



NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – London/South East

FRIDAY 7th February 2014

Royal Greenwich UTC

There is a separate signed attendance list available.

Mike Sharp, Principal of the Royal Greenwich UTC made a brief welcome and an introduction to the UTC which has only been open for 17 operational weeks, with currently year 10 and 12 students only, with the aim for preparing them for jobs which might not yet exist.

Kim Holland, NFEC Director and Regional co-ordinator welcomed everyone to the seminar and gave apologies from Bob Millington for not attending due to attending a funeral.

Introductions

Mike Bristow, NFEC Consultant described that NFEC had held 2 national conferences last year, but this year there will be just one, probably around December time, but during the year NFEC will be concentrating on holding more regional seminars including more subject specific events such as a one day seminar in May on Trailblazer Apprenticeships.

There have been some changes to the NFEC organisational structure with Jon Gill taking over as Chair, Warwick Hall taken over the work of Alan Gray with Richard Brooks, Kim Holland, Bob Clarke, John Lockey and Bob Millington as NFEC Directors.

Beginning in January, Jill Mustard has taken on a new role within NFEC as Operations Manager, currently working 2 days a week. Her initial work has been to check currency of databases and has already spoken with many providers and looks forward to meeting more as she attends the regional seminars in the next couple of months. She will be talking to providers to ensure that NFEC are targeting the needs of members within its work programme. Her email contact is jillmustard@nfec.org.uk.

There are exhibitors from LJ Create, Cussons and Festo in attendance today so attendees could take time to look at their products on display.

NFEC has the “ear of Government” and the more people who are involved with NFEC will give more strength to any points being made. Please could attendees let Kim Holland or Jill Mustard know of any names from other providers who may benefit from attending these types of events so we may also invite them to join the NFEC seminars.

Feedback from Awarding Bodies

City and Guilds , Andrew Hewison, there has been a lot of focus on 14-19 level 2 and 3 qualifications including involvement from employers. Many are now drafted but it is too early to be able to share them yet. A Tech Bacc is about 2 months away from being available ready for a September 2014 start. There has been a lot of involvement in the many Trailblazer meetings, with 4 new qualifications being developed already. There has been technical guidance from DfE and other supporting bodies on 16-19 qualifications. There have been modifications to C&G 2580 and the Engineering Diploma and new short courses in Welding and CAD will be available from October 2014.

EAL, Jas Sall – there are new rail qualifications including track maintenance and signalling, revisions to BIT lean manufacturing and a qualification portfolio for building services. There is a level 2 Introduction to Personal Learning and a level 2 Manage your own Learning Styles. Webinar events are being launched covering EAL Smartermtouch on February 26th, online certification on March 5th and accessing exams on online and security on March 12th.

IMI, Barry Williams has sent his apologies but written details were available outlining developments on 16-19 qualifications being supported by companies such as Volvo, John Deere, Kawasaki , BMW and Vauxhall, which are accepted for key stages 4 and 5. There are some level 3 qualifications approved for used on key stage 5 and some service and maintenance engineering qualifications which allow progression to FE education. They are trying to send out the message that vocational learning is the same as academic qualifications even if many will be removed in 2016.

Edexcel, Elaine Davis and Christine Hepworth – there are new specialist accredited Pearson first awards in Product Design and Development available from September 2014 with backing from the Royal Academy of Engineering and backed by Siemens and JCB. The Royal Academy of Engineering has also been involved in the development of new Engineering A levels to be ready for 2017 start date. Performance tables for 2016 have been released, many of the inclusions are BTEC, with 7 more on pending list awaiting professional body approval so it is hoped these will also be included on the issue of the March list. There is to be a National level 3 provision for Product Management and Pearson are looking for writers. The pathway and structures are available for this next generation if anyone is interested in being involved. There are some level 2 and level 3 qualifications which are due to expire in December 2014 and Pearson is currently making decisions on which to withdraw or to extend. It does look like the level 2 Applied Manufacturing in Engineering will be extended due to the Rail apprenticeships

Logic Certification, Tracy Harker – Logic have qualifications to meet the needs of Gas and Building Services including renewable, plumbing , heating, biomass, gas safety awareness and safety. Tracy covers all of the UK so please give her a call if you require any further information 078872 456278. A discussion took place on whether providers are struggling with provision on renewable energy. Solar thermal, heat pumps and biomass are the 3 most supported by Government, interest is gaining but not at the rate PV took off initially. PV is not particularly included nowadays. Pre-requisites for learners are needed before training which is mainly on installation but does contain some design elements and knowing the correct calculations to perform. Grant Engineering, based in Yeovill, are manufacturers of biomass equipment and Gtech is also another company who supply and install products for renewables.

There seems to be a lot of wind farms being created but many employees are from Europe rather than the UK. This supply chain needs to change. Grow Offshore wind is an interested organisation and they are looking to support providers with industry match funding and are looking for invitations to advise on to help a bid proposal. Lowestoft is the port used to service this industry.

Mike Sharp stated that the UTC ethos is to have industrial scale to give learners understandability and education, not for just vocational training purposes and the students will be installing a wind turbine for themselves shortly.

Awarding Bodies information on the Whitehead review

They've been focussing on 14-19 qualifications rather than the changes for adults so did not have anything really to report.

As so many industry employees are now becoming apprentices, age is not taken into account during the development of a qualification and it is not thought that there will be a separate apprentice qualification for 19+. Level 3 guidance has been given by DfE for Trailblazers but no guidance has yet been received for 19+ and the seminar agreed this would be a nightmare to manage if such a thing happened. There are now many employers willing to fund 19+ even though there is funding available for the 16-19 age range, although one college reported that their Maintenance engineering programme was all 16 year olds this year rather than having some adults included and this is thought to be due to funding issues. Other areas are not funding adults until higher level qualifications. Frameworks for apprentices are changing for functional skills and ICT now dropped.

More employers are asking about higher apprenticeships. The notion of Whitehead review trying to declutter qualifications has had no impact yet. The other challenges are taking priority because if funding is to be dropped then why do too much development in this area. It does appear that some of the systems are working such as QCF and NCF are sort of fit for purpose. Large employers are again taking over in the consultations rather than SMEs but how can these be encouraged to get involved. Each Trailblazer must have sponsorship by SMEs with 5 to endorse a qualification by letter.

Feedback from the last meeting in Carshalton College

ACE -The uploading of information onto the ACE system is slow with many workbased learning coordinators doing the certification but the receiving of the certificate is appropriate timing.

C&G 2357 and amount of workload involved – Changes were going to be made by January 2014 but these have not been seen yet. Andrew will take this and talk directly to Carshalton College.

Effect of raising the participation age – there is misunderstanding with students believing they have to stay on at school rather than being able to attend colleges or taking on apprenticeships. This misdirection will hit funding at 17 for many colleges. Jas commented on an activity survey of apprentice on EAL website where statistics are saying 50% of apprentices found out about it under own initiative, 7% received no career advice from school, 98.5% were happy with their choice for

becoming an apprentices and 68% of schools gave academic recommendations whilst only 4% gave advice for apprenticeships. There are more older apprentices being seen as mature people are wanting to re-skill even though there is still limited take up on loans for level 3 learners as they are difficult to obtain.

There are many UTCs further north in the country than in the London area. Hackney UTC initially wanted to be academic institution but they are now changing to be more vocational too, including taking on some apprentices. It seems to be harder for UTCs to gain key stage 4 pupils rather than key stage 5. It is thought that travelling may put off younger students to UTCs and that is important to keep qualifications linked with future progression into apprenticeships or colleges.

There was an interesting tour of the facilities at Royal Greenwich UTC.

NFEC role in 2 Trailblazer panels

Bob Millington is representing NFEC on 2 panels, Aerospace and Automotive Manufacturing and sent some notes to be passed on. Andrew Hewison from C&G is also part of the Aerospace panel.

- Matthew Hancock is listening to opinions during the panel discussions; so far, the independent assessment of practical work will be binary i.e pass / fail whilst VRQ qualifications will be graded pass, merit, distinction.
- The new foundation version of PEO is the National Occupation Standard and needs to be re-written as a unit with assessment.
- There are a number of challenges with lots of work ongoing since December with timescales for Aerospace submission due 14th February although funding has not been decided.
- A GLH of 1400 is asked for on Automotive Mechatronics , rather than the currently stated 216.
- Pilot dates for Automotive is given as September 2014.
- BIS Pilot date for Aerospace is January 2015 but GKN are saying September 2015.
- There will be more panels starting in Aeronautical Maintenance and Food and Drink Maintenance in the next few weeks.
- GTA England are looking to be the voice for SMEs but there is very little work being done with little SMEs.
- Many Sector Skills Councils seem to have been sidelined although Cogent seem to be involved.
- BMW, JLR and Toyota UK are backing what is happening.

NFEC propose to hold a separate day later in the academic year specifically for Trailblazer Apprenticeships.

The type of proposed agenda being:

1. Role of Trailblazer Group
2. Membership and rationale for this.
3. Changes achieved e.g. binary outcome for competence assessment, only VRQs graded; common criteria for thresholds on grades (Pass, Merit and Distinction) from AOs; common content and rigour of VRQs for any given level.
4. Changes in relationship between industry and providers.
5. How SMEs will be engaged and their apprenticeships managed.
6. Guided Learning Hours (GLHs) for Foundation and Development Stages of Apprenticeships.
7. Levels of funding and how fees might be negotiated. The concept of government caps on fees.
8. Any differences regarding the routing of funds to large employers as opposed to SMEs.
9. Qualifications – nature, structure, broad content, **independent** assessment for both competence based NVQs and underpinning VRQs. Awarding Organisations involved. Common grading for assessment. (AOs may like to be involved in joint/separate workshop sessions).
10. Q & A Session(s).

This was agreed to be a good idea for a day in May, probably a Friday, meeting around the Coventry area preferably at an employer such as JLR or BMW in Oxford. Festo also offered their premises in Northampton, off junction 15 M1.

Study programmes and traineeships

Havering College are in their first year of delivering traineeships with Functional skills/GCSEs and will be doing GCSEs in second year. With the funding dropping at 18 as the level 3 work impacts there may be difficulties in delivering the right level in the amount of GLH available. Also work experience is needed and getting this balance with visits will be difficult.

With this drop in 25% funding, John Gill and AOC are lobbying for discussions on this and Jon Gill would like feedback on the impact, as of yet there are no facts and figures been given.

It seems that there are limited small traineeship programmes as yet. Many youngsters not ready for the workplace, in fact many are a long way from this. It follows that there are many current fulltime level 2/3 students are not ready for employment, even HNC students. Work experience places can be difficult to obtain with so many learners and companies requiring insurance. Bedford College is looking at setting up a learning company within the college and then selling its products to schools.

College of NW London took on a specialist person to arrange work experience and this has proved successful with having the right personality with time to do the arranging. It is possible to get people to come to college to talk to students as part of work experience giving experience of work rather than work experience. The interpretation is difference between centres but it is agreed that this needs to be clearer in future changes to make work experience valid and real but will be a greater challenge.

Companies are reporting that they have apprentice vacancies but students coming for interview are not suitable for the role, not being “rounded” for employment. City College Norwich is now

providing 3 hours a week practical session so that its learners are confident to handle tools and able to select appropriate fasteners rather than being of academic level 3 with no practical skills. It was agreed that students needed staged progress for practical work to move into the next stage as a rounded engineer. Enrichment activities within traineeships with funding can be done but without funding may be difficult. Other employers are looking for employees who are punctual, look presentable and have the appropriate attitude to learning.

Different colleges have been doing different activities to try to achieve punctuality of students such as 100% attendance being rewarded with free tools or the chance to win an i-pad or similar incentive. Others have taken 15 minutes to talk to a student in their lunch break when they were 15 minutes that morning. Another college has been known to change its starting time to suit learners.

Next regional seminar

College of NW London has provisionally offered its premises, which is close to the Dollis Hill tube station, to host the next London and SE seminar. A date of Friday 27th June is suggested. Proposed discussion topics so far are inputs from awarding bodies and SSCs, updates on developments for the Whitehead review and new qualifications and Functional Skills after 2 years of delivery and how colleges are performing and also "selling" them to students.

Please email Kim Holland or Bob Millington should anyone wish another topic to be added to the agenda.

Kim thanked everyone for attending, to Jamie for organising, Mike for the tour and the exhibitors for coming and also to remember the National Conference when it is arranged for the end of the year.