via an employee's time) is spent on in-house mentoring throughout the course of the training programme. There are many hidden costs associated with training staff and employers are already making a significant contribution.

### RECOMMENDATION 7:

Develop cost models further to achieve a sensible balance between employer and government training contributions

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Raise the profile with young people – not the last choice and it could lead to HE – do we have the pathways?
- Promote pre-apprenticeship training and recruitment from full time education.
- Research required into lack of apprentice training e.g. salary rises in plumbing.
- Recognising the true value of employer contribution would help engage greater number of employers.

## Views on content of provision

Qualification content in particular is seen as being in some cases out of date or not suitable enough for the needs of the sector.

### RECOMMENDATION 13:

Continually update existing qualifications in line with the sector's requirements. This also includes the development of new content such as environmental technologies.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Could we provide a guide for progression through apprenticeships for employers, trainers and providers
- Link with existing network of CoVE Specialist Development Groups (SDGs).
- Content of courses must be updated as industry's needs change. This is the responsibility of all providers.
- Involve professional bodies and trade associations in this process. Explore and develop forums for comment.

## Views on quality of provision

Generally there is more dissatisfaction with the quality of service and teaching provided by further education than for private training providers. Issues revolve around communication, the quality of teaching, resources and general curriculum planning.

### RECOMMENDATION 12:

Work with partners to improve providers' service: administration, teaching and communication.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Should not be seen as customers but as partners – developing curriculum, providing placements, requesting other training.
- Improved training directions to facilitate satisfying employer training needs.
- Use experienced industry employees as ambassadors/ reps to liaise with employers-employees as they would be more valued.
- Improve feedback on provision.
- More employer engagement with the content of the Tech Taster Manual.

# The Provision Itself

## Rationalising the number of courses and qualifications

There are training courses and qualifications currently in the system that have not been funded for a considerable amount of time. Because there has been no demand for this curriculum we suggest that it is no longer relevant to the sector.

### RECOMMENDATION 1:

Remove curriculum that has been unfunded in the past three years to remove the confusion in the system.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Employer-set qualifications across the board.
- 14–19 diplomas – where do they fit into the pathways?
- Can we improve communication and professional FE provision with agreements, schedules, contracts for achievement in apprenticeships? All parties responsible!
- Help employers understand pathways, qualifications – skills and curriculum – information, advice and guidance for employers.
- Buyers aren't fazed by the complexity of buying a car – why are they confused about buying qualifications and will they change?

## Technical certificate funding

There is a significant amount of funding directed at stand-alone technical certificates, which offer a theory-based qualification but no work-related experience. People undertaking a full-time technical certificate are typically not employed in the sector and have little prospect of gaining work-based experience to allow them to gain a National Vocational Qualification.

### RECOMMENDATION 2:

Only fund technical certificates as part of a full-framework apprenticeship or as part of an NVQ.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Too many full time students are not made aware of the fact that the technical certificates is not of any great value without the NVQ certificate.
- Alternative solution – technical certificates cannot be offered by any establishment as a standalone qualification without offering the opportunity to convert to an NVQ via either apprenticeships/conversion courses.
- Provide confirmation documentation for everyone in training within the industry regarding progression routes and skilled status.
- Link technical certificate funding to NVQ outcomes.

## Profile of learners

Access to the sector is still dominated by white males. Despite various initiatives and mechanisms being introduced to encourage under-represented groups to join the sector, there seems to have been little impact. There are also significant numbers of non-employed learners, both adults and 16–19s, who are on technical certificates that the sector deems to be non-economically valuable (NEV).

### RECOMMENDATION 9:

Reduce the large number of NEV courses and instead develop innovative and sustainable entry and progression routes into the sector for a reduced number of non-employed status learners.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Fund first L2 and first L3 qualifications for all, including women and ethnic minorities.

## Higher education

There are a low number of higher education establishments offering building services engineering courses. This poses a problem for individuals who need to gain a professional qualification alongside their work.

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

Develop a sustainable network of providers offering degree and sub-degree courses within all regions.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- HE provision needs to be flexible i.e. continuing professional development, foundation degrees. Collaborative provision between providers needed.
- HE provision needs to be aspirational for all rather than just for those already in post.
- Reluctance of HE institutions to revalidate degrees.
- Professional body requirements – dictate content.
- Resources and support from industry to specialist equipment.
- Why just degrees – why not NVQ4/5 accreditation for competence in the workplace.

## Expenditure on provision

Based on an analysis of current funding for non-economically valuable skills, there is potentially around £22 million across England that could be redistributed to much needed training provision elsewhere in the sector such as environmental technologies (solar panels, photovoltaic panels for example), business management, benchmarking, supply chain management and apprenticeships for adults.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6:**

Seek a more effective use of funding to improve sector productivity performance and skills levels.

### **VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:**

- Need to have a replacement offer to maximise reinvestment of £22m.
- Ensure that sustainability is incorporated into all training and is not seen as an 'add-on'.
- Provide funding for provision in demand that is currently not funded e.g. Short courses in renewable energy technologies.
- Should we have continuing professional development logs for all student workers to update and record essential training? Should/could this be mandatory?
- Could we build in additional modules like working at heights, working in confined spaces to NVQ's board accredited?

## Provider quality marks and awards

Whilst there is some take-up of quality marks and CoVE status in the region, there is still scope for more providers to achieve quality marks. Essentially if more providers achieve these standards then it should raise the overall quality baseline of the sector's provision.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11:**

Work with provider to increase the achievement of quality marks. Agree criteria of the 'New Standard' in the sector to ensure quality provision is recognised and endorsed.

### **VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:**

- Relationship-led marketing not marketing on standards awarded.
- Develop full-cost training with employers.

# Hurdles and Bridges

These 'hurdles' and 'bridges' to achieving great future provision were suggested by meeting delegates.

Hurdles	Bridges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Large decrease in numbers on full/part time courses in construction sector if no replacement</li> <li>● Government policy to educate people to L2</li> <li>● Government response to Leitch</li> <li>● Demographics</li> <li>● Adult retention on evening classes – professional vs leisure</li> <li>● Technical Certificate → NVQ</li> <li>● Formal meeting</li> <li>● Complex system of LSC planning to make changes quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manage way through</li> <li>● Look for pick up in other areas</li> <li>● Right information, advice and guidance</li> <li>● Transition plan and timings</li> <li>● Communication to providers to feed into strategic plans</li> <li>● Providers to plan response</li> <li>● Partnership working</li> <li>● More adult vocational learning</li> <li>● Clear information</li> <li>● Conversion courses</li> <li>● CSCS card</li> <li>● Time window to convert to NVQ</li> <li>● Partnership – provider – employer – stakeholder measure targets implementation plan</li> </ul>

## Great Future Provision...

Delegates were asked at the start of the meeting what words they would use to sum up great future provision. The highlighted words represent those which resonated with delegates following discussions.

Responsive	Value for Money	Commitment
Quality	Relevance	Accessibility
Fit-	For-	Purpose
Affordable	Accessible	Purchased
Curriculum	Progression	Inclusion
Progression	Partnership	Effective
Provision for all	Equality	Diversity
Requirement	Result	Saving
Responsive	<b>QUALITY</b>	Success
<b>RELEVANCE</b>	Quality	Affordability
Partnership	Value for Money	<b>DEMAND LED</b>

*These 'practical' and 'challenging' ideas are also the views and suggestions of the meeting delegates.*

### The most PRACTICAL idea worth doing

- To give accreditation to centres who offer the range of technical certificates and NVQs only, therefore technical certificates cannot be offered by any establishment as a standalone qualification unless NVQs are also offered to all candidates either by:
  - Apprenticeship groups.
  - Conversion courses (technical certificates to NVQs).
- Technical qualification joined with NVQ that employers will be able to recognise across industry.
- Ongoing meetings to enable the sharing of ideas and experiences amongst providers.
- Explore funding mechanisms/opportunities for sustainable energy qualifications (e.g. mass market renewables).
- Introduce continuing professional development log requirement across the industry. Provide a schedule, guide of assessment and competences time related for trainees.
- Working in Partnership: SSC communicating industry needs to training providers. Establishing better communication with 'client' employers.
- Getting providers talking together on how they can provide a regional offer to the sector's employers' needs.
- Taking into account current information from providers on the ratio between technical certificate and NVQ. Data used is old. New data may well show a different picture.
- Engage more adult learners in FE.
- Widen the funded arena across adults (as in Wales).
- Improve the quality of information, advice and guidance.
  - Using case studies.
  - Events for advisors.
  - Materials to support the above.
  - Mapping of current provision (MOVE is working on this at L3 and above).

### The most CHALLENGING idea worth doing

- Introduce CSCS type cards which show qualification, technical certificate could be given accreditation for say a 2-year period to allow conversion to an NVQ.
- Close the gap between colleges, learning centres and employers.
- Force the employers to 'take on' a minimum number of school leavers onto apprenticeship programmes (e.g. a certain fraction of their total workforce).
- Rigour and consistency within new foundation degrees within sector: how do we ensure this?
- Draw together all of the stakeholders on a regular basis to plan, short term and long term, provision.
- Demonstrate the benefit and value of training that result in employers engaging in training.
- Embedding achieving an apprenticeship as the route into sector employment for both adults and young people.
- More of today's meetings.
- Encourage students to develop further i.e. From L2 to L3, L4 and so on. Education does not need to stop at 18 years old.
- Link technical certificates to NVQs. Remove technical certificate-only funding. Link this into OFSTED audit to remove funding from areas where this is poor.
- Develop flexible/continuing professional development programmes at HE level.

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