



NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – Midlands

FRIDAY 21st March 2014

Stafford College

Attendees at the end of this document.

1. Introductions

Kevin Whitehouse welcomed everyone to the seminar, thanking John Morris and Dave Brain for hosting the seminar at Stafford College.

2. Matters of concern

There was a brief discussion on the challenges of getting teams together for World Skills UK, with some employers being more supportive than others. BMet College and Toyota have both entered teams.

Following the raising of this point at the NW regional seminar, the shortage of teachers for GCSE Maths and English does not seem to be so much of an issue for Midlands' providers. Many providers including JCB have employed ex-forces staff and even though they may need to train as teachers as part of a resettlement course, the transition for most into FE has been very successful with only one example of an individual finding it difficult to take on all the roles of an FE lecturer. It is thought that it would be useful if a contact could be found to help find ex-forces staff and be circulated to colleges.

NFEC are intending to do a brief survey on the shortage of suitably qualified people to fill Engineering vacancies including looking if inducements are offered, and then to contact the AoC with data as appropriate as evidence.

The use of college enterprise units are no longer valid for work experience under new EFA guidance as they are not a true commercial situation. It was agreed that some industrial experiences could be a lot worse than the learners being in a sheltered environment as it is very much dependent on the employer, due to the requirements for a structured programme and any liability issues which may arise.

3. Apprenticeship trailblazer feedback

Andrew Parsons, from Toyota UK is a member of the Automotive trailblazer and he gave the following information:

- Industry will receive the money and pay providers for their services, this gives the associated admin/inspection to employers and there was discussion whether this is too much for many SMEs?
- The Automotive trailblazers are due to start in September 2014 and they are “going bold” whilst they have the support of government
- The Aerospace trailblazer is due to start in September 2015.

The development process was described by Bob Millington. An Industry standard, a 2 page document, is to be written first; this standard lists what a fitter should be able to do as well as their expected behaviour and attitude (which is also to be assessed). This 2 page document has been approved for Auto and is available on the website. The Employer Occupational Briefs (EOB) are in the process of being developed, but as NFEC has predicted in our response to the Richard Review, they will evolve from the current respective National Occupational Standards (NOS) already in place. The Employer Units of Competence (EUC) which stem from the EOB, which are similar to NVQ units, are then developed and then this is used as the basis for the VRQs. NFEC has fought against a synoptic final test at the end of a long and complex apprenticeship, and there will now be some summative assessments. There will also not be grades awarded for practical competence, just pass/fail. The technical/academic side will be graded pass, merit and distinction so apprenticeships can be graded based on the technical certificates not the practical competence. It is the Government wanting apprenticeships to be graded throughout and worryingly, not all trailblazer panels are not fighting this.

Andrew stated that the changes were to be implemented from 2016 with every apprenticeship to be this way by 2017. For the Automotive group, Toyota, BMW, JLR, Vauxhall, Ford, Nissan and EEF have come together and are working well with the ear of the Government. Where they have had issues, they have been granted meetings with the Minister to resolve them quickly. They are trying to involve more SMEs through the GTAs and the IET and IMechE are now also involved to ensure successful apprentices are able, if they so wish, to register for Eng.Tech status. The Auto Trailblazer have benchmarked good practice between the current apprenticeship models in this country and in Germany. The common denominator in successful programmes is having a huge chunk of off-the-job training upfront for a year with a provider. They want a mandatory 1400 GLH extended PEO upfront in a 36-48 month apprenticeship. They know colleges can do this and it is the funding cutback which has affected the delivered GLH recently (currently 214). The Aero trailblazer panel are wanting 600 to 700 GLH first year with NVQ knowledge and PEO. Richard Hamer, BAE systems is Chair of the Aerospace trailblazer panel.

A synoptic theory and practical exam will be taken at the end of year one, the Foundation Phase, for the off-the-job training to show the competence of the apprentice. If they do not pass, they will fail or go back to retake year 1 until they do. The Development Phase (Years 2,3 and 4) will follow a model along the lines of the current NVQs and suitable under-pinning VRQs. There should be some sort of assessment in years 2 and 3 before a year 4 synoptic test. There needs to be a structured form/document for the employer sign off to say that the apprentices can do what they need to do. Having an independent Engineering assessment body will not be good for industry as employers have new products models which may not be able to be seen

externally or lots of specific equipment which only the employers know how they are to be used correctly and effectively.

As yet there is no answer about who is responsible for Quality and how it will be monitored. It was thought that someone external like SEMTA may be good at deciding this.

Costing models are being formed now to put to Government, including quotes for provider support, but not wages of apprentices. There will be a Maximum Government Contribution (MGC) – in other words, a cap. This will vary between schemes depending on GLH. From this Contribution, 80% will be from Government, 20% will be from industry. The 80% from Government will be split 60% upfront and 20% being dependent on end related success. All money will go to the employing company who will ask for tenders from training providers/colleges and companies can choose where they send their apprentices. Colleges will probably have to tender and break down the costs to justify it to the employers as they will be using competitive methods to buy provision from providers and all commercial pricing structures will have to be justified. This is the competitive market wanted by Doug Richard in his review. It is looking like some kind of PAYE system will be the means for payment to the employers, but consultation is still taking place as this may not suit SMEs.

Industrial Partnership bids are trying to help SMEs enter schemes run by larger companies, e.g. Toyota is working with 7 SMEs to deliver programmes for their apprentices. There is no clear way forward yet but a possible way forward might include Colleges setting up similar schemes to offer this to local SMEs. There is a call for companies such as SMEs to see their apprentices as a resource for tomorrow, not as a resource for today, hence allowing them a full year off the job so that the apprentice can be fully trained and the whole of the Engineering profession gains by having “proper” apprentices back into the workforce.

Currently the Government is not stepping in to rationalise between the trailblazer groups, it is for the employers to have what they want. At the moment a mechatronics maintenance apprenticeship is being developed and this, together with the Aerospace Trailblazer is being seen as examples of good practice. Other pathways will be formed based on these but the government are not as yet being too prescriptive.

Industry believes that the Government should be funding a broad based qualifications with these qualifications updated to show changes in technology, such as Computer Integrated Manufacturing, Robotics and soft PLC. But the great depth with what companies need specifically should be paid for by the company later on. It has been agreed that all qualifications should be reviewed every 3 years.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will hold the budget for capital equipment and providers will have to bid for it from them.

Any trailblazers starting in September 2014 will be a mixture of old and new specifications, but these will be mainly employers who are already doing very similar work with their apprentices already. The new specifications for September 2015 starts must be with providers no later than February/March of that year to allow for full preparation, including any CPD to take place and to allow for effective tendering to take place. There is a funding consultation on the

website should anyone like to take part, as it is available for anyone to answer. Most apprenticeships will be September start just to fit with school years but there is no reason why a roll on, roll off may not be used. Entry level will generally be completion of 4 GCSEs, A-C.

NFEC will be holding separate meetings when the information is more definite on funding, qualifications and structure, as some of this current knowledge may change.

4. Awarding Body Updates

- **Logic Certification, Tracy Harker** gave information for Logic qualifications, many for the renewable energies, oil and gas industries. They are holding their 2014 National Centre Forum on Thursday 26th June at the IGEM conference centre in Kegworth, just off junction 24 on the M1; this gives a great opportunity to catch up with all that is happening in the industry and within Logic Certification, plus meet the Logic Certification team. There will be a number of top industry speakers and also several breakout sessions on LCL paperwork and systems giving a chance to preview new documentation and see how the online QCF registration system operates. Please contact her if you have queries, tracy.harker@logic-cert.com. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.mmtrackd.co.uk/2/display.php?M=4236530&C=adeb5760e26c6e31cd6019542782321d&S=7433&L=958&N=6197>

- **Pearson, Bryony Leonard** said that Pearson were developing new trailblazer qualifications based on the EUC and would be NQF and be available by 2015. These will be ready for delivery in September 2015, specifications and assessment materials should be ready by April 2015 for preparation work by providers. Should anyone like to be involved in writing content for these, please contact her on bryony.leonard@pearson.com.

The BTEC 1st next generation are now launched. There will be new Higher Nationals revisions ready for September 2015. There will be revised nationals, level 3 qualifications ready for September 2016 but these will be different from those for the trailblazer and apprenticeships.

With the removal of qualifications, 15 credit or less, following the Whitehead review, Pearson would like to still support qualifications with large registrations and providers should contact them if they would like to continue with a qualification affected by these changes.

Pearson will be involved in the development of qualifications for the progression of trailblazers including bespoke HNC/HND and Foundation Degree. There has been a bias of Engineering based trailblazers in the first phase of development, but there are only 4 out of 29 announced in the second phase. It is likely that there will be 2 different PEO qualifications by 2015/16 due to changes with NQF. There will be deregulation of old apprenticeships, so there will be a 4 year run out period. Awarding Organisations are being asked to develop qualifications quickly as it is forecast to have 5% of apprenticeships to be trailblazer apprentices started in September 2014, 20% by September 2015 and 100% by 2016.

There are new rules for internal assessment of BTEC Firsts and Nationals on the BTEC link on the website for rule by providers in September 2014, ready to help centres and learners with the external assessment being introduced in 2016.

- **C&G, Darren Quinn** – sent apologies from Andrew Hewison, should there be any queries, please email Darren on darren.quinn@cityandguilds.com.

There is information about e-portfolios for C&G 2850, levels 1,2 and 3 on Learning Assistant. The sales team is happy to answer any query, contact Darren or Kirstine Train. There are also sample questions for C&G 2850 evolve tests. It is password protected but this is usually the same one as for as Walled Garden. Andrew is developing C&G 3268 welding qualification to include Level 1 & 2 Award & Certificate size qualifications for Fabrication, Cutting and Brazing/Soldering. These will be available for new registrations from 01.09.2014. C&G 7689 CAD is being redeveloped for parametric modelling, 2d and 3d Cad and will be available from Oct 2014.

Should any centres wish to retain any removed 15 credit or less qualifications please contact C&G. Letters will be required to support these qualifications.

The Tech Bach qualification will include a tech qualification of varied GLH depending on award/certificate/diploma/extended diploma, a level 3 maths/english qualification and an extended project. The level 2 is equivalent to 4 GCSEs and level 3 is equivalent in 2/3 A levels.

There has been a name change from Focus Alerts to My preferences on the City and Guilds Website

<http://www.cityandguilds.com/provide-training/centre-support/preference-centre>

- **AQA, Phillip Bryant** – explained the new qualifications for Applied General and Tech level with the initial focus on 16-18 full time students. The Applied General is tending more for progression to HE with the Tech level being more focussed to apprenticeship and employment. AQA are working with colleges and industry to see how things are going and what is needed. AQA would like to talk to providers about what they are developing and are looking for providers who would like to take part. If you would like to take part in this or to find out any more please contact Phillip directly on pbryant@aqa.org.uk
- **EAL, Mark Haig** – EAL are introducing a suite of 8 rail engineering qualifications, at levels 2 and 3. These include track renewals, rolling stock and track maintenance; they can be part of an apprenticeship or stand alone. If you are interested, please look on their website and register at www.rail@eal.org.uk. EAL has launched a new level 2 Certificate in Applying Business Improvement Techniques which should be easier to deliver as it is quite diverse in that it includes practical activities, learner self-study as well as the theory aspects within the qualification. At the moment this is available to register learners onto, however it does not

sit within the current IOP framework, but should be introduced in the summer when frameworks are reviewed by the sector skills council.

There are new qualifications in Introduction to Personal learning at levels 1 and 2. EAL are revising their NVQ portfolio, removing those qualifications which are not used.

There has been an update to the RPL documents relating to level III electrical qualification – 501/1605/8, and there has been implementation of simulated assessments relating to the electrical qualification – 600/7695/1. For further details on the building service qualifications, contact your EV or if you currently have the building service EV then contact them. All Building services centres should be using the current Matters of Gas Safety.

SEMTA and EAL are working together to get qualifications onto SCQF.

There have been webinars held on the Smarter touch system, online service systems and exams. These are available on their website. It is free of charge and they are planning to do more in the future but there are no planned dates yet.

5. Implications of reform of vocational qualifications level 3 and Whitehead Review

There is a rationalisation to minimise number of available qualifications following the Whitehead Review, with at least 10% of qualifications to be removed. There are currently over 19 000. Reforms are already starting and individual websites are key at the moment for the information on these. There are lists of approved qualifications which are being updated regularly with appeals taking place by awarding organisations as required. These will form part of performance tables.

Tech level (occupational technical focus) and General Applied (general level of study more for progression to HE) need to be supported by HEIs or industry. This needs to be 1 professional body, 3 HEIs or 5 employers. It is also thought that should there be a change in Government, there will not be any major changes to what is going on currently. With the demise of SSCs, standards will be copyrighted, but with industry being in charge there should be some stability. Ofqual are also reviewing QCF and it looks like the system will be returning to NQF.

6) Work experience

New rules from the EFA are stating that college enterprise units for hairdressing, MV etc. will not count towards work experience. It is difficult to find work experience for students and many Engineering placements are to large companies. At Walsall College specific staff have been employed to organise work experience. From the NW regional meeting, there were suggestions that there may be a consortium of colleges in Greater Manchester who may work together on finding work experience places. There was a suggestion to call this work readiness rather than work experience. It is the amount of placements needed for learners which is the problem. If it were only 1 or 2 it would be easier, especially in Engineering. Within the seminar, there were colleges which paid their learners a minimum wage as part time workers in their enterprise unit and others who did not.

Bob Millington will work with the AoC on this subject and also talk to Fairtrain in Coventry to see if they have developed a standard for work placement. **ACTION: BM**

Date of next Seminar and topics for next seminar

Malcolm Hindle and Peter Winebloom from the EEF Technology Centre have kindly offered to host the next Midlands seminar in Birmingham, this is by junction 7 of M6.

The date set is **Friday 3rd October 2014, 10am for 10.15am start.**

Topics to be included are:

- Trailblazer updates– qualifications, SME engagements, funding, overview on phases 2 and 3.
- Discussion, possibly led by Walsall College, giving feedback on getting a grade 1 inspection report, with focus on teaching and learning.
- Tour of the facilities

ATTENDANCE LIST

| Name | Organisation |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Dilip Solanki | Deltatecnix Ltd |
| Andrew Wood | Cussons |
| Philip Clements | Warwickshire College |
| Malcolm Hindle | EEF |
| Kevin Smith | Walsall College |
| Andy Thompson | Walsall College |
| Phil Holmes | Festo |
| Bryony Leonard | Pearson (EDEXCEL) |
| Jill Mustard | Operations Manager – NFEC |
| Tracy Harker | Logic Certification |
| Phillip Bryant | AQA |
| Ray Kitchen | Birmingham Metropolitan College |
| Mick Nicholl | Solihull College |
| Andrew Parsons | Toyota Motor Manufacturing |

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Julie Hinton | Semta |
| Darren Quinn | City and Guilds |
| Andrew Simms | South Worcestershire College |
| John Morris | Stafford College |
| Kevin Whitehouse | NFEC Midlands Co-ordinator |
| Bob Millington | NFEC Director |
| David Brain | Stafford College |
| Mark Haig | EAL |