



NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – Midlands FRIDAY 6th March 2015

Dudley College

There is a separate attendance list available.

1) Welcome and Introduction to the seminar

John Lockley welcomed everyone to the seminar on behalf of Dudley College, Kevin Whitehouse, as Chair, also welcomed everyone and introductions were made around the room.

2) Current matters of concern

Kevin Whitehouse attended a HS2 conference held in Birmingham at end of February and he outlined the headline points showing the opportunities which are available around this initiative:

- Phase 1 will be completed by 2026 Birmingham to London, Phase 2 to Leeds will continue from this.
- It is the biggest scheme in Europe with £40 billion investment, 100 000+ jobs in areas such as Construction, groundwork, H&S, Manufacturing, Electrical/ Electronic engineering, signalling, ecology, rolling stock and project management, over a 20 years plan.
- Recruiting staff for these positions may be difficult due to current record employment rates and also that 40% of employed people in this industry are older than 50, 20% are over 55 and 96% are male.
- There will need to be an upgrade for National Grid and Telecommunications in the areas to meet the needs.
- There will be a National Rail Hub at Northampton, colleges at Birmingham and Doncaster, and a Rail Specialist Centre at Newcastle College has been built.
- There will need to be a lot of training to meet these needs.

So what are the challenges?

- College Staff recruitment may be difficult.
- Work required for developing the relevant qualifications and apprenticeships are still a bit of a grey area.
- This recruitment will soak up a lot of school leavers.
- Retraining of current staff will need to happen at a fast pace.
- Discussions showed preferences to see current good colleges being involved and helping to support the training rather than have specialist colleges being set up from new.

Discussions following this highlighted difficulties in the recruitment of engineering staff. There is a gap in salaries for staff in industry and those in education and that this will also be the same for all specialist areas. This is going to cause real problems for future training of engineering skills and apprenticeships. It was thought that it would be better if lecturer salary matched that of those skills required in that industry rather than all lecturers being paid the same regardless of their industry average salaries.

3) Qualifications/Awarding bodies

EAL – Mark Shepherd and Jon Mitchell

There have been recent changes in several qualifications including track maintenance and rolling stock. The qualifications have been contextualised to meet specifications required by their sectors so they meet SEMTA apprenticeship requirements and map to relevant industry standards. There are EVs in place to support these qualifications.

There is a new VRQ level 1 Welding which is online with a link on the EAL website for this.

There is a range of Motorsport qualifications developed for key stage 4 and 5 which have now been approved.

EAL offer Flexible solutions which allows you to mix and match qualifications for yourself to meet the needs of employers.

Webinars are proving successful so please try them for yourselves. If any further details are required on anything from EAL, please contact Mark and Jon (mshepherd@eal.org.uk and jmitchell@eal.org.uk).

Pearson – David Lee

The new Edexcel website went live in December. There has been a lot of work ongoing on the review of BTEC Nationals level 3. Should you wish to be part of this, please look at the Pearson Planner 2016 to join the planning, content and external assessment discussions.

Interim qualifications (award 360GLH, subsidiary diploma 540GLH) will be available in 2016, with the full qualifications available in 2018. The draft specifications for these will be ready from September 2015. There will be national events during the year to disseminate the information. There will probably be a year of dual running up to 2017, but this will depend on QCF and SASE. A discussion took place on hours for GLH and fitting into the available college funding for curriculum requirements. Funding is not available for study programmes as they are for apprenticeships. There is a resource package being developed for units to support FELTAG requirements.

The higher nationals are being reviewed now and will include a minimum English Language requirement. There is to be a new HN Global digital community and on-line library for students and tutors so please get involved.

BTEC firsts are on the list and are funded for 19+ learners. Please contact Steve Smith, Stacy Venables and David Lee for any further information.

C&G – Chris Bailey

There has been a lot of work towards the developments of qualifications for trailblazers as well as SFA funding and their statements of purpose with 11% more cuts of funding to be made. Letters of support will be very useful for keeping qualifications as there is an annual review process, anything with less than 100 registrations are being cut.

Preston College with STEM have developed a level 4 qualification and would like others to join in to look at the draft. Work on a food engineering maintenance qualification is ongoing. There have been many updates for Electrotechnical and Plumbing sectors.

AQA – Philip Bryant

DFE have an updated list published on track performance for level 2. AQA have 3 qualifications at technical level from September 2015 including power network, design engineering and mechatronics which will have associated performance and UCAS points. These are supported by the Engineering Council for Eng Tech. For any more information please contact Phil on pbryant@aqa.org.uk. Training events are being organised with some online events which you are now able to register on.

4) Bid Writing – Graham Arnold, Bid Development Manager at Birmingham Metropolitan College

For securing funding with the LEPs in place rather than just SFA, it is important to understand what LEPs are and how they fit into the process. For BMet 10% of its income must come from this type of funding so they must know how each faculty is going to achieve this external funding. Negotiation skills are very important with employers. There are 147 colleges in financial difficulties and there are more funding cuts just announced.

Often there is lots of activity with lots of enthusiasm in bid writing at beginning but then it gets harder. Successful tenders are generally the result of a wider end to end process and getting commitment throughout the process by the whole team. Graham explained 10 points for why tenders may not be successful such as:

- poor planning
- last minute rushed jobs (spending 5/ 6 weeks on the process is good)
- meeting their requirements and explaining what's in it for them
- unattractive pricing – sometimes best quality bids win, but sometimes it is decided on price
- understanding the impact on the learners

To look for appropriate tenders to take on, it is important to look to Government and their manifestos, legislation in white/green papers, departmental strategy and spending plans. Funding can be found in websites, newspapers and policy documents, company expanding a business, local developments (find the source and talk to them), commissioned reports. A useful website is

UKCEScontractsfinder.gov.uk. There are HEFCE commercial tendering, apprenticeships, lottery and trusts, charities and EU funding.

Grant finder is available for a subscription of £4 000 per annum but it searches 8000 sites for potential funding.

Decisions can then be made as to whether to make a bid or not – only do those which make sense to you based on competency of staff, resources and strategy for the business. Look for the marginal gain which makes you that bit better than others. Ensure that your bid is robust, using dedicated writing staff to help and allow them to clear diaries to do this properly, get help from finance and give the team the environment to write it with appropriate IT systems and software.

Suggestions at what to look at next are NEET provision, the general election changes, European Social Fund, European regional development fund, EU structural and investment funds strategy, local growth fund, employer ownership fund, apprenticeships. Take care though with any match funding. LEPs do have funds available for equipment. Sometimes smaller colleges may need to form partnerships as they may not have a bid manager/team of their own. It is important to involve the faculty teams in this funding and explain why it will be good for them.

5) Trailblazer

There will be 3 briefing seminars for providers on the Trailblazer developments which are being organised by GTA England and NFEC. All will provide the same information and ran by essentially by the same team.

- Wednesday 25th March at BAE Systems, Preston, chaired by Nigel Austin BAE
- Wednesday 15th April at Toyota Manufacturing UK, Burnaston, chaired by Andrew Parsons, TMUK
- Wednesday 22nd April at Marshalls ADG, Cambridge, chaired by Richard Hamer, BAE.

The starting time is planned for 10am at all venues, through to 1.30 to 2pm, ending with lunch and networking. The purpose is to give as much general information as possible to cover all sectors. Speakers will include providers giving feedback on running pilot schemes such as from North West Training Council (JLR, Auto), EEF (JLR, Mechatronics) and Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMW, Mechatronics), Awarding Organisations, SEMTA, Professional Status Awarding Bodies and Rebecca Rhodes from the SFA on funding. Further information will be sent out shortly.

Bob Millington ran through the slides which were delivered by Rebecca Rhodes at the National Conference in December. These are on the NFEC website under Conferences tab. NFEC are represented on 4 Trailblazer panels with Bob Millington (Aero and Auto, Phase 1), Warwick Hall (Electrotechnical Phase 1) and Kim Holland (Maritime Phase 3).

- 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. This workload is unsustainable long term.

- 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. VRQs will be graded, and this will be the grade given against the overall apprenticeship.
- There are still huge amounts of work to be covered by all industries to develop pathways which are still planned.
- 2 page standards have been written for all pathways and these are available on www.apprenticeships.org.uk/standards.
- CPD may be required by providers.
- 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.
- 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. Funding is secure for 2015 and should survive the election.
- 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 have been 3 delivery options put forward
 - employers contract out everything
 - employers contract out some
 - employers do everything
- What is happening this year for funding will also happen for 2015/2016 because of all of these issues which have not been sorted yet.

Concerns from Bob's point of view

- Loss of SEMTA and the regulatory body for keeping standards between the trailblazers and using common standards already being used by the original panels
- Will that £1 being out upfront 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.
- Relationship between customer and provider. Tendering process will need to ensure that the requirements can be delivered in a quality. Government will only put in 2/3 of the agreed price so there is no extra money to be gained through the system.

- 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.
- Still don't know if employer can just hand over money to providers to deliver the whole programme for them.
- Economies of scale will affect things if a company only needs 2 apprentices requiring a specialist pathway.
- CNC machining needs to be core across all sectors

Three of the awarding organisations, Edexcel, EAL and C&G are working together on their qualifications to ensure common grading criteria. They should have draft specifications available at the briefing events.

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

6) Experiences of gaining a grade 1 during an Ofsted Inspection, Neil Sambrook, Walsall College

The College undertook a journey since 2003 to gain this with some Principal changes during this time until the current Principal took up the post in 2011. There were a lot of Ofsted readiness meetings, a learning and quality committee was set up with Governor involvement which focused on the quality teaching, learning and assessment. Link managers and subject sector leads were identified for each subject area. There was robust performance management of poor performing teachers embedded and monitored throughout. A 2 day plus weekend pre-inspection action plan was put into place. Learner views were taken into account regularly and this was fed back into changes taking place. The SAR and QIP were critically appraised and updated regularly. If a course fell below required data levels, it was placed into an intensive care procedure to find out why with the Deputy Principal. This meant that the course tutor needed to know everything about the course they were responsible for.

During the inspection itself, there were 7 subject area inspectors, 2 employer responsive inspectors, and 3 aspects were inspected. 62 classes were observed in total with 8 joint observations. Student voice meetings also took place. The college did argue a few points during the week but all inspection activity stopped at 2.30pm on Thursday, with feedback to managers taking place after that and then to all staff at 4pm on Friday. They received a Grade 1 for all three outcomes.

Student success was thought to be one of their biggest factors and by using performance management of staff, this in turn performance managed the students.

There have been changes since the inspection to take into account the changes in requirements and there is more English and Maths involved.

Items for NFEC

Staffing issues needs to be put back onto any agendas. Bob Millington will talk to Teresa Frith, Policy and Skills development manager at AOC to raise the matter of skills shortage and to be able to pay competitive wages such as:

- Could college recruitment “piggy back” on teachers’ advertisement campaign? But whilst funding is going down, wages can’t go up. FE college staff have been going to schools
- It is difficult to persuade younger people to become lecturers when the payscales in colleges are against them as inexperienced and they can earn more in industry than in education. Lecturing is becoming an end of careers event rather than a start of career, even though it is a hard career for an older person.
- Could colleges discriminate between job roles to suit the outside industry payscale rather than a lecturer being a lecturer
- Could a scheme be set up to encourage employers to provide someone for 1 afternoon a week to help teach and also college staff to go to do CPD in industry.
- Have a national marketing campaign to perhaps encourage ex-military staff to take up lecturing or to show how people can become a lecturer.
- Use the training education trailblazer as a focal point to see what they are doing to cover shortages.

Re-arrange the previously postponed Eng Tech meeting at Birmingham Metropolitan College.

Topics for next seminar

- Trailblazer updates, maybe including experience from a providers point of view
- FELTAG – outcomes from reports and how to model it in the different locations
- Staffing initiatives from Aelp or AoC , addressing skills shortages in FE
- HS2 Board about developments

Venue

Friday 16th October has been suggested and thanks to Kevin Whitehouse for offering to host this at Birmingham Metropolitan College.

Kevin Whitehouse thanked everyone for attending and to John and Dudley College for hosting this seminar.

A tour of the facilities then took place.

ATTENDANCE LIST

| Name | Organisation |
|-------------------|---|
| Dilip Solanki | Deltatecnix |
| Steve Davies | Sandwell Training Association |
| Ian Kane | Sandwell Training Association |
| Andrew Lee | City of Wolverhampton College |
| Joel Dalhouse | City of Wolverhampton College |
| Phil Holmes | Festo |
| Jill Mustard | NFEC |
| Philip Clements | Warwick Trident College (Warwickshire College) |
| Dave Coles | Warwick Trident College (Warwickshire College) |
| Mick Fitzpatrick | Training Consultant JLR |
| Mike Coakham | Herefordshire & Ludlow College |
| Dave Porter | Boxford |
| John Lockley | Dudley College |
| Christine Chapman | Dudley College |
| Kevin Whitehouse | NFEC Midlands Regional Coordinator |
| Mark Shepherd | EAL |
| Jon Mitchell | EAL |
| David Lee | Pearson |
| Chris Bailey | C & G |
| Phillip Bryant | AQA |
| Graham Arnold | Birmingham Metropolitan College |
| Bob Millington | NFEC Life longer member – NFEC National Liaison |
| Bryony Leonard | Pearson |

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| Neil Sambrook | Walsall College |
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