

Provision: Viewpoint

London

assessment of current provision
workshop outcomes



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 Westminster and will contribute to the Sector Skills Agreement for London. 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 for manufacturers and private provision.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP

- A core and options approach to the suite of building services qualifications would help to rationalise the current range of technical certificates and NVQs.
- Skills cards should cover upskilling and the training stages of labourers, etc
- Credit frameworks (with solid core element) is the way forward
- Core plus mandatory modules to all qualifications
- Must complete L3 in specific discipline before going on to specialist courses
- Wider training is valuable to employers so should have recognition within qualification frameworks
- Employers benefit from 'targeted' training (diversity, etc) but must tie the training into achievement of NVQ.

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:

- Raise awareness of the Train to Gain service
- Brokers to promote cost-benefit calculation to employers
- Current funding looks for full achievement of a qualification so an electrician who wants certain qualifications needs to do the whole lot for funding and quality measurement
- Develop costs/benefits and clear pathways for training modules
- Recognise the need to provide basic and widespread training early in career of trainee so that they can make sound choices, and ensure a wide skills base available for future
- Need to draw on work undertaken nationally on the business benefit (and financial return) derived from apprenticeships

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/investment/benefit models further to achieve a sensible balance between employer and government training contributions.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- How can employers insure their long term investment in training? – secure employees' loyalty for a given time?
- Important for employers to maintain an apprentice/adult trainee balance
- Fund to support education and development (government) targets
- If employers benefit from trained staff they should contribute
- Develop an investment model to balance costs with benefits
- Employer grants for those that train – costs for those that do not

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:

- Consider unitised qualifications as a 'pick and mix' and fit for purpose
- If modules or options were funded separately, then gaining full status in one discipline e.g. electrician would allow development in other disciplines
- Consider low tech options (eg. CAT) high tech, environmental cost?
- SSC at core of qualification reform – their opportunity and responsibility
- Greater contact with employers needed

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:

- Employers to engage with providers
- Employers need impartial advice and one stop shop approach – not assisted by too many providers with vested interests
- Develop an employer engagement strategy in partnership with providers

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:

- Draw on provider best practice and collaborative working
- Qualifications reform – led by SSCs and employer-led
- Work with LSC to prioritise qualifications employer need
- Communicate through a coordinated single conduit
- Only use colleges that provide quality provision and outcomes

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:

- Merge technical certificates with NVQ to streamline qualifications
- Note that assessment strategy should link technical certification provision to work based learning
- Employers need to be more willing to provide work placements
- Remove funding and use to encourage employers who train
- There is some contribution of technical certificate achievement to the productivity of 'uk plc'
- Technical certificates offered alongside NVQs – employability package
- Colleges should only provide courses to be used by employers
- Discourage the idea that the sector is a catchment for poor achievers from school

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:

- Intake should be employer led
- Need to fund provision for adults – which has a VET package including NVQ and technical certificate

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:

- Bridge gap by FE providing foundation degrees
- Research what is out there and what is required then fund!!
- Improve sector image
- FE college ability to offer foundation degrees as part of current FE bill provides opportunity to provide progression. Needs clear link to employer demand
- Clear progression routes needed especially from craft through to management and engineering.

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:

- £22m is a nationwide figure – what is the London figure?
- Offer to employers who train!
- £22m nationally need to recognise for adult funding in future will be 'demand-led' and therefore not simply 're-deploying'
- Mandatory quality marks

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:

- Needs 'teeth' – if no compliance then it won't work
- Involvement should be mandatory
- Make the registration of qualified tradespeople mandatory
- New Standard must not be watered down
- Seek more funding to support levels 3 and 4
- Need to ensure the ideas of CoVE are sustained through the 'new standard'
- Need to find ways to stimulate 'excellence' not only 'competence' (thinking of 2011 world skills)
- Need to distinguish between purposes of standards and role of awarding bodies

Hurdles and Bridges

These 'hurdles' and 'bridges' to great future provision were provided by delegates at the meeting.

Hurdles	Bridges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paperwork to support accounting processes ● Competition between providers ● Confusion ● Qualifications ● Eg. pathways ● Efficient routes ● Electrician – air con, engineer ● Trade associations ● L3 standard across sector ● Non regulation is a real barrier in sector ● Poor image of industry sector gives opening for 'everyone' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Level playing field ● Badging ● SummitSkills need to be fit for purpose ● How funded ● How assessed ● Double standards let them in with lower qualifications ● Enforced trade standard ● Regulation ● Protect income of tradespeople ● Diploma at school level i.e. train from 14 people who have made career choice

Great Future Provision...

Delegates were asked at the start of the meeting what words they would use to sum up great future provision.

Quality	Sustainable – employment outcomes	Flexible
Quality	Relevant	Deliverable
Relevant	Content	Recognised
Flexible	Creative	Deliverable
Quality	Cost	Effectiveness
Rationalise	Building	Services
Employer	Funding	Focused
Partnership	Quality	Investment
Quality	Flexible	Use career change
Responsive	Fit for purpose	Quality
Demand led	High quality	Flexible, timely
Fit for purpose	Quality	Innovative
Scope for trainees to meet society's future needs		
Relevant	Quality	Achievable
Flexible	Responsive	Professional

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

The most PRACTICAL idea worth doing

- All steps to simplify training provisions and add value to the trainee and the employer
- Capture the best of the current suite of building services qualifications and rationalise into a suite of qualifications with core and options which cover all the building services disciplines i.e. the SummitSkills footprint
- Minimum standard for both disciplines – level 3 NVQ
- Look at different routes to achieve L3 in agreement with the employers
- Influencing a shift in provision to reflect sector needs
- Establish qualifications with common core element plus specialised units to meet employer demand
- Removing funding from providers not providing cost effective education and training
- Address the NEV issue and look at sustainable employment – partnership – employers, funders, learners
- Ensuring qualifications on offer reflect employer needs
- Registration of tradespeople/practitioners/professionals

The most CHALLENGING idea worth doing

- Sector diversity – wide range of institutional interests who wish to maintain the status quo
 - National employers organisation
 - Trades unions
 - Probably some training providers
- Make entry to the industry accessible to all – remove age barriers and promote/ensure diverse participation
- Close down level 2 FE funding. Money saved could support the industry in:
 - Education and Development targets
 - Support failing college provision
 - Support small companies
 - Promote train to gain – ESF availability
 - Invest in schools – promote apprenticeships
 - Develop SummitSkills network to approach schools promoting training within the sectors
- Changing current qualification frameworks to become fit for purpose
- Change employer perceptions of young people
- Sector Qualification Strategy (in terms of awarding bodies)
- Keeping up with scientific developments on renewable, environmentally friendly energy and ways to use them.
- Getting government to fund post 19 education and training, through development of employer led funding to encourage training!
- Revamp qualifications suite – look at flexibility and quality standards
- Card scheme to evidence individual's competency – similar to CSCS
- Consider trainees as future industry employers and expand rather than reduce scope and content of training

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