

# Provision: Viewpoint

## North East

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 Newcastle and will contribute to the Sector Skills Agreement for the North East. 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:**

- Solution – key relationships need to be developed with awarding bodies, other SSCs and manufacturers

## Employer willingness to pay for training

63% 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:**

- Agencies who do no training should perhaps be subject to training levy
- Promote the role of the Union Learning Representative in unionised workplaces

## 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:**

- Perception of productivity challenged with employers
- Ageing workforce

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Qualification content in particular is seen as being in some cases out of date or not suitable enough for the needs of the sector.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

- Employers can tell training providers what they need.
- SSCs need to talk to manufacturers to ascertain future needs
- Have SummitSkills worked with Innovation Construction Skills Forward – they are working with universities to see what individual requirements are, current qualifications, etc. – SummitSkills should get on board

## 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 13:**

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

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

- How interested/involved are employers in quality of provision?

# 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 year to remove the confusion in the system.

### VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Information, advice and guidance – only a few people seem to be eligible. Leitch suggests that it should be universal.
- Information, advice and guidance industry must feed knowledge and information into system
- Quality marks
- Confusion exists, it could be simpler but there may be a need for variety
- Engage employers in FE and tackle perceptions
- Resolutions – work with Awarding Bodies to remove qualifications that have been un-certificated in the last 3 years.
- Information, advice and guidance – industry must feed knowledge and information into system

## 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:

- Maintain technical certificates for Programme Led Apprenticeships to enable young people to access apprenticeship opportunities which are not currently available
- More about information, advice and guidance, purpose of provision and proof of progression
- Progression routes needed
- Work experience e.g. sitework on local, regional and central government contracts
- Do any of the technical certificates map to other SSCs qualifications
- Definition of technical certificates from LSC + linked to apprenticeship framework

## 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:

- Sector diversity underpinning evidence needed i.e. why and where needed as it may not be the case across all levels
- Engagement with minority groups – local authorities' outreach workers
- Include disadvantaged customers in this i.e. long term unemployed, lone parents, people with disabilities

## 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 – I think we should explore on-line solutions and ICT platforms as part of higher level training
- Post graduate vocational qualifications

## 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:**

- Concern over the reliability and validity of the interpretation of data
- Information, advice and guidance
- Evidence needed
- Ensure Job Centre Plus funding is also targeted at entry level for the sector

## 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:**

- New standard should make a huge difference.
- Need to work with all training providers in the region re. quality and the new standard.
- Does CoVE mean anything to employers? What difference does a kite mark make?
- Need to get employers involved.

# Hurdles and Bridges

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

Hurdles	Bridges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employer engagement</li> <li>● Balancing different/conflicting agendas</li> <li>● Learning and qualifications reflect current and future skills needs</li> <li>● Information from sector (especially employers)</li> <li>● Inflexibility of managing agents</li> <li>● Thorough understanding of regional skills levels and priorities</li> <li>● Appropriate funding levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employer engagement</li> <li>● IAG from people</li> <li>● Use case studies (some reservations) and advocates/networking</li> <li>● Training and business awards</li> <li>● Exploit new technology developments to bring in new ideas on training</li> <li>● Cross-fertilisation between FE colleges and private providers</li> <li>● Robust evidence!</li> </ul>

## Great Future Provision...

Delegates were asked what three words they would use to sum up great future provision.

Sustainable	Suitable	Progressive
Accessible	Affordable	Equal
Employers	Flexible	Accredited
Accessible	Relevant	Information
Relevant	Timely	Effective
Employers	Flexible	Accredited
At All Levels	Engagement	Learner and Employer
Sustainable	Accreditable	Fit for Purpose
Responsive	Appropriate	Valued (By Employers)
Flexible	Adaptable	Relevant (VFM)
Appropriate	Demand Led	Visionary
Relevant	Responsive	Involvement

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

### The most PRACTICAL idea worth doing

- Establish effective regional employer engagement mechanisms
- Informing at an early age the benefits the sector can give through schools and colleges – this may avoid loss of talented potential employees
- Advocacy for all employers/Information, advice and guidance/learners/customers
- Credit accumulation for both technical certificates and competence based qualifications
- Sector Qualification Strategy
- Credit Accumulation Transfer
- SSC to work with employers to produce material(s) to support Information, advice and guidance – informing advisers and learners of the most appropriate career choices
- Robust evidence that provides a platform for agreed next moves between skills stakeholders employers and learners
- Engaging employers and employer organisations and raising awareness of industry and training in education

### The most CHALLENGING idea worth doing

- Establish effective regional employer engagement mechanisms.
- Create more relevant training that moves with the times.
- Bringing all parties together to provide better information for the future.
- The development of an appropriate Credit Accumulation Transfer system
- Engaging employers
- Engaging education



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