



## NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – London and South East FRIDAY 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014

### Kingston College, Kingston Upon Thames

There is a separate attendance list available.

#### 1) Welcome and Introduction to the seminar

Barbara Rogers welcomed everyone on behalf of Kingston College and gave an insight into the Engineering section of the College. Kim Hollands welcomed everyone to the seminar on behalf of NFEC. Introductions were made around the room.

#### 2) Update on SFA changes – Gavin Graham

The restructure has now made 4 divisions:

- Chief Executive Office - marketing and public affairs
- Funding and programmes - policy, funding, delivery and performance
- Operations - accounting, compliance, finance and capital
- Central Delivery Service or CDS - employer and provider services for apprentices and delivery with phone in only and no local meetings.

Gavin is part of employer and provider team which is split again:

- Localism - work with LEPS
- Intervention – financial and quality but only if there are problems and intervention is required
- Apprenticeships - engage with employers and support the apprenticeship reform

LEPs are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and business and were set up in 2011. LEPS are of different sizes and structure. LEPS will influence funding as there is a bidding system for ESIF (European Social Infrastructure Fund) and Capital funding, based on growth areas and priorities. Engineering is seen as a priority growth area. Government wants 20 000 additional higher apprenticeships including Engineering. Traineeships are an important role to get young people work ready, but can only be run by grade 1 and 2 providers.

Apprenticeship reform is now taking place following the Richard Review in 2012. Employers have more control on training and finance. Funding will go to employers and this is still the latest from SFA, it is how it goes to the employer is the subject of the current debate. There are currently 5

funding bands, with an employer contribution of £1 to every funded £2. This is still in decision mode, probably until after May. AGE grants for 16 to 24 year olds of £1500 per apprentice for a maximum of 10 will change on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. After this date, for employers of 50 and under staff, they can receive a maximum of five grants.

Please see the websites for help

Links to SFA – the agency story

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-the-agency-story>

Link to SE LEP website

Richard Review

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-richard-review-next-steps>

AGE link

<http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/steps-to-make-it-happen/incentive.aspx>

Any questions to the SFA will need to go through the CDS with no face to face meetings now. Discussions showed that it is thought this will be hard for SMEs and may put them off. Many training providers are assuming they are going to be working as managing agents for the employers. The future of the AV matching service, which is part of National Apprenticeship Service, will remain, and there is work ongoing to make it more user friendly. There has been apprenticeship advertising on Facebook and a little on TV, with the campaign Get in Get on.

It seems that funding for higher apprenticeships will all come from the SFA, including the current HEFCE part. It is rumoured that colleges can work directly with universities to acquire delivery of the higher skills knowledge. There is a need to work with employers, to not just assume they want a bolt on HE qualification rather than offer them the higher apprenticeship with both taught elements and practise elements from the recruitment stage.

### 3) Trailblazer Update

Bob Millington gave an update on his involvement with the Aerospace and Automotive Mechatronics panels. NFEC, through Warwick Hall, will also be involved now on the ElectroTechnical panel.

- Any points NFEC give are based on the NFEC response to the Richard Review.
- Bob works closely with Mark Maudsley from GTA England, to try to get the involvement of SMEs because in Engineering, they employ two thirds of all apprentices. Currently most of the Trailblazer work is being completed by the big employers.
- The apprenticeship pathways will vary in structure.
- Initially there is a foundation, off the job, phase which is supported by VRQs, similar to the current PEO. This will act as the gateway to the development phase. An apprentice can fail the foundation based on competence, behaviour and attitude.
- Government wanted all competences to be graded, but these trailblazer panels fought this and so competence will not be graded, just a binary outcome of pass/fail on Aero and Auto

panels. Nick Boles is listening to requests on this point on a case by case basis so may vary depending on pathway. VRQs will be graded, and this will be the grade given against the overall apprenticeship.

- Auto Mechatronics is looking at an assessment model of a 3 day practical test with knowledge, understanding and competence at level 2. Aero are looking for a different model for assessment.
- The Auto Mechatronics pathway will have 1400 GLH in the foundation phase whilst other pathways will be different to this. For example, there will be less units in the Machining apprenticeship foundation phase so will need less time to deliver.
- These trailblazers are trying to get parity between Trailblazer panels and asking to get commonality between them where possible, such as with behaviour and attitude. This includes transferring of good practice between pathways.
- Since CNC Machining links with High Value engineering, there will only be one CNC machining pathway across all industries.
- The Auto Mechatronics trailblazer started in September for BMW and JLR, the Aero trailblazer will start in 2015. The money is currently remaining with the providers as the new funding model is not ready yet.
- Funding is up to £24 000 for advanced Engineering apprentices. Engineering has the maximum funding contribution from Government (MGC). £2 from Government for every £1 from employers. There are incentive payments available such as for SMEs £2700, taking on 16-18 apprentices £5400 and £2700 for completion.
- Employers can ask for bids from providers and contracts will be set up. This tendering process is not going to help the learner
- Money will go to employers, who will then pay the training providers. The administration of money for employers is a worry especially for small companies.
- There is a suggestion for SMEs to use training provider/GTA to do all of the administration for them. Government is taking SME as 50 or less not European standard of 250. There are no decisions yet if this situation may occur.
- Money will not be paid by Government to providers until employers have paid some money. This means that providers are having to fund this until that point which may mean potential cash flow problems.
- Will that £1 be a barrier to many SMEs? Nick Boles is looking at the situation. Are the incentives for 16-18 and for outcomes of success be sufficient to offset this payment upfront? If the Government gives a payment in kind, this does not fund tutors so the money would still be needed to be found from somewhere in the system.
- In Germany and France it is compulsory to employ apprentices.
- There will be no functional skills involved. Employers in Aero want only applicants with 4 GCSEs.
- 3 Awarding organisations, Edexcel, EAL and C&G are working together on their qualifications to ensure common grading criteria.

There needs to be stronger engagement with providers because so far involvement has only really come from Midland Group Training Services, Birmingham Metropolitan, BMW, NW Training Council and JLR. NFEC is going to work with GTA England to host 3 information events, including as broadly as possible all Engineering sectors, covering quality, provision and funding

across the country. These will take place at BAE Systems in Preston, Toyota Manufacturing UK, Derbyshire and an employers' premises in the South, still to be confirmed. The sessions will be run by the same team to ensure parity and will take place around March/April 2015 to ensure that draft specifications are available and that information is not changing as quickly as it is at the moment.

The Government wanted all apprenticeships to be Trailblazer standard by 2017, but this is not likely to happen. Any higher apprenticeship will be based on advanced programmes. There will be higher levels for both Aerospace and Automotive.

With the removal of SSCs, SEMTA is taking on commercial activities so are not so involved. It is currently not known who will now take on this role, looking after standards and rigour over the various apprenticeships. A regulatory body is being looked at which industry will fund.

If you have comments or anything else, as a provider, you want covered please let NFEC and Bob Millington know.

#### 4) Qualifications/Awarding bodies

Adrian Lewis - EAL There are some changes on the website, including new qualifications and developments (at different levels) in motorsport, welding, preparing to work, rail pathways / frameworks, building services such as gas, plumbing and H&S. The Webinars and on line system has been improved to make the online system easier to use. EAL are working with the Trailblazers, with pilot qualifications starting in 2 months with JLR on Automotive.

Adam Barrigan – Pearson Qualifications are being written for use with Trailblazers. There will be 30% external assessment and 50% of the content will be mandatory. Draft specifications should be ready by Spring 2015. Level 3 will be NQF and will meet league table requirements. NFEC, with Bob Millington, is involved on the advisory panel for these specifications. BTEC Firsts for start date of September 2014 are up and running with product design and materials, and are proving popular with schools and UTCs. There is potential redevelopment of Higher Nationals for 2016/7 and are currently under consultation. Rachel Wyatt was introduced as the Pearson Curriculum Manager for Hampshire and the surrounding areas.

#### 5) Update on Eng Tech Now

Jill Mustard explained that Phil Horsham from Eng Tech Now had attended the London and SE seminar in June but since then Eng Tech Now is also going to be part of the Trailblazer outcomes. Due to the interest from the other regional seminars, it had been decided that Jill Mustard will work to organise a meeting of interested colleges in each area so Phil Horsham can give guidance of what is actually needed now, and in preparation for Trailblazer apprenticeships, for colleges to work with employers to offer Eng Tech within their provision. A date and place will be arranged with Phil and the interested colleges. Kingston College showed an interest in the proposal.

#### 6) NFEC website and forums

Kim Hollands talked about the NFEC website developments with the forum now set up. This is to try to get providers talking to each other in different regions. Members have automatic access to this,

non members may request a months' free trial by logging onto Join NFEC tab on the website and registering their email address

***A tour of the facilities at Kingston College took place.***

7) Current matters of Concern

Bob Millington stated that NFEC are addressing membership equity with being, or not being a member, at National Conference and the regional seminars. From now on new exhibitors /delegates may attend one seminar for free and get a month's free trial on the website to see what happens and then make decision if they want to become a member and be able to attend all seminars for free. If not, after that a charge of £200 for a delegate or £365 for an exhibitor will be charged per attendance.

Bob Millington and Bob Clarke will be retiring from the NFEC Board at National Conference in December. Warwick Hall now looks after the business affairs of NFEC. Bob will remain part of NFEC in an advisory capacity and will continue to sit on various committees and trailblazer panels. Mike Bristow has been employed to set up the National Conference and Jill Mustard to run the seminars with the regional co-ordinators. There is now "new blood" on the Board of Directors and anyone interested in joining at this level of trustees is welcomed, please contact Bob Millington.

The National Conference will take place on 4th and 5th December at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham University. The full programme has been published and is available on the NFEC website. The programme is taking on new initiatives, with no breakouts, but a more focussed programme such as the training of apprentices on undergraduate and teaching technicians' routes at university level and Richard Hamer will update on trailblazers and SFA funding.

Topics for next seminar

Potential topics were discussed:

- Trailblazer updates, with employers from companies who are local to the host provider
- Discussion on employers views for reform
- GCSEs, helping apprentices and those on study programmes to achieve grade C
- Study programmes and finding high quality work experience, perhaps with Stephen Gardener, Fairtrain

Venue

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015 has been suggested and thanks to Kim Hollands for offering to host the seminar at IPS International, Rochester.

Please remember the National Conference, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham University.

Kim Hollands and Barbara Rogers thanked everyone for attending and thanks were given to Barbara and Kingston College for hosting this seminar.

Name	Organisation	Other info
Alan Hare	IPS International	
Andrew Wood	Cussons	
Dave Porter	Boxford	
Andrew Chater	Chichester College	
Dilip Solanki	Deltatecnix	
Graham Fleming	NU Training Services	
Kamal Bhattacharyya	Daikin Airconditioning UK Ltd	
Phil Holmes	Festo	
Sameer Ali	LJ Create	
Louise Bracegirdle	Kingston College	
Barbara Rogers	Kingston College	
Kim Hollands	London/SE Regional Co-ordinator	
Bob Millington	NFEC Director	
Gavin Graham	Employer and Delivery Service Manager – Skills Funding Agency – National Apprenticeship Service	
Adrian Lewis	EAL	
Adam Barrigan	Pearson	
Rachel Wyatt	Pearson	
Jill Mustard	NFEC Operations Manager	