## **NFEC REGIONAL SEMINAR – Midlands**

**Friday 21st October 2016**

**Green Lane Campus, Walsall College**

There is a separate attendance list available.

1. Welcome and Introduction to the seminar

Kevin Whitehouse welcomed everyone to the seminar on behalf of NFEC. Introductions were made around the room. Neil Sambrook welcomed everyone on behalf of Walsall College.

1. Current matters of concern

Kevin Whitehouse mentioned results of the Area Reviews. Birmingham Metropolitan is already large so has not been included. Walsall College also seems to have been left alone. A new centre has been built at Rodbaston, South Staffs College but changes for South Staffs and Walsall, via the South Staffs review, may be investigated next year. Shrewsbury College have merged in August 2016 with Shrewsbury Sixth Form College to form Shrewsbury College Group, with the involvement of 3 campuses. South Worcestershire and Malvern Colleges became part of Warwickshire College group in August 2016, Evesham and Malvern sites supporting agricultural services mainly. Hereford merged with Ludlow College 18 months ago so have not really been involved this time round.

Discussions took place as to the effects of college mergers on NFEC. With less colleges, there will be less NFEC members but large colleges have more importance/voice for NFEC to work with. NFEC wants to keep representation of learners as a main focus and it seems that senior managers of large college groups are very much business based and more remote from the learners. Campuses are becoming colleges again in their titles with Group in the main title such as Warwickshire Group of Colleges and Shrewsbury College Group. It is agreed that as it is costly to run higher level Engineering, it makes sense to have specialised locations for higher levels but lower levels need to be kept local for the 16-17 years olds especially. It is seen as a positive for learners in Shrewsbury as there has been an increased admission of A Level students from the 6th form side. Several UTCs have now closed. Discussions took place on European apprenticeships being much stronger in image and rigour than in the UK. Status of Engineering in Germany is high but in the UK, the image of Engineering is still dirty. There is belief and hope that this will change. Science and Maths have been pushed more that Technology and Engineering within the STEM agenda. South Staffs have the jobs to offer but there are no students applying of suitable level. Schools are captive of their own experiences and are still encouraging A level students to University or less abled students to go to college. There are less school link programmes due to funding. With only 3 pathways out of 8 qualifications allowed to be vocational in the future, schools are pushing the baccalaureate for league tables performance. Degree apprenticeships will be one way to help higher level students achieve without having to do a full time degree and getting into debt. Companies use of levy money was discussed. There is a chance of companies using up levy payment with the same individual doing level 2 to level 3 to higher. Companies may set up their own training school using levy money instead of using colleges.

Birmingham Metropolitan and Aston University UTC are hoping to feed into the National Rail College for HS2. Level 4 and above will be at the Birmingham campus but there needs to be lower level, more general training delivery at colleges allowing the technical and specialist subjects to be delivered at the Rail Colleges.

Filling staff vacancies is challenging, with only 1 or 2 applicants for a position being common. Workload, pay and conditions, staff development and administration all play a part in this. Starting rates for lecturers are worse than in industry. Colleges need to be able to pay market rates for industry not just as teachers. Discussion took place with assessor and lecturer rates and not expecting assessors to teach as well without extra pay being given. End assessors will need to be well trained and will need healthy pay scales accordingly.

1. The Composites Technician Trailblazer Apprenticeship “An opportunity”

Brian Thornton introduced this subject and his slides are available, and he was joined by Dean Jones, Rolls Royce who is Chair of the Composites Trailblazer group. The Trailblazer initiative has given the opportunity to do a specific composites apprenticeship. It is Industry led with Rolls Royce being the lead. Other SMEs and large companies are involved in the steering group. They are not trying to reinvent the wheel so are replicating and changing accordingly. It is going to be a 36-48 month programme based on level 3 technical certificate. There will be 8 mandatory units, mainly incorporating materials, defects, design and processes. There is a minimum of 2 choice units. Pearson will supply the Tech Cert as a BTEC level 3 and EAL will create the composites levels 2 and 3 NVQ qualifications.

All types of industries including construction, rail, automotive and aerospace are now using composites and there needs to be much more specialist delivery, especially at Catapult type centres but with the involvement of colleges. There is significant growth in the manufacture of composite parts / material across all sectors with manufacturing and material suppliers throughout the country. There are pockets within the country where there is no delivery in composites engineering, including the West Midlands. Composites UK will help colleges find out which companies require training and the programme is about to be promoted to companies. The opportunity for FE is to get involved. The National Composites Centre, NCC, will provide a train the trainer programme as it was foreseen this would be a difficult subject for many colleges to deliver technically. It is an 8 day programme either at Bristol, or it could be delivered at a college if one wants to come forward as the host. It needs to be held in a clean room to stop contamination but does not have to be air conditioned. There can be flexible delivery of 8 x 1 days or 4 x 2 days or 2 x 4 days. There can also be supported delivery with the NCC. They are looking for student starts from 2017 and are applying for £24k funding level 5.

If anyone is interested, please contact Brian on [Brian.Thornton@nccuk.com](mailto:Brian.Thornton@nccuk.com), or 07770 633488 or 0117 3320360.

1. Updates from Awarding Bodies

David Lee and Georgina Tattersall – Pearson

David explained the changes to linear GCSE and A levels. Many colleges have stayed with QCF qualifications for this year but must change over in September 2017. There are now level 2 tech certs or “ technical” qualifications which have a specific industrial focus. There are smaller tech awards worth 120 credits. There ae level 1 introductory qualifications and Engineering will be ready for a September 2017 start. They include personal skills type units as well as the sector specific units as taster type units and are internally assessed as a project.

The current 2012 NQF BTEC firsts are continuing until 2018 for last registration. The level 2 technicals are available from 2017, focussing more on practical skills with external assessment (with 4 windows each year) for on screen, on demand multiple choice type test as well as a synoptic internal project.

Level 3 BTEC Nationals including the external assessment are now ready for teaching. These sit on the tech level on performance tables and subjects include Engineering, Manufacturing, Aeronautical, Computer Engineering, Electrical and Mechanical. There are also Applied General with 360GLH and 510GLH. Both carry UCAS points. It was commented that published books are still not available and David will feed this back. There should be revision guides and practise assessment for externally assessed units.

Level 4 / 5, HNC/D will be ready in January 2017. Current centres will transfer automatically. There are core subjects such as design, maths, science and a professional engineering project (assessed via a Pearson set assignment). There will be schemes of work and materials available.

Pearson are involved in 14 standards. The price for external assessment will be available by the end of this year for end point assessment.

The slides for the presentation are available separately, please contact David or Georgina if there are any questions. They are available to visit colleges if required to give updates directly.

Curriculum Development Manager - [david.lee3@pearson.com](mailto:david.lee3@pearson.com)

Apprenticeship Development Manager (West Midlands) - [steve.smith@pearson.com](mailto:steve.smith@pearson.com)

Apprenticeship Development Manager (Black Country) [-Georgina.tattersall@pearson.com](mailto:-Georgina.tattersall@pearson.com)

Dean O’Donoghue - AQA

Dean sent his apologies for not being able to attend but he forwarded information for AQA, as 2 documents and contact details, which was shown and is available electronically. Please contact Dean on [dodonoghue@aqa.org.uk](mailto:dodonoghue@aqa.org.uk) for any information on AQA qualifications.

1. Apprenticeship Trailblazer Initiative update and discussion - Bob Millington

There is still a lot going on with trailblazer development but Bob has chosen 2 areas to concentrate on for feedback. Bob handed out 2 documents - levy and assessment, and he talked through the information. These documents are available separately.

Next year GTA and NFEC will be holding briefings focussing on sharing models and delivery experiences between partners and finding best practise on Advanced Manufacturing Engineering. Bob suggests that we have a standing agenda item at regional seminars as more providers start to deliver Trailblazers to share best practise and experience based on a different theme each seminar such as behaviours or gateway assessments.

Feedback received by centres currently involved with trailblazer delivery stated:

* Gateway assessment is resource heavy and there are areas of workshop allocated for this specifically but it is beneficial. (Peter Winebloom, EEF)
* Now training our 3rd cohort of Trailblazer apprentices in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (Sue Killin, BMet)
  + 2014 – 18 apprentices successfully made it to the Development Phase – due to complete in the latter part of 2017
  + 2015 – 17 apprentices successfully made it to the Development Phase – due to complete in the latter part of 2018. In addition 6 level 6 apprentices made it on to their Development Phase that includes a foundation degree and are due to complete in the summer of 2019
  + 2016 – 18 apprentices enrolled on to the AME trailblazer and a further 10 higher level apprentices began their programmes
  + Delivering Level 3 BTEC alongside the Foundation and Development phases – Diploma for the level3’s and Award for the level 6’s. Moved to the new Pearson AME BTEC this year
  + 15 Foundation Competence units delivered in BMW workshop over a 46 week period
  + Both Btec and Foundation competence units have been selected to ‘blend’ with one another so that duplication of knowledge can be avoided where possible eg mechanical maintenance and assembly has the same knowledge content
  + This approach enables more training to be delivered outside of the mandatory requirements eg pipe bending, electro-pneumatic systems
  + Simplistic approach to recording of assessments – training time is more important than having assessors completing copious amounts of paperwork
  + Initial assessment is completed and ‘weaker’ maths is identified very early on
  + Maths support is put in early – end September to ensure apprentices aren’t put under undue pressure in the latter months of the programme
  + Also we offer a 2 hour drop-in evening session for additional maths support and/or practice.

6. Skillman Project EU funded project to develop a robotic qualification in collaboration with Automotive Industry

Kevin Whitehouse gave details of this Skillman project. SAS airlines, Denmark are developing qualifications for composite materials and in the UK, JLR and EAL are working with Kuka to develop a robotics qualification consisting of 10 units. Material is available on line and EAL will accredit the programme. Fully funded training is available to automotive suppliers and there are opportunities for colleges to gain free access to this material and training. For more information please contact the Project Director, Paula Cresswell on [paula.cresswell@bmet.ac.uk](mailto:paula.cresswell@bmet.ac.uk).

Items for NFEC

No real issues highlighted.

Topics for next seminar

* Trailblazer practitioners (e.g. EEF, Warwickshire and BMet) to look at good practise on a topic such as behaviour. Also could include experiences from an apprentice point of view asking 2 apprentices about their training and jobs they’ve done, e.g. Sue Killen, BMet.
* HS2 and National College - relationships between colleges and national colleges
* Institution for Apprenticeships, their role and development so far of remit and intended role, (Bob to consider who might do this)

Venue

Friday 10th March 2017 has been suggested, and the venue will be confirmed.

The National Conference is on Thursday 8th December and Friday 9th December at the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, Sheffield. Speakers include:

* Denis Healy, IMechE
* Shagufta Sharif, WISE
* Una Bennett, SFA on apprenticeship funding models
* Adrian Anderson, UVAC on degree apprenticeships
* Matt Tudor, Bridgwater College on providing training for industry
* Kerry Featherstone, AMRC
* Steve Caunter, South Devon College on preparing FE for the next technological revolution
* Colin Herron, Zero Carbon Futures
* SEMTA

Kevin Whitehouse thanked everyone for attending and for Neil and Walsall College for hosting this seminar.

A tour of the College facilities took place.