

# Provision: Viewpoint

## East Midlands

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 Nottingham and will contribute to the Sector Skills Agreement for the East Midlands. 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:

- Modular provision collaboration between providers – a single source for employers
- Use 'mass customisation' as the principle to the design and delivery of training and education
- SSC to take lead in establishing links between manufacturers and the provider base to develop appropriate units of training linked to NVQs
- Any training is assessed as part of NVQ prior knowledge
- Pre 1980s industry was regulated by the unions (wages, apprentices, etc). Overseas this vacuum has been filled by legislating all levels in the industry – starting with C.Eng to technician, skilled, semi skilled, labourer. Wage rates, qualifications etc can then be legislated and people working in the industry become legally liable for work done. This is the principle behind the legislation currently used for medical doctors.
- Create an independent SummitSkills/honest broker advisory team
- Streamline qualifications to ensure relevance
- Manufacturer-training should be classed as an 'add-on' to a solid training foundation
- Manufacturer training to be built into the NVQ structure

## 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:

- Integration of skills need analysis (Train to Gain) with FE (training needs analysis), SummitSkills dialogue with LSC, Business Link and East Midlands Development Agency
- Communication – put this in the NVQ structure i.e. meeting on site and reviews – employers generally will not attend meetings with colleges – they genuinely have higher priorities
- If training is fit for purpose the benefit is apparent
- Shared ownership needed between colleges and employers
- Allow employer to explain their course requirement to the college
- Employers not always sure what they want!

- Policy and sector skills strategy leading to coordination of effort need to be aligned
- Standardise qualifications required in industry i.e. qualified plumbers must have a particular qualification
- Benchmarking business to business demonstrates the business value in terms of profit/loss
- Flexible delivery with trainers training apprentices at college and assessing on site and reviewing with employer
- Willingness of companies to get involved – possibly enforcing meetings with colleges?
- Learn from best practice in European union, e.g. Holland
- Regulate who works on site with qualifications first
- Independent arbitrated discussions between colleges and employer
- Offer financial incentives
- Involve all sectors of the industry in critical design of qualifications
- Employer forums – continuing professional development evenings with evaluation and feedback. Invite all those involved not just employers of apprentices
- Employer inductions – make employers aware of the requirements of NVQ portfolios through induction evenings
- More informal meetings required between employer and tutor to see what is being taught and how

## 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:

- Allow cost of adults to be funded

## 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:

- Colleges to work with the likes of manufacturers to have joint qualifications
- Continuing professional development for training staff and teachers – the relevance of their skills will help convince employers of the relevance of training provision
- Ensure employer demand and ongoing participation

# The Provision Itself

- How can skills of staff be maintained in modular systems? Have better links with industry so that staff can also get placements to transfer skills to students
- Create training that moves employers away from manufacturer reliance
- SSC's qualification review recognises the need to provide progression routes to enable people to enter industry at level 2
- Development of specialist provision across the region – more collaborative delivery methods used by FE providers/HE institutions i.e. sharing existing good practice
- Manufacturers offer training on their equipment – certify their training as add on modules to basic qualifications
- Encourage better communication between employers and providers
- What happens in Europe?
- Cooperation between colleges to run courses
- Sector Skills Council need to develop the base content of qualifications to standardise across delivery organisations
- Provision should have individuality, be fresh and alive
- Have standardisation of qualification with all delivery materials developed by industry-led body prior to QCA accreditation
- Provision should be meaningful – collaboration between all built environment sector skills councils

## 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:

- Shoe leather not fora
- FE partnership with private sector to suppliers: x – paid through tax, y – paid by employer, z – paid by manufacturer
- Need awareness of what is out there to benefit employers
- Have better contact with employers
- Allow employers to switch colleges to suit their employment needs on an annual basis
- Employers need to be involved in the NVQ systems and have access to their learners' progress and work on demand

## 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:

- Enforce employed status
- Provide courses with a maximum 5 year 'life'?
- Employees leaving after completion of training
- Provide modular subjects through FE/HE or manufacturer courses
- Are employers aware of the range of qualifications available?
- Qualifications need to match up with CSCS skill cards
- Need sector qualification reform
- Have a modularised credit approach framed by employer demand
- Have a modular continuing professional development approach
- We need to ensure future apprentices cover both aspects of our trade e.g. plumbing and pipe fitting
- Modular credit weighted programmes across various trades i.e. NVQ2 = 100 credits – with extra units paid for by industry
- Update the technology in technical certificates through additional models (also found in NVQs)
- Is the provider on top?
- Ensure that NVQ2 cannot be achieved without employment
- Modularise the qualifications to accommodate 'lifelong' apprenticeships
- Modularisation – have credit accumulation towards an NVQ
- Modular for courses but keep a core unit
- Encourage diversity – do not limit to just one skill i.e. Prefitting/plumb/welding

## 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:

- Adult provision for adult entry, i.e. labourer to electrician upskilling
- The progression route must include a technical certificate 2330 (electrical) – the technical certificate develops practice of skills necessary to meet regulations
- Incorporate new technologies into modular courses
- LSC should only fund providers that offer vocational qualifications with technical certificates
- Do not allow none NVQ provision to be carried out by any provider

- Progression is important – new entrants need something to help them get to L2/3 and for established/completed trainees to stay within sector and with employer
- Only fund providers that offer the full training provision to level 3, not just to level 2
- Scrap the level 2 qualification for apprenticeships (electrical model)
- A consistent approach is required
- The relationship between employer/provider needs harmonizing/structuring
- Technical certificate must stay:
  - increase employer involvement
  - lack of skill in industry
  - lack of training places in industry
- Develop a recruitment strategy across region
- Communicate with all size of employer companies before any change, i.e. employers' group?
- Technical certificates provide the injection of skill and knowledge required before moving on to work-based learning

## 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:

- How is provision organised in other countries?
- Given the costs to employers of apprenticeships (both hidden and explicit), are more apprenticeships a viable way of attracting new groups to the sector? Need more flexible and accessible routes.
- Places are available but the applicants are not applying
- Need to address perceptions of the sector – media coverage of high plumbers' earnings has stimulated demand from individuals – how do they find the 'proper' route to enter the sector?

## 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 qualifications alongside their work.

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

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

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Joint courses between FE/HE used to work – they need to start again.
- Foundation degrees now coming on stream in FE institutions.

## 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:

- Combine full time college plumbing qualifications up to level 2 with raising GCSE levels to complete higher level qualifications later
- Implement paycales for adult trainees
- The problems are structural – business skills and mergers are the solution
- More communication with schools
- Do not forget the basics
- Consider the baccalaureate system?
- Opportunities in companies need more structure
- How is training organised in other countries?
- Widen accreditation of manufacturer's training
- Qualifications are similar but there are different accreditation bodies – why?
- Independent team meeting employers for support and advice.
- Clusters of firms taking on trainees (ie. as CC skills' model)
- Funding should go back to employers to assist with supervision/career path after apprenticeship.
- Sustainability – currently in the FE sectors we pay tutors/lecturers about £25k, in addition lecturers need Cert. Ed. which is 2–3 years training. Industry pays £35k+ – we can't get the staff
- Allow employers to be funded to employ adults or allow progression.
- Implement a modular framework approach
- A possible use of funding would be to develop experience levels of existing trainees.

## 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:

- Hold joint meetings between employer and training providers to discuss requirements
- Have a visible/clear public standard like 'CORGI'

# 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>● Is industry really asking what really/think needs</li> <li>● Micro-company training</li> <li>● Bridges need financing</li> <li>● Longer term needs of sector</li> <li>● Keeping all employers happy</li> <li>● Communication between training providers and employers</li> <li>● No enforcement stopping unqualified tradesman</li> <li>● Short vs medium vs long term strategies differentiation</li> <li>● Opinions today are facts e.g. costs &amp; impact</li> <li>● ConstructionSkills issue same as SummitSkills</li> <li>● Getting away from basics – need to attract right trainee</li> <li>● Focus is on small-medium, not medium-large employers</li> <li>● Non-engaged employers</li> <li>● Are tutors skilled enough and quantity of teachers</li> <li>● Academic vs employer diff languages</li> <li>● Failed by school education</li> <li>● Regulation (labourer to professional)</li> <li>● Funding right level for right programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finance</li> <li>● Modularisation</li> <li>● Both stakeholders for common purpose</li> <li>● New standard</li> <li>● Work together on results/communication</li> <li>● Clear route to education</li> <li>● Getting buy-in from companies</li> <li>● Professional updates/put it in law/employer payments for updates</li> <li>● Pay lecturers more (attracting right staff)</li> <li>● Lecturers need full skills to teach</li> <li>● More transparency/simple</li> <li>● Clear strategy on where to go with policy</li> <li>● Employer – college engagement (e.g. tasters) to lead to more teachers and communication</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.

Flexibility	Priorities	Proactive
Quality	Consistency	Relevance
Funding-	Quality-	Education
Fit for Purpose	Employers' voice	Accessibility
Communication	Willingness	Participation
Quality	Opportunity	Understanding
Ability to lead business		
Quality	Appropriateness	Clarity
What-	Industry-	Wants
Employer-	Demand -	Led
Flexibility	Quality	Responsive
Finance	Quality	Demand
Consistency	Accessibility	
Zero-	Skills-	Shortage

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

## The most PRACTICAL idea worth doing

- Modularisation
- Modularise courses to offer learners/employers flexibility in their qualification to meet their needs
- Upskilling via modular methodology
- Modular training allowing for the creation of multi skilled operatives, to include pipefitting, welding, plumbing, etc to include the needs of medium to large companies as well as the main focus at present on small companies
- Extend (require) collaboration on provision between publicly funded providers across the region (sub-regions) to ensure appropriate breadth and quality and remove over-supply
- Ensure employer participation and bring regional stakeholders along the SSA process.
- Communication with providers.
- Joint SSC approach (built environment)
- SSC to link employers to providers and reduce volume of networks
- Improve communication to providers
- Complete on overview of delivery/curriculum in each college/training provider
- Getting providers to work together better and share best practice.
- Get approval for manufacturers training to add as modules to existing technical certificates
- Stop short term level 1 for 'DIY' plumbers occurring (i.e. keep full-term apprenticeships 3–4 years to qualify) thus quality retained
- Work with other providers to develop new curriculum
- Improve communication
- Employers meeting college staff
- Modular subjects
- Keep tutor up to date with industry

## The most CHALLENGING idea worth doing

- Engaging new employers
- Regulate industry
- Enforce bona fide employment to enrol on learning programme
- Industry regulation by law (no short term measures)
- Ensure the separate colleges work together to be able to provide economical modular training
- Ensure better domestic recognition and consumer value placed in standards across the UK – CORGI, NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting)
- Engage with medium and large employers
- Support the design of fit for purpose qualifications focusing on employer needs!
- Provide short, medium and long term strategy to identify skill needs and provide clear messages to support training providers
- Streamline qualifications
- Ensure the right people are involved in design making
- Getting more employers (of all sizes) involved at all stages of the process – developing curriculum accessing training
- Legislating the industry
- There is resistance from Engineering Council, SummitSkills, LSC, QCA etc probably due to fear of prosecution and accountability. Solution is professional indemnity insurance. It works well elsewhere in my experience as the CEO of a major international contractor and as a consultant.
- Get more employers to buy in!
- SSC to develop all basic learning materials for all new qualifications prior to QCA approval and issue to training providers
- Legislate competencies
- Getting employers to meet college staff
- Getting colleges to provide the subjects and work to them
- Colleges allowing staff to update

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