



## NFEC National Conference – November 24 and 25 2011 List of Comments from Evaluation Sheets

**Please Note:** These responses have been transcribed verbatim, with some explanation in parentheses where necessary.

### ***1. Please specify any positive or negative outcomes?***

- a) Very good networking event that enabled me to meet new people.
- b) Scones and jam were lovely – well done Holiday Inn.
- c) Fantastic opportunity to listen to the Apprentices talking about their experiences.
- d) Very positive event – thank you.
- e) Some good networking and opportunities to follow up.
- f) Really wanted GLHs presentation - realise the problem though.
- g) UTC information very good.
- h) All presentations and workshops relevant to current issues.
- i) YA Pre-Apprenticeship packages?
- j) All topics were interesting.
- k) Good to chat and get the latest from C&G and EAL on qualifications and frameworks.
- l) HE White Paper from Aston was good and informative.
- m) Higher Apprenticeships - excellent.
- n) Very useful workshops sessions to reconcile our experiences with those of others from the Sector.
- o) Happy with venue – but time for a change.
- p) Can some water and glasses be put out during coffee and tea breaks for those who don't drink hot drinks please?
- q) Networking was very good.
- r) Positive outcome that NFEC will lobby for a Pre-Apprenticeship - based on programme-led apprenticeship?
- s) The information concerning the HE White Paper was very useful and interesting – material I was only vaguely aware of.

### ***2. Which session(s) might have been longer or in more depth?***

- a) Dr Richard Hutchins (LEPs) – brilliant. Could be longer or repeated.
- b) Just about right – all of them.
- c) HE White Paper.
- d) Review of 14-19 Vocational Education (Wolf Report).
- e) (Workshop) – Employability – needs more time – e.g. Oil Industry. Need opportunities in other areas.

- f) Funding System.
- g) Funding and Extended Diplomas.
- h) HE in FE – Workshop on comparing and contrasting different opportunities, policies, delivery models used by colleges + impact of fees on HNC/HND/FD?
- i) Good balance as usual.

**3. Which session(s) might have been shorter or in less depth?**

- a) Workshop on Friday is already has feedback on Thursday.
- b) Breaks slightly shorter.
- c) Wind Power.
- d) Workshops shorter/snappier.
- e) Higher Apprenticeships Airbus – would have preferred a presentation on their experience as an apprentice rather than qualification programme.
- f) IMI session.
- g) Good balance as usual.
- h) Workshops ran out of steam a little. Presentations were about right.

**4. Please specify any sessions where you would have preferred different treatment of a topic**

- a) (Would prefer a) Workshop on strategic planning – what to do with regards to reduced GLHs, funding, employer contributions – what are we all doing?
- b) Employability (Workshop) and job for learners progression.
- c) Higher Apprenticeships - from the perspective of SMEs who may only have one or two employees who they want to put on Higher Apprenticeships.
- d) All fine – thank you Bob for another excellent conference.
- e) Funding of apprenticeships workshop went off-topic and I felt it didn't achieve anything.

**5. Please specify topic(s) that you would like to see included at the next NFEC National Conference**

- a) Employer engagement opportunities and how to encourage employer involvement.
- b) The latest Ofsted Report – (could have been mentioned and commented on).
- c) Delivery of PLTS in apprenticeships – how are centres handling them?
- d) GLHs.
- e) Funding of HE for FE colleges.
- f) Funding of Higher Apprenticeships. The March funding reform issues. Capital bid opportunities? Fellowships schemes.
- g) Some more (on) apprenticeships – bring some more live ones in.
- h) HE in FE
- i) Employers – let's hear what they have to say.
- j) Employability and jobs for students.
- k) Ideas on maintaining high levels of success/retention on FT engineering programmes – perhaps delivered by a Grade 1 provider of Engineering.
- l) Maximising funding opportunities for Apprenticeships, full-time students. Review of IMI Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship for Automotive Repair and Retail Sector.

- m) Funding methodology changing for 2013/2014(?) – update.
- n) Re-book Harlow College (re GLHs – will they stay or will they go).
- o) Workshop on Higher Nationals for colleges who deliver this BTEC qualification.
- p) Post-16 Pre-Apprenticeship programmes.
- q) Higher Apprenticeships?
- r) UTCs- Update on successful cooperation between schools, FE and HE.
- s) Workshop on student loans at Higher Level – how is it going for others?
- t) Latest thinking from the SFA on loans at Level 3 for example.

## 6. Some General Comments

- a) Bedrooms really cold.
- b) Food – especially lunch, below standard.
- c) Maybe time to change the venue – still stay in Coventry though – try Coventry Hilton or other.
- d) Venue is great.
- e) Would it be useful to publish the email addresses of delegates alongside the names on the delegate list so that we can make easy contact afterwards?
- f) Venue is absolutely fine, right size, right service and I know how to find it!!

## 7. Issues and Agreed Actions

- a) **Plumbing** - The electrical competence unit in the Level 3 cannot be assessed by an electrician. Only the BTEC day short course (unit 5?) is recognised. **ACTION: NFEC to contact Awarding Bodies (EAL and C&G regarding this matter).**
- b) **Extended Diplomas** - Lots of Extended Diplomas – confusion over terminology – needs clarification. **ACTION: NFEC to raise at meeting of National Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.**
- c) **One – Year Subsidiary Diploma** - Discussion on this variant VRQ. **ACTION: NFEC to raise this at National Council and each Regional Seminar under standard agenda item “Awarding Bodies and Related Issues”.**
- d) **Building Services – (Electrical)** – Still an issue regarding range statements for assessment. They are being reduced and are likely to be again. **(H&V)** – Similar situation. **ACTION: NFEC to monitor at National Council and Regional Seminars.**
- e) **Building Services – (Access to Building Services)** – This multi-disciplinary qualification on the whole not seen at fit for purpose. **ACTION: NFEC to continue working with the AoC, BACH and appropriate Awarding Bodies to continue with the review of the single-skill qualifications.**
- f) **Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA) Database** – Feedback suggests it is taking up to 13 weeks before a new qualification appears on this which in turn affects the flow of funding. **ACTION: NFEC to raise at National Council.**
- g) **Apprenticeship Funding** – Concern over costs of qualification content affecting both assessment strategies and fundamentally - the type of apprenticeships delivered. NFEC asked to lobby on these matters. **ACTION: NFEC to monitor through National Council and Regional Seminars.**
- h) **Apprenticeship Funding Levels** – Deep concern over proposed funding levels. Five levels of “uplift” – *Standard; Low; Medium; High and Specialist*. Specialist proposed at £12,000 and “High” at £8,800 which is likely to cover Engineering. Specialist will be reserved for very high cost provision like agriculture. If £8,800, this represents a significant reduction in level of financial support for Engineering. **ACTION: NFEC to investigate current levels for Engineering framework and lobby SFA (invited by Gaynor Field at Conference to contact her post-conference on this matter).**

**i) Apprenticeships – Concern over:**

- The consultation process
- Devaluing of GLHs as a guide to teaching hours as opposed to a basis for funding.
- Twelve-month period to complete an Intermediate Apprenticeship vs 42 months for an Advanced Apprenticeship.
- The level of understanding of policy makers
- Confusion over apprenticeship “brands” – impacting on IAG
- The narrowness of frameworks - or is this just a concern for the larger employer.
- Role (if any) of LEPs in supports the GTAs.
- The treatment of RPL within proposed funding model.
- How funding will support both the diverse and the specific.
- (Bring back Gant/Levy system!!)
- The lack of recognition of the breadth/complexity of the Engineering Framework within the funding model.
- The funding model “driving” which framework is delivered – high earners preferred irrespective of needs.

**j) Cost of Employing Apprentices for SMEs –** Government now taking action to provide a £1,500 subsidy for any SME taking on apprentices and supporting them through to conclusion. Some money up front and the balance on completion.

**k) Alliances NFEC can make to help with lobbying –** NFEC has built up some useful contacts with BACH and the AoC with whom concerns/issues can be shared. Also contacts within the SFA and the NAS have been made that will be helpful.

**l) Missing Opportunities (Oil Industry) –** NFEC asked to lobby Awarding Bodies regarding suitable qualifications. Also lobby for unit accreditation. **ACTION: NFEC to raise with ABs at National Council.**