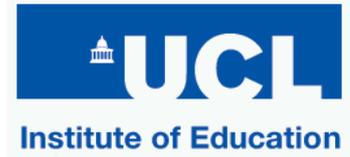


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# Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Projects

Final National Report

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# Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Projects

## Final National Report

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

1.1. The Education and Training Foundation (hereinafter the Foundation) was established in 2013 with an overarching remit to improve professionalism and standards in the education and training (ET) sector. Through its vocational education and training (VET) priority, the Foundation is committed to taking forward recommendations from '[It's about work...](#)', a report produced by the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning ([CAVTL](#))<sup>1</sup> and, in particular, to developing its approach to 'two-way street' strategic partnerships between employers and VET providers. The initial report was subsequently followed by the '[CAVTL One Year on Review](#)'.

1.2. CAVTL defines the two-way street as:

*"The key enabling factor is the VET system working as a **two-way street**, not further education and skills operating as a separate 'sector'. The **two-way street** is about genuine collaboration between colleges and training providers, and employers. In the best examples the Commission has seen, employers are not just customers of vocational teaching and learning, but are engaged at every level in helping to create and deliver excellent vocational programmes. Collaboration is based on the recognition that there is added value in working together. Providers and employers make distinctive contributions for mutual benefit."* (CAVTL p.7)

*"In the best provision we have seen, leaders and managers (in colleges, training providers and companies) develop strong collaborative arrangements as the basis for the **two-way street**. They demonstrate an 'external disposition' – facing outwards from their own organisations to develop productive strategic partnerships in order to ensure that vocational programmes meet employers' skills needs, now and in the future. This in turn creates the context in which teachers and trainers are trusted to apply the **two-way street** approach, working collaboratively across organisations to design and deliver innovative and responsive curricula. And strong VET leaders actively engage in joint evaluation of the business impact and added value of programmes, rather than simply accounting for numbers of learners and qualifications."* (CAVTL p.26)

1.3. The *CAVTL One Year On Review*<sup>2</sup> also reinforced the need to change the paradigm with which employers and providers approach working together. The Review notes:

*"We very deliberately introduced the phrase a **two-way street** in recognition of the need to move on from past models of engagement between employers and providers. Historically the further education and training sector has tried to engage employers on its terms, or employers have tried to engage the sector on their terms, both looking at the problem from different ends of a one-way street. But the old supply and demand paradigm is not fit for the 21st century. We need a genuinely collaborative approach which is based on a shared understanding of the problems to be solved, the potential solutions and the business benefits of working together, for both employers and colleges or training providers. This approach focuses on how both ends of the street – working within a robust and well*

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<sup>1</sup> CAVTL (2013) [It's about work...Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning](#).

<sup>2</sup> McLoughlin, F. (2014) One Year On Review – see <http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/etf:2055/datastreams/RESOURCE/content>

*organised VET system – can help individuals and organisations to grow and succeed.”*  
(CAVTL One Year On Review p.4)

1.4. To build on the work and the findings of the Commission, the Foundation commissioned University College London’s Institute of Education (IOE) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) to undertake a programme of work designed to set up, support and monitor the effectiveness of nine [Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges](#) between ET providers and employers. The Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges were designed to encourage and model genuine and sustained collaboration between employers and providers; to ensure that leadership, management and governance in colleges and training providers has a strong focus on a clear line of sight between learning and work and, in this way to improve the VET system in England. In this respect the programme linked with the Foundation’s work on [Excellence in Leadership, Management and Governance \(ELMAG\)](#).

1.5. This programme of work, which took place between February and October 2015, was intended to complement and work in tandem with other related Foundation projects, in particular the [Teach Too](#) programme, but also to be informed by the [Apprenticeship](#) and [Traineeship Staff Support Programmes](#). The two major areas of focus for the Two-Way Street programme were leadership development within the ET sector and the building of an effective VET system. However, also running throughout the Leadership Exchanges was a concern to ensure equality and diversity issues were addressed and projects were required to explore one particular equality and diversity issue raised as a result of their work.

1.6. Following this introduction the report comprises five sections. Section 2 provides the reader with an overview of each of the Leadership Exchange projects along with a description of the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme’s management and the requirements of each of the projects. Section 3 focuses on outcomes and impacts, drawing a distinction between the outcomes for providers and the impacts upon learners and employers, a distinction adopted by the Foundation for the implementation of all of its programmes. The outcomes for providers considers how the Programme has enhanced the confidence and/or capability of staff whether, individually, as part of a whole organisational approach, or more widely across the ET sector. The impacts on learners are more difficult to evaluate at the time of writing this report, but could be measured in terms of engagement, motivation, skills developed or qualifications and frameworks achieved. It is anticipated that the Foundation’s own Programme Assessors will be following this aspect of the Programme at a later date. Impacts on employers were more clearly articulated by all of the employers that engaged with the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme and are indicated in this section. With each of the projects exploring an aspect of equality and diversity, Section 4 outlines these findings and shares with the reader the successes, proposals and challenges that arose from this aspect of the projects’ work. The final two sections, prior to the appendices, focus more sharply on the lessons learnt from this Programme and the recommendations that emerge for providers, employers and provider/employer partnerships looking to build modes of two-way street partnership working and to policy makers, in terms of the frameworks that might support this way of working.

## **Section 2: The Programme**

2.1. In initiating the programme the IOE-AELP partnership recruited and selected nine regional Leadership Exchanges ensuring regional spread and representation from different types of provider and a range of employment sectors (see Figure 1).

### **Figure 1. Two Way Street Leadership Exchange Project Summaries**

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#### **BARKING AND DAGENHAM COLLEGE with ROOFF LIMITED**

##### **Sector: Construction**

This Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange brought together a number of employers and two colleges under the leadership of the college's Chief Operating Officer, and the Business Development Director, from Roof Ltd who is also the founder of the London Region Construction Group. From the employer perspective the primary aim of the Leadership Exchange was to increase the number and diversity of keen young people willing and able to enter the construction industry in London: a sector that has and will continue to have considerable employment opportunities and skills needs. Both colleges were primarily concerned to ensure that their construction provision for adults and young people meets the needs of employers so that more of their students either gain employment or enhance their skills within employment.

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#### **BOSTON COLLEGE with T.H.CLEMENTS**

##### **Sector: Agribusiness**

This project sought to enhance a college-led programme of support for management development in the local agribusiness sector. Local small- and medium-sized enterprises in this highly specialist area have complex structures and are operating in a very competitive environment. Their management needs are varied, and include on site supervision, human relations and marketing. As numbers required for each specialism are low, T.H.Clements has previously brought in training consultants from some distance. This project sought to develop the capacity of the college to support a range of local, niche agribusinesses in their development of management capacity.

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#### **BUXTON AND LEEK COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DERBY with VARIOUS EMPLOYERS**

##### **Sector: Logistics and Transport**

This Leadership Exchange brought together five employers under the leadership of the Chair of the Institute of Couriers, in partnership with Buxton and Leek College, the University of Derby and the D2N2 LEP. The employers' primary aim was to increase the number and diversity of young people with the right skills and personal qualities to enter the logistics and transport industry in the heart of England: a sector which has and will continue to have considerable employment opportunities and skills needs. Buxton and Leek College and the University of Derby were mainly concerned to ensure that their provision meets the needs of employers so that more learners gain employment and current employees enhance their skills.

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## **EALING, HAMMERSMITH AND WEST LONDON COLLEGE (EHWLC) and CITY AND GUILDS LONDON INSTITUTE (CGLI) with MACE CONSTRUCTION AND CATALYST HOUSING**

### **Sector: Construction**

This project sought to focus on the improvement of language skills of construction workers in London who have English as a second language (ESOL) so that they are able to read and observe safety procedures on-site. The partnership was intended to be between EHWLC and two companies, MACE Construction and Catalyst Housing, which together have a substantial building operation. The project aimed to focus on providing training activities as part of the concept of the 'pop-up college'. EHWLC's idea was to involve the employer partners in the co-production of an ESOL unit of learning activity, working with a third party, CGLI, to have this accredited. This could then be offered across different construction sites in London. In addition, EHWLC wanted to explore how digital activities, such as 'My Kinda Crowd', might be used to support this type of learning activity.

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## **FAREPORT TRAINING ORGANISATION with THEO PAPHITIS RETAIL GROUP**

### **Sector: Retail**

This project aimed to design and pilot the delivery of a suite of leadership development pathways and programmes from Levels 2-7. The project responded to analysis by People 1st which highlighted shortages of leaders in the sector and sought to develop progression pathways to encourage leadership development. In particular the Leadership Exchange wanted to encourage young people to recognise the opportunities for leadership offered by a career in retail as well as to help long-serving staff to recognise their management and leadership skills and experience. The partners sought to collaborate to design and deliver a programme across three divisions of the Theo Paphitis Retail Group leading to learning that could be shared more widely with the sector.

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## **KIRKLEES COLLEGE with SYNGENTA and NUFARM**

### **Sector: Process Manufacturing**

This Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange was initially based on two employers working with the college, with interest from two other employers. From the employer perspective the primary aim of the Leadership Exchange was to increase the number of young people entering process manufacturing, an industry experiencing an ageing workforce with all the succession issues that this brings. For the College, this meant developing the Level 2 and 3 curriculum to extend into higher levels, Level 4 and Advanced and Higher Level Apprenticeships.

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## **SOUTH WEST ASSOCIATION OF TRAINING PROVIDERS (SWATPRO) with THE NORTH BRISTOL National Health Service (NHS) TRUST**

### **Sector: Health**

This project sought to support the North Bristol NHS Trust to identify effective approaches to the planning, sourcing and delivery of training for staff working in specialist areas within the hospital. There was a particular focus on developing apprenticeships outside the more traditional areas where they are already well used. Although the Trust is a large employer, many of the specialist areas in the hospital have some of the characteristics associated with SMEs and require similar approaches to engagement and continuing support from the training provider.

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## **THE SKILLS COMPANY / PREVIOUSLY SKILLS SOLUTIONS (ON BEHALF OF ENGINEERING FUTURES) with THE HYDE GROUP**

### **Sector: Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing**

This project looked for support to enable Engineering Futures, a partnership formed by The Skills Company, Trafford College and Tameside, to develop an Engineering and Manufacturing Employer Leadership Partnership Cluster. The Cluster would have local employers at the heart, with further partners consisting of other local and national support agencies, training providers, schools, colleges, universities, industry specialists and training providers. The Cluster hoped to explore and address the skills shortage within the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sector by developing meaningful local work experience, career paths, job and training opportunities for young people, as well as for groups currently under-represented in the sector (e.g. women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled).

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## **WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE with UNILEVER**

### **Area: STEM Occupations**

This project sought to develop and extend an existing and effective partnership between Unilever, Wirral Metropolitan College and the University of Liverpool which provides a work-based pathway from Level 3 programmes to degree success for employees of Unilever seeking to build a career using their skills in Chemistry. The project was designed to explore whether the existing model of the learner journey could be replicated for a range of learners not only in large multi-national employer organisations but also within small- and medium-sized local employers. It also examined pathways below Level 6. The Unilever partnership has already been very successful at recruiting females onto the programme so the project undertook an exploration of why this might be the case and why young women were being attracted to the programme.

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2.2. Each of the Leadership Exchanges was committed to:

- the two-way street concept in all its elements;
- developing and demonstrating effective relationships between education and training providers and employers;
- focusing on business growth and understanding of their local economies;
- improving two-way street activities in the VET system.

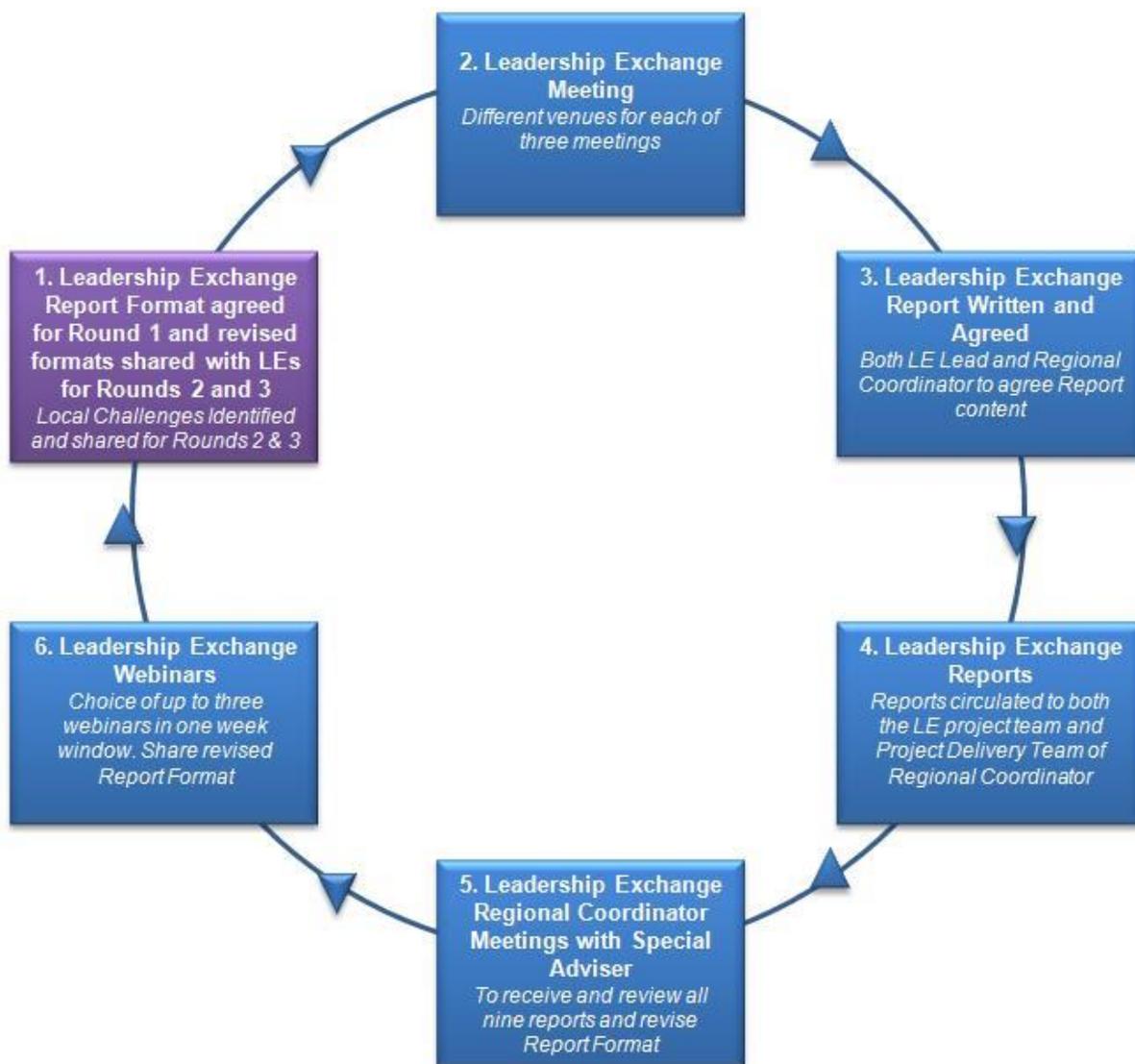
2.3. The Leadership Exchanges met on three occasions between February and October 2015 with the first meetings taking place in February/March 2015. Each had a named senior leader from a provider organisation, who acted as the Project Lead, and a named senior leader from an employer organisation. All had a focus on learning in one particular vocational sector and identified a named individual as Clerk who was responsible for reporting on each of the three Leadership Exchange meetings. They were each allocated a Regional Coordinator, who was appointed by IOE-AELP to work closely with the Project Lead and Clerk to support the Leadership Exchange's activities. Leadership Exchange partners were also encouraged to engage with their Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to ensure that developments were in line with LEP priorities.

2.4. During the lifetime of the nine projects it was expected that the Project Lead and/or other partnership members would participate in three national webinars to discuss the findings from each

of the Leadership Exchanges and to identify areas for development and synergy. While the first webinar took place as planned, there was a strong feeling from participants that they would find face-to-face meetings more productive, so the final two national events became face-to-face seminars` held at the IOE. It was clear that this was an important decision and added significantly to the success of the Programme as a whole – see Lessons Learnt p. 20.

2.5. All Leadership Exchange meetings resulted in the publication of a report following a format and set of individual questions provided by the IOE-AELP (see Appendix B for each of the three Report Formats). Thus a national cycle of meetings, reporting and seminars was established as illustrated below (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Two Way Street Leadership Exchange Meetings and Reporting Cycle**



2.6. In addition to participating in the reporting cycle, all Leadership Exchanges were asked to produce tangible outputs that could be shared with colleagues from across the VET system to enhance or further support the development of two-way street initiatives and to report on an aspect of equality and diversity which was pertinent to their particular partnership (see Appendix C for details of these outputs and explorations). In addition, any individual associated with the work of the

programme was invited to contribute their thoughts to an online questionnaire, launched at the end of August 2015 and closed in mid-October 2015 (see Appendix D. for a summary of questionnaire findings).

2.7. All Leadership Exchanges went through a competitive process of application and selection prior to taking part in the programme and receiving funding. The projects chosen were selected because they could clearly demonstrate that the lead organisation and its partners had the capacity and skills to establish an effective Leadership Exchange which would be able to achieve specific outputs and outcomes within the short timescale required. They also needed to be led by an organisation in England that was funded to deliver VET by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) so this included FE Colleges, Independent Training Providers and Adult and Community Learning providers. An important selection criterion for each of the projects was that it was actively supported by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Principal.

2.8 All of the proposed Leadership Exchanges had to include at least one employer but could also include non-SFA funded partners who could add significant value (e.g. sector membership bodies, voluntary organisations, higher education organisations, schools, professional bodies and associations, commercial agencies or companies, and support agencies). Finally, the vocational sector chosen for development through the Leadership Exchange had to have been rated as 'outstanding' or 'good in the Lead Provider'<sup>3</sup>.

### **The Programme's Management Group**

2.9. The programme was managed by a Programme Director, Professor Ann Hodgson, IOE, and two Programme Managers, David Smith, IOE, and Stella Turner, AELP, together with nine Regional Coordinators. The Programme Director and one of the IOE Programme Managers also performed roles as Regional Coordinators. The other Regional Coordinators were John Dilks, Mick Fletcher, Paul Grainger, Professor Ken Spours, Markos Tiris, Kate Wilson and Sue Yeomans. This Management Group met on four occasions throughout the life of the Programme. The Regional Coordinators became the key support mechanism for the Leadership Exchanges, acting as 'critical friends', providing quality assurance of project outputs and playing a key role in monitoring project progress. They were thus able to report back in detail on progress to the full Management Group meetings. The role of each of the Regional Coordinators was:

- To act as the main link between the IOE-AELP and a regionally based Leadership Exchange Partnership
- To support each Leadership Exchange Lead, their Project Administrator/Scribe and Employer Partner(s) in planning the partnerships Leadership Exchange meetings, engaging in these meetings and in identifying specific project outputs, outcomes and impacts
- To use IOE-AELP documentation, as appropriate and required, with Leadership Exchange Leads and exchange project teams.
- To act as a critical friend, providing support and challenge, to the Leadership Exchange Lead and other members of the Leadership Exchange project team
- To attend meetings and participate in programme webinars as required by both the Leadership Exchange Lead and the IOE-AELP Programme Director and/or Manager

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<sup>3</sup> This may have been a grade provided by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) for the area or the provider's own self-assessment must have been good or above provided the organisation's Leadership and Management has been graded 'good' or above by Ofsted.

- To assure the quality of Leadership Exchange outputs, materials, resources and reports
- To ensure that outputs met the design specification of the Education and Training Foundation, e.g. placement of logos etc.
- To ensure the timely and accurate delivery of all Leadership Exchange outputs, materials, resources and reports
- To provide regular project RAG ratings and brief narrative on these ratings to the IOE-AELP Programme Director and/or Manager
- To liaise, as appropriate, with the Programme Director and Manager
- To liaise with the Two Way Street Special Adviser offering support and challenge to the Leadership Exchange project teams.

### **The Programme's Advisory Group**

2.10. In addition to the Management Group the programme appointed an Advisory Group whose role it was to:

- provide a 'sounding board' and reflective forum for the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme;
- advise on policy and practice within the VET system through its expert membership;
- advocate for the building of an effective VET system with a clear line of site to work that is based on deep collaboration between employers and VET providers;
- support the quality assurance of the Programme;
- advise on and support engagement, dissemination and sustainability for the Programme;
- contribute to the testing and refinement of two-way street working and leadership.

2.11. The Advisory Group was chaired by the Programme Special Adviser, Professor Lorna Unwin OBE<sup>4</sup>, and comprised:

- ET provider representation
- Employer and employer organization representation
- Project Director
- Project Managers
- Project Administrator
- Professional association/ trade union representation, and
- Representation from the Foundation.

2.12. The Advisory Group met three times during the life of the Programme.

### **Role of the Education and Training Foundation's Programme Assessors**

2.13. In addition to the members of the Management and Advisory Groups, the Foundation also appointed two Programme Assessors. Their role was to act as external experts for the Foundation by offering options and solutions for consideration; acting as a critical friend to the Foundation and indicating where it may have done things differently; by being an objective reviewer for the Programme and a conduit for quality improvement, and by checking that the Foundation's end users were always at the forefront of its work

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<sup>4</sup> Professor Unwin also acted as the academic adviser to the CAVTL Commission and provided a key point of continuity between the Commission's work and that of the Programme, moving from recommendations to implementation.

The Management Group established a good working relationship with the Programme Assessors from the start and responded appropriately to formative feedback from them.

## **Section 3: Outcomes and Impacts**

3.1. This section draws out the outcomes that the Leadership Exchanges identified for provider staff. This meets with the Foundation's focus on outcomes being clearly identified with sector providers. In addition, and again in line with the Foundation's policy, the impacts that the Leadership Exchanges had on employers and on learners are clearly identified.

### **A. What were the outcomes for providers?**

- A greater understanding of the precise skills needs of employers within the locality and within a particular sector

*'Anecdotal and informal requests may be the starting point of the process but chasing solutions without securing fundamental information and evidence is futile.'* (Rod Davis – Managing Director SWATPro).

- Improved knowledge of how employer organisations work and the demands of modern work practices with the potential for curriculum development to more precisely meet the needs of employers and learners

*'The opportunity for staff from the college to visit the employer's premises and have a tour of the facilities has definitely helped in understanding the unique needs of the company and in designing a bespoke package.'* (Ruth Cooper, Boston College)

*'The added value to this project will be to support the professional development of the College logistics training staff in making real-world connections to further their own knowledge and understanding through technical liaison opportunities and professional placements.'* (Nicki Moore, University of Derby/Buxton and Leek College)

- An external view of the provider organisation and how it serves, or doesn't, the needs of employers

*'We really valued the opportunity to talk to an employer openly and honestly about their perceptions of the College. Some of what we learnt was a shock.'* (Ruth Cooper, Boston)

- Myth busting about what colleges and independent training providers are, what they do and how they operate
- Deepening existing employer links and relationships

*'The exercise has provided a helpful model of the clear line of sight to work, but from a provider's perspective.'* (Paul Grainger, Regional Co-ordinator)

- Identifying potential new education and training opportunities and where future growth sectors are likely to be

*'It has been a useful opportunity to be involved right from the beginning in developing a training programme for a major local employer. It has enabled me to develop both a bespoke programme and one that can be built on and tailored to suit individual employer needs.'* (Wendy Poole, Programme Area Manager, Boston College)

- Space and time to reflect on partnership practices and procedures
- Clear indications of how management practices and staff structures need to change (e.g. the single key contact model in Barking and Dagenham College and Wirral Metropolitan College)
- Greater knowledge of the 'intermediary bodies' working within the sector
- A model of working in depth with employers beyond the current Leadership Exchange

*'The college sees this project as key to its continuing employer engagement activities.'* (Steven Downham-Clarke, Assistant Principal, Kirklees College)

- Contribution to meeting LEP and other local strategic priorities
- Stronger communications between the provider and the employer to improve the experience of learners
- A continuing dialogue between employers, skills providers, schools and careers and employability practitioners
- Support in articulating learner pathways for progression into or within employment
- Access to existing employer networks and, in some cases, active engagement in generating and building employer networks

## **B. How did the Programme impact on employers and learners?**

### *Employers*

- Greater understanding of how education and training providers operate, how they are measured and funded and the constraints they face – the ability to 'navigate the system'
- Knowledge about the range of education and training opportunities available in a locality and/or region

*'We feel very positive about new delivery options for employee training in 2015-16, and in addressing the developmental challenge over the last six months.'*  
(Ian Nunn, Syngenta)

- Employers feeling that they had been listened to and that they could negotiate the means of gaining tailored provision where this was not already available

*'The project has enabled the college to better understand from industry the type of training required to improve the skills that are needed in the local area.'* (Rachel Gedney, T.H.Clements)

- Potential for greater retention of staff and reduction in recruitment costs as well as greater productivity through investment in high quality, relevant training and development.

*'Two Way Street has reinforced the commitment but the partnership approach has allowed for internal auditing which has equated to enhanced productivity.'* (Mike Winstone, HR Director TPRG)

- As a result of participation in the Leadership Exchange the West of England LEP now sees the health sector as a priority in the South West. Moreover, where the LEP representative was involved she gained a much more fine-grained understanding of what was required in her area.

*'The Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange has given me the ideal opportunity to gain an insight into the skills challenges being faced by NBT. The strength of the employer/provider partnership has been key to the leadership exchange and in supporting the development of the West of England LEP Local Sector Skills Statement for Health and Life Sciences.'* (Pearl Mills, West of England LEP)

- As the result of two presentations on the Leadership Exchange in conferences for employers in the Logistics and Transport sector in the East Midlands (D2N2 LEP region), for example, employers now have a greater understanding of the advantages of strategic collaboration with VET providers and made a commitment to develop partnerships

*'Strong employer impact to the Two Way Street project and excellent showcase in front of both LEPs, D2N2 and LLEP, very strong employer turnout, much talk of coalitions for workforce solutions'.* (Carl Lomas MBA, Institute of Couriers (Buxton and Leek College)

- The opportunity for reflection and forward planning
- Greater knowledge of the 'intermediary bodies' working within the sector
- A model of in-depth working with education and training providers beyond the current Leadership Exchange
- Support with succession planning within the organisation
- Opportunity to extend and improve activities associated with recruitment and selection of employees
- Efficiencies associated with working in employer networks, in particular for SMEs
- Opportunities to work in unison with supply chains for skills development

### *Learners*

Whilst the programme did not specifically look at learner impact a number of projects suggested the following potential impacts for learners:

- More directly relevant education and training that provides them with the skills to gain initial employment or to progress within their current role
- Greater employer involvement in learning programmes to ensure the relevance of the programme to real working practice
- Greater awareness of the range of employment opportunities available in particular sectors with clear progression routes and skills escalators (see in particular the Barking and Dagenham, Kirklees and Buxton and Leek case studies)

- Clearer and consistent messages from both employers and providers with regard to requirements for success on their learner journey
- Over the next three years an anticipated impact on the number of young people working in the logistics, construction and STEM industries, including those engaged in traineeships and apprenticeships (see the Buxton and Leek case study, for example)
- Access to the latest technology and innovative practice
- Access to more informative, attractive and up-to-date careers education, information, advice and guidance resources in, for example, logistics, STEM and construction.
- Access to real world employment activities where theory is contextualised within the world of practice

## **Section 4: Equality and Diversity**

4.1. Each of the Leadership Exchanges identified an issue related to equality and diversity that the Exchange would examine in more detail and report back findings to the management team. The majority of projects decided to explore an aspect of gender equality although consideration was also given to age, shift workers, ethnic diversity and migrant workers.

4.2. By providing individual projects with the opportunity to identify an issue of their own choosing and by giving them the freedom to define their own approaches to addressing it, it was anticipated that a deeper and more practical approach would be taken that avoided simple data collection.

4.3. This section identifies the actions taken and the lessons learnt from these explorations and provides a number of case studies to illustrate the points made.

4.4. Gender was clearly the key theme for the majority of the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange. Examples included increasing female managers in the retail sector (Fareport Training Organisation); increasing the number of women in construction (Barking and Dagenham College) and logistics and transport in the East Midlands (Buxton and Leek College); research on why a particular programme had managed to attract so many women (Wirral Metropolitan College); engagement with girls' schools and having a female Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) ambassador (The Skills Company).

### **Buxton and Leek College with the Institute of Couriers**

The Leadership Exchange benefited from the insights of a female Logistics and Supply Chain Manager who highlighted the type of concerns that were preventing women from wishing to work in logistics, such as a lack of personal hygiene facilities, personal safety and gender stereotypical images of the sector. Taking very real practical steps the Leadership Exchange Partnership members all agreed to take action. Members all agreed to monitor the images used in marketing and labour market information to ensure more of a neutral view of the sector and to promote positive images of women doing the job where possible. It was also recognised that women in current roles in the sector play an important part as positive role models and should make themselves available where possible to help young women to consider working in the sector. The extent to which this project has had an impact on the gender mix of the sector will not be known for a number of years but there is an intention to monitor the gender of students enrolling for programmes at the college and University as well as the statistics on women engaging in work in the sector. Whilst recognising this as a national issue the East Midlands remains focussed and will make every effort to influence practice at a national level.

### **Barking and Dagenham College with Roof Ltd**

The Barking and Dagenham College partnership began by identifying the many and varied reasons why few girls/women choose a career within the construction sector, such as a stereotypical view of the industry being solely about men in hard hats working as bricklayers; lack of positive role models, a view that the industry can be sexist towards women and the lack of clear careers information/guidance at school – particularly around the varied job roles available.

In the light of these observations Barking and Dagenham College Leadership Exchange, in conjunction with the College of North West London and the partnership's employers, identified a range of different initiatives that could be developed and implemented to increase the number of females into construction. These included:

- Building on an already strong, well developed relationship with Women Into Construction who would support College students with:
  - Mentoring
  - Work experience placements
  - Providing positive female role models to deliver information sessions/seminars
- Training female apprentices within the sector to become CITB Construction Ambassadors.
- Utilising college students to produce a recruitment film aimed at increasing diversity within construction and focussed on females and those from BME backgrounds.
- Focussing recruitment on diverse roles within the sector including project management, Building Modelling and Management (BIMM) as well as the traditional trades.
- Organising sessions within schools to raise awareness including positive female role models (in person or in images/films used) and giving information regarding the wide range of careers within the sector – and the route into these.
- Producing case studies about female students to feature both on the College's website but also as good news stories on the employer-led London Region Construction Training Group website and in their newsletter.

4.5. Additionally, however, consideration was given to:

- Age – making sure that management positions were available to both the youngest and oldest employees in the retail sector (e.g. Fareport Training)
- Shift workers – night workers getting access to management training (e.g. Fareport Training) and online resources (e.g. Kirklees College)
- Ethnic diversity – North Bristol NHS Trust working with SWATPro identified as a priority '*to strive for a workforce that better represents the community it serves.*'
- Migrant workers (e.g. Boston College)

### **Kirklees College with Syngenta**

The Kirklees College Leadership Exchange partnership set out to explore the pathways to independent economically stable lifestyles and careers in process manufacturing for those from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This theme was chosen because members were aware of the under-representation of these groups locally and regionally in the achievement of technical and higher level skills. In addition the partnership focused on encouraging women to take up occupations in engineering and related sectors. Contact was made with Women Into Science and Engineering who provided the partnership with useful pointers in terms of funding and grants. By acting as a 'group' rather than individually a joint calendar of events to promote engineering/process manufacturing to females was established. In the college, this is now going to form part of its regular enrichment programme. The intention is to include schools in visits to the process manufacturing plant, targeting those with the highest success rates in science and related STEM subjects, and specifically, those schools with a higher than average Black and Minority Ethnic profile.

The college's partner BASF is setting up a 'Kids lab' at BASF where local schools will visit their plant with a focus on seeing STEM activities in action. Meanwhile the College recognises that 'educating our tutors' is crucial to help them understand the importance of integrating plant-based activity into the curriculum specifically for under-represented groups.

The next stage of the Kirklees Leadership Exchange's equality and diversity strategy will be to extend activity into the laboratory technician programme and other STEM subject areas. They will also identify and mobilise STEM Ambassadors, having already agreed that the Champion for these actions will be the new Head of the Process Manufacturing Centre.

### **The Skills Company (on behalf of Engineering Futures) and the Hyde Group**

The Engineering Futures partnership was very aware of the disparity that exists in terms of underrepresented groups, including women and Black and Minority Ethnic groups, across a range of careers in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics. Both employers and providers are aware that the manufacturing sector is not seizing the competitive advantage opportunities of gender and ethnic diversity in the workforce. The UK currently has the lowest proportion of female 'engineering professionals' within EU countries. Only four per cent of Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies apprentices are women. The low level of ethnic diversity inevitably impacts upon business understanding of other cultures and leads to untapped domestic and international market opportunities.

Under the direction from the Leadership Exchange, the partnership challenged skills providers, colleges and employers to promote the qualities of the Advanced Manufacturing / Engineering sector whilst developing meaningful local work experience, career paths and job and training opportunities amongst young people, and within groups currently under-represented in the sector (e.g. women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled). Engineering Futures collaborated with WISE, WES and Positive Steps, and has used the knowledge, experience and best practice gained from leading a WISE/TAC Project, sponsored by the Royal Academy of Engineering, to actively promote the school engagement project amongst females, ethnic minority groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Engineering Futures has worked on behalf of this Leadership Exchange, to organise 13 events within schools which included providing assemblies, delivering talks to classes from Years 9 to 12 on engineering career opportunities, liaising with employers to facilitate and deliver a number of "meet the ambassador" events and "have a go" workshops and the planning and delivery of a full day event for the National Women in Engineering Day for 125 students. This gave the project the opportunity to specifically address the issues highlighted and to raise aspiration levels regarding the opportunities available for girls and those from a Black and Minority Ethnic background.

*'Your workshop was really well received by our students. The role model who helped run the event was inspirational! I look forward to working with you next term and many, many thanks for everything. (STEM Co-ordinator, Loreto Grammar School for Girls, Altrincham.)*

## **Section 5: Lessons Learnt**

5.1. One of the key lessons from this programme is that there is a real willingness on the part of employers and education and training providers to communicate more effectively about employment opportunities, skills needs and training solutions, if given the time and opportunity. While the specific needs of the different sectors and the occupations within the sectors varied, it is possible to draw out some generic features that are likely to lead to successful Two-Way Street partnership working.

### **A. What were the key features of successful Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges?**

- The Leadership Exchanges in this Programme had a strong catalytic effect when they identified a specific problem, need or issue to address that provided a clear, mutual benefit for both parties.

*‘There needs to be a synergy between industry and education in order to ensure our young people are work ready. This will involve a broadening of the ‘two way street’ concept through which leaders exchange and transfer knowledge in order to ensure that we meet present and future requirements of industry in relation to growth and sustainability.’ (Peter McCann, Principal, Kirklees College)*

- There was a need for jargon busting and demystifying the different terminology used by education and training providers and employers both in oral and written communications, such as websites and brochures.

*‘Understanding each other’s language is key’ (Ruth Cole, Fareport Training)*

- The case studies provided later in this report demonstrate that the nine projects began from different starting points. Exchanges were most successful where they were building on, but also strengthening and deepening, existing contacts and relationships.

*‘A ‘Complete Shift’ is needed from a ‘buyer-seller relationship’ to a ‘partnership relationship’ in the context of our leadership exchange in process manufacturing. The partnership has developed and is bringing positive benefits.’ (Steven Downham-Clarke, Assistant Principal, Kirklees College)*

- It was important for the Leadership Exchange to have a sector-specific focus rather than operating within a generic concept of employer engagement.
- The status of the Leadership Exchange is underlined if leaders are present, drive the agenda and take actions away to inform the working practices in their respective organisations.
- It is crucial to have a clear action plan, transparent lines of communication with realistic expectations of both partners and regular meetings to monitor progress.

*‘The monthly meetings have been the key which has allowed for the management of any changes.’ (Sandra Dearing, TPRG)*

- The rigorous structure of the Programme with its demands for three reports was seen by most as an enabler:

*'SWATPro and NBT have worked in partnership successfully for five years supporting and delivering learning and skills to hundreds of learners and apprentices. The rigour and structure of this Project has given the space and focus outside of contracts, delivery and finance for the understandable differences in leadership styles, responsibilities, requirements and working styles between a large public sector organisation and an independent training provider to become apparent.'* (Rob Sly, SWATPro)

- Leadership Exchanges benefited from having short-term and long-term goals that provided quick wins and a reason for sustainable activity with a definite avoidance of becoming simply a 'talking shop'
- Both employers and education and training providers appreciated the need for honest and open dialogue within a supportive environment that encourages the development of experimentation and even risk taking.

*'The opportunity to engage in open and honest debate on skills needs with one of our key local employers has been invaluable.'* (Amanda Mosek, Principal and Chief Executive, Boston College)

- Building trust was seen both in individual Leadership Exchanges and at the national seminars as being a *sine qua non* for employer/provider partnership working.
- There needs to be a recognition of the complexity and different ways of working of both the employer and provider organisations with their different demands and constraints.
- Two-way street working is successful when there is a willingness to learn and to use the new knowledge gained from the Leadership Exchange to change the way the partner organisations operate.
- Face-to-face meetings between employers and providers in a locality were seen as key to providing local solutions for specific local needs.
- Success was more likely when Leadership Exchanges made full use of pre-existing local, regional and national partnerships, such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships, sector-specific bodies (e.g. In the case of Barking and Dagenham College the London Region Construction Group, in the case of SWATPRO the NSA Skills for Health Excellence Centres)

*Achieving a strong and deep degree of communication between key players in sector; in this case the transport and logistics sector □ and align the project activities with existing initiatives, in particular between the D2N2 LEP and the University of Derby □ (Nicki Moore, project clerk, Buxton and Leek College)*

- It was felt to be important, but was difficult in practice, to involve higher education providers, particularly in relation to the development of Higher Apprenticeship programmes – see for example the Wirral Met College case study
- Leadership Exchanges can provide the space and time to interrogate an existing successful curriculum, training or apprenticeship model and examine how it might be replicated in

different companies, small and large employers and various occupations within a sector - the Wirral Met College development of its successful Higher Apprenticeship programme that it wished to replicate within local SMEs was a good example of this activity.

- The provision of face-to-face national seminars for the employers and providers in the nine Leadership Exchanges to learn about what was happening across the Programme as a whole proved to be very successful for motivating participants, reassuring them about their activities and providing new ideas to try out. The first seminar, which was undertaken on-line, proved both less successful in terms of stimulating dialogue and less popular among participants. Attendance at the two subsequent face-to-face events was high, with the majority of projects represented by more than one person.
- Finally, *'It's not buyer and seller, it's a partnership'* – this pithy comment from a participant at the second national seminar neatly sums up the central message about the new type of relationship between employers and education and training providers that Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange activities stimulate.

## **B. What helps to make this type of activity sustainable?**

- One of the obvious but most important ways of sustaining activity is through the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange demonstrating that it can achieve commonly agreed goals and that both parties are willing to change.

*'Collaborating takes a lot of time but you get back as much as you put in and more besides.'* (Nigel Wright, L&D Director, Syngenta)

This can be facilitated through a number of mechanisms, including:

- Working through local/regional/sectoral groupings, such as LEPs, Sector Skills Councils and Chambers of Commerce, which already have an infrastructure and are sometimes able to provide resources for two-way street working (e.g. Solent LEP potentially funding a Leadership and Management Programme).
- Having an on-going document (e.g. action plan, memorandum of understanding, roll-out plan, and workforce development plan) around which to continue collaboration, dialogue and action (see the Barking and Dagenham College Action Plan or the Kirklees College Memorandum of Understanding).
- Developing and maintaining a funding plan that attracts additional strategic sources of funding
- Broadening the membership of the Leadership Exchange to include operational as well as strategic leaders and a wider range of employers.
- Disseminating the findings so that other sectors, occupations within sectors and different providers are able to learn from and take the ideas forward (see for example Fareport Training Organisation Blueprint- see p. 68)
- Reporting on labour market intelligence, compendium of resources, Info-graphics, skills escalator, lesson plans for careers adviser and schools, video resources, all disseminated on-line (see Buxton and Leek College case study)
- Impact monitoring with regards to skills development and internal progression of staff.
- Identifying pent up employee demand for training in some sectors (e.g. retail where the training provider was overwhelmed with applications for management training)

- Ensuring that the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange does not rely too heavily on key individuals
- Embedding the Two-Way Street principles into the college's strategic planning process (e.g. Barking and Dagenham College)
- Working to achieve short-, medium- and long-term impacts to provide rewards throughout for all partners (see the SWATPro position document)

5.2. While face-to-face activity that promotes in-depth relationships and understanding has proved to be a real strength of this Programme, one or two of the Projects suggested that this may need to be supplemented by additional, less time-consuming mechanisms such as webinars, teleconferences, websites and newsletters.

5.3. In a minority of cases a need for further financial resources to maintain the Leadership Exchange was identified. While this is understandable, it may also suggest that the Leadership Exchange was too ambitious in its goals and that the outcomes were not of sufficient value to the participants that they were prepared to use their collective resources to continue to fund activities.

### **C. What barriers were encountered and how were they overcome?**

5.4. Initially a number of projects were concerned about the short timescale of the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme and the ability to gain active employer commitment, but in all cases bar one, the timescale actually facilitated activity because there was an urgency to get started on something concrete and to meet on a regular basis. The regularity of meetings deepened relationships and commitment.

*'With a small partnership and without the infrastructure that other providers have the day job has occasionally got in the way. However the end result was worth it with a clear emerging strategy for NBT and SWATPro to take forward starting with leadership and management.'*  
(Rod Davis, South West Association of Training Providers Ltd)

5.5. The Ealing, Hammersmith and West London case study (see pp. 39-42) demonstrates the difficulties of setting up a Leadership Exchange from scratch when the employer side is not fully engaged and the link person is not in a position to make strategic decisions. It also highlights the dangers of a provider being over ambitious about what it can offer in terms of flexible delivery.

*When evaluating this Project and considering the conditions required for successful future projects there are a number of clear considerations to make: Firstly the scope of building a project like this from nothing in the timeframe available was too ambitious; Secondly, ensuring that employer partners have sufficient buy-in from decision makers; and Finally that we have the ability to prioritise internal delivery to match an employer's involvement. (Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College)*

5.6. Several employers commented that they were not able to attract young people to work in their sectors (e.g. construction, logistics). This was partly seen as an issue of poor Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), which meant that young people and their parents did

not understand the nature and range of employment and training opportunities in certain sectors, but also an unwillingness on the part of schools to allow colleges and employers in to try to change perceptions of careers in these sectors. However, in several cases, CEIAG materials in various formats were produced or planned and events organised as part of the work of the Leadership Exchange. For example, as a result of The Skills Company working with Engineering Futures over 900 students engaged directly with employers in the STEM sector and over 2000 young people attended a Careers Fair promoting STEM. Buxton and Leek College worked with the Institute of Couriers to produce a range of materials highlighting employment opportunities in the logistics sector.

5.7. The complexity of offering apprenticeships and finding an appropriate pathway for particular employment needs was seen as challenging. As the quotation below indicates, however, this is work that needs to be undertaken in trying to match employer needs with locally available provision.

*'If I had realised the amount of work in scoping the roles to Frameworks then researching the delivery options I would not have volunteered! However, I believe it has been hugely helpful as a starter for NBT to look at Apprenticeship expansion.'* (Rob Sly, South West Association of Training Providers Ltd)

#### **D. What are the key enablers and inhibitors for employer/provider Two-Way Street partnership working?**

Through discussion of practice within the nine Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges, this Project has identified a number of factors that either enable or inhibit partnership working between education and training providers and employers. The bullet points below set out factors that were most commonly cited. Some of these relate specifically to employer/provider practices, while others are the result of external circumstances, such as the nature of the economy or national policy.

##### **Enablers include:**

- Fast-moving technological change and new work practices that require the development of new skills and more effective recruitment and training.
- The need for staff in education and training providers to engage deeply with current industrial practices in order to update their own skills and make their programmes more relevant for learners.
- The introduction of the compulsory levy for training which has the potential to stimulate the growth of vocational learning.
- Unitised qualifications that allow for local flexibility and smaller 'chunks' of learning
- Clearly defined and articulated local skills needs.
- The existence of active employer networks, such as Chambers of Commerce
- Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs) and Group Training Associations (GTAs)
- Working through and with regional bodies, such as LEPs, sector bodies and other key facilitating networks.

*'The Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange has given me the ideal opportunity to gain an insight into the skills challenges being faced by the North Bristol Trust. The strength of the employer / provider partnership has been key to the success of the Leadership Exchange and in supporting the development of the West of England LEP Local Sector Skills Statement for Health and Life Sciences.'* (Pearl Mills, West of England LEP)

- Dedicated Employer Services within education and training providers with a clear remit to be the voice of the employer inside the organisation and the representative of the provider to the employer.
- Employer-friendly forms of communication (e.g. websites and brochures) focusing on employers' skills development needs with less emphasis on qualifications.
- Applying two-way street principles to existing employer/provider projects or VET programmes to enhance sustainable development.
- A history of successful expansive apprenticeships<sup>5</sup> is helpful because employer / provider relationship have already been established with a focus on employer goals.

#### **Inhibitors include:**

- Pressures on all partners to meet their own targets, which often distract from or even run counter to the common aims of the employer/provider partnerships.
- Area Reviews that focus college time and effort away from deep engagement with employers and are likely to lead to reduced provision. Although if undertaken comprehensively and over a reasonable period of time, area reviews could be used to stimulate greater partnership working within a locality.
- The proximity or overlap of LEP boundaries which can result in contradictory priorities – a point reported by more than half of the Leadership Exchange projects.
- The large number and restrictive nature of apprenticeship frameworks and the bureaucracy associated with apprenticeship funding

*'I knew that there were a lot of Frameworks to cover most jobs in the NHS but since scoping them we've found some I didn't know existed. Delivery partner identification is a real issue in some areas. Nevertheless it has formed the basis of setting some priorities and a forward strategy for Apprenticeship expansion.'*  
(Yvonne Greenwood, North Bristol NHS Trust)

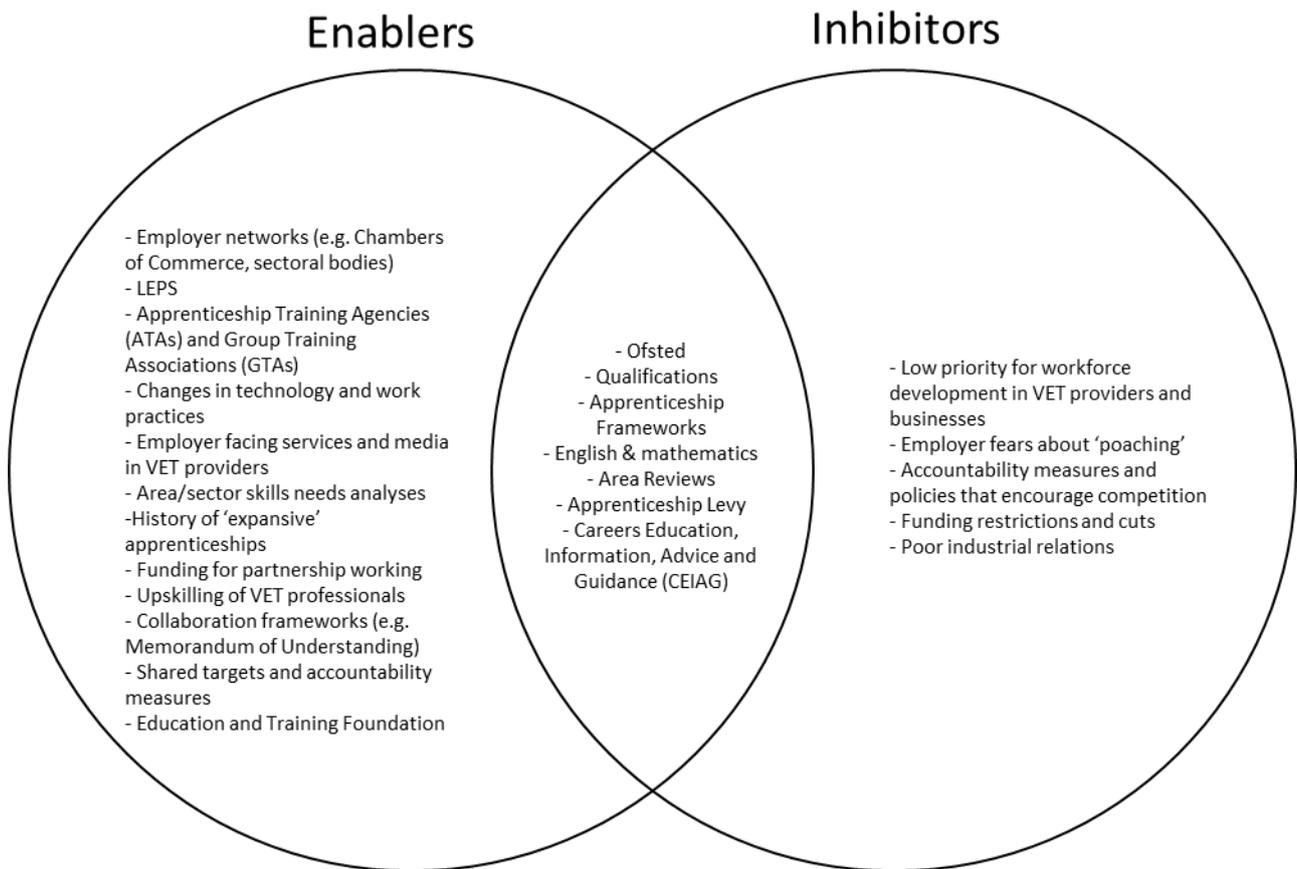
- The large number of new 'standards' as well as frameworks which employers and education and training providers both find confusing.
- Qualifications that are often too rigid and do not allow for local adaptation to meet local employer skills needs.
- The demise of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).
- Lack of effective Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) for young people and competition between education and training providers that makes impartial advice and guidance difficult to achieve.
- The lack of resources to keep partnership activities alive particularly with funding cuts for the post-16 education and training sector.
- Low priority for workforce development within some companies and lack of resources to support training, particularly in SMEs.
- Employers' fears of losing staff that have been trained – the problems of 'poaching'.
- Poor industrial relations in a company.
- The time required to establish trusting working relationships between partners and to develop tailored provision.

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<sup>5</sup> See Alison Fuller and Lorna Unwin, (2008) *Towards Expansive Apprenticeships: A Commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme* <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/apprenticeshipcommentaryFINAL.pdf>

Figure 3. illustrates the factors that the evidence from this Programme suggests enable or inhibit two-way street working. A Venn diagram has been used because some of these factors can act either positively (as enablers) or negatively (as inhibitors) depending on how they are configured and managed.

**Figure 3. Enablers and Inhibitors**



## **Section 6: Conclusions**

6.1. The nature of work has changed as employers engage with the opportunities and challenges posed by digital technology, globalisation and economic developments, resulting in new occupations and business processes that demand new skills. Partnership working over time will enable professional, technical and vocational education to keep pace with changes in business and work processes, but it will also act as a seed-bed for innovation across both organisations.

6.2. The Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange programme has demonstrated that there are clear benefits for the leaders of both employer and provider organisations. For employers these include:

- A higher profile within the community
- Access to co-designed and bespoke education and training focused on skills not just qualifications
- Professional, technical and vocational education and training that is more closely aligned with current and future employment needs
- More highly skilled employees with a clearer understanding of the culture and demands of the workplace
- The opportunity to engage with a variety of potential employees over a period of time
- Broadening and enriching the professional identity, confidence and capacity of staff through their active involvement in education and training
- Increased understanding of the opportunities offered by local education and training providers
- Improved access to research and ideas for innovation
- Better use of local professional, technical and vocational resources and facilities.

For providers they include:

- New opportunities to develop leadership and management capacities by engaging with new partners and new ways of working
- A clearer picture of the current and future education and training needs of employers in the locality
- Improved understanding of how employer organisations work and the demands of current work practices
- Opportunities for curriculum specialists and leaders to update their professional knowledge and skills
- A more direct 'line of sight to work' for learners enhancing their motivation and engagement
- The potential for improved learner retention and progression into employment
- New ways of structuring education and training to reflect workplace practices
- More effective use of the resources and facilities of both partners
- An improved reputation as a trusted partner supporting the local community
- The opening up of opportunities for business development including apprenticeships.

6.3. The Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme strongly suggests that education and training providers and employers wish to collaborate over the provision of effective vocational education and training. It is therefore important to harness the goodwill that exists on both sides to

set up Two-Way Street Partnerships and to use them as catalysts for developing vocational education and training with a clear line of sight to work.

6.4. From the experiences of the nine projects it is possible to identify the following features of successful partnerships:

- Employer-provider partnerships are successful when they identify and agree common goals from which both parties benefit
- Effective employer and provider leaders create the *formal* climate for high quality professional, technical and vocational education within which more *informal* and flexible arrangements may exist for curriculum delivery
- Employer-provider partnerships are more effective and productive when they have a clear local and/or sector-specific focus – generic employer engagement strategies are likely to be less effective because they are less targeting and therefore less immediately relevant for both parties
- Partnerships are likely to be more successful where they use and develop existing employer/provider relationships. If starting from scratch it is best not to be too ambitious about what can be achieved in the first instance
- Partnerships work best when they have the right people at the table and both employer and provider representatives have the authority to implement and lead change and development. However, relying solely on enthusiastic individuals to drive things forward is not sustainable.
- The most productive and sustainable partnerships are based on honest and open face-to-face dialogue about requirements and constraints with the ability to listen to some hard messages – this is a way of dispelling unhelpful myths and developing the *trust* required for meaningful collaborative activity
- Partnerships that have a clear plan of action, ground rules, transparent lines of communication and realistic expectations of both parties are more likely to succeed. In some cases, this might include a Memorandum of Understanding
- Effective collaborative arrangements move beyond a simple ‘supply and demand’ relationship to joint responsibility for improving the professional, technical and vocational education and training system
- Partnerships benefit when they engage with wider stakeholders such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), professional and employer organisations, local authorities and professional and trade associations
- Partnerships’ ability to meet the needs of employers and learners is greater if they engage with higher education institutions to build the skills escalators and Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships that sit at the heart of an effective vocational education and training system
- Effective partnerships use the lessons learnt from collaboration to make changes to the way that both organisations operate:
  - a. Providers, for example, might consider with their employer partners how to improve their communication channels (e.g. through websites and brochures that reach out to employers as well as students)
  - b. Employers might consider how to work with education and training partners to ensure that the publicity they produce about opportunities for employment within their sector speaks to young people and their parents

6.5. Partnership working between employers and providers is not easy as their languages, cultures and ways of working are frequently very different and often misunderstood by each other. Some aspects of current policy further complicate collaborative activities. These obstacles include:

- Limited power and financial resources at local and regional levels where decisions about the funding of, and incentives for, developing technical, professional and vocational education and training are best made
- Strong, relevant vocational education and training is expensive - shared employer/provider facilities and expertise are one way of overcoming this issue although such solutions require effective local and regional partnership planning
- Accountability measures that promote competition between education and training providers do not encourage collaborative working - this suggests the need for more area-wide planning and locally negotiated performance measures or, based on the work of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) working with the Association of Colleges (AoC), local outcome agreements<sup>6</sup>
- Up-to-date and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for both adults and young people is difficult to achieve in a competitive education market place although it is vital for effective and appropriate recruitment to work, apprenticeships and vocational education and training
- Area reviews are a potential risk, if the focus on efficiency outweighs the opportunity to improve technical, professional and vocational education and training locally and nationally
- Currently many national qualifications are not flexible enough to meet the demands of local education and training needs as well as national standards.

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<sup>6</sup> See UKCES / AoC, (2015) Local action, national success: How outcome agreements can improve skills delivery [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/438493/150624\\_OA\\_cover\\_design\\_V3.1.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/438493/150624_OA_cover_design_V3.1.pdf)

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## Appendix A. Case Studies

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### **Barking and Dagenham College in conjunction with Roof Ltd** Case Study

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#### Objectives

London has a booming construction industry but employers report difficulties in finding young people with the right skills to fill vacancies, with concerns about skills gaps in terms of both quality and quantity.

This Leadership Exchange was established to begin to address this need through deepening and broadening the dialogue between employers in the construction sector (Rooff and the London Region Construction Training Group) and two key construction skills providers - Barking and Dagenham College and College of North West London. It also involved active participation by the London Enterprise Panel, which itself emphasises the importance of construction to the Capital.

More specifically the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange aimed to:

- Raise young people's awareness of opportunities and pathways within the construction sector;
- Identify the particular training needs of small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- Examine possibilities for curriculum development within the colleges to ensure a better match with the modern demands of the construction industry (e.g. Building Information Modelling and Management systems);
- Focus on attracting more young women into construction;
- Ensure sustainability beyond the life of the project.

#### Roles

The core membership of the Leadership Exchange comprised:

- *Yvonne Kelly*, Chief Operating Officer at Barking and Dagenham College and at the time of the third meeting, Acting Principal.
- *Mike Paxton*, Curriculum Director Construction and Entry to Employment
- *Steve Drury*, Business Development Director at Roof Ltd and founder of the London Region Construction Training Group Ltd.
- *Indra Pooran*, Project Co-ordinator for Barking and Dagenham College
- *Riikka Vihriala* was Clerk to the Project and provided a very useful link into the London Region Association of Colleges
- *Ann Hodgson* as Regional Co-ordinator for the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme.

Other members who attended on one or more occasions

- *Paul Skitt* from the College of North West London
- *Michael Heanue*, Principal Policy Officer for the London Enterprise Panel
- *Employer representatives* from SW Bruce and Co. Ltd, Cosmur Construction Limited and Neilcott Construction Limited

## Outcomes and Impacts

### **Outcomes for the provider and its staff**

There is no doubt that the Leadership Exchange Project has had positive outcomes for Barking and Dagenham College and, to a lesser extent (because of its less intensive involvement), for the College of North West London.

*The Leadership Exchanges have led to:*

- A much greater awareness of the skills needs within the construction sector in London.
- In-depth engagement of employers with the design and delivery of construction courses at the two colleges '*an area which has been challenging previously*' (Yvonne Kelly, Barking and Dagenham College). An example of this type of curriculum development is the new bespoke course in dry-lining that has been designed at Barking and Dagenham as a direct result of the conversations that occurred within the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange and from which both providers and employers will benefit.
- The creation of a website for the London Region Construction Training Group. This involved not only a 'real life' commission for Barking and Dagenham college students, but also created an active medium for communication between the two colleges involved in the project and London construction companies of all sizes to ensure that employers are aware of the training opportunities available in the colleges and that this training is up-to-date, tailored to employer needs and fit for purpose.
- A detailed, on-going Action Plan to take forward ideas and initiatives discussed within the Leadership Exchange meetings beyond the life of the Project.

*Future plans include:*

- The production of a newsletter designed by Barking and Dagenham College students for the London Region Construction Training Group
- Support from employers from the construction sector with the design and endorsement of a student Employability Passport.
- A film designed to attract more young women into the construction sector created by Barking and Dagenham College students.
- Support from employers with the design of Barking and Dagenham College's new Advanced Technology Centre focused on developing work in three sectors – Creative Industries, Construction and Engineering.

*More generally as a result of the Leadership Exchange project, the colleges involved:*

- have been made more aware of wider regional activities related to the construction industry via the London Chambers of Commerce and London Enterprise Panel;
- are more confident going into the Area Review process because they know they are meeting a genuine need for training in the construction industry and that their provision is valued;
- feel that employers are now more aware of the way in which national policy on qualifications, funding and inspection drives college behaviour and can sometimes constrain flexibility.

## Impacts for employers and learners

*Employers in the construction sector have benefited from:*

- A greater understanding of how the education and training sector works and what provision is available in two of the major London colleges that specialise in this area;
- Direct communication channels with colleges that have begun to map the skills needs within the construction sector and have already led to and will lead to further bespoke training to address some of these within the industry;
- Participation in a workshop about Building Information Modelling and Management which is part of the future for the construction industry;
- The creation of a website for the London Region Construction Training Group and the offer of a related Newsletter;
- The promise of a film designed by Barking and Dagenham College students and training of CITB Construction Ambassadors to help with recruitment in an industry that is suffering from considerable skills gaps;
- A jointly agreed Action Plan to take forward the ideas discussed in the three Leadership Exchange meetings;
- Stronger links with the London Enterprise Panel and greater knowledge of activities related to education and training opportunities in the Capital.

*The impact for learners includes:*

- Involvement in 'real life' commissions for a website, Newsletter and film;
- Training as CITB Construction Ambassadors;
- More carefully tailored courses that meet industry needs and develop the employability skills that are more likely to lead to sustained employment

## Lessons Learnt

One of the key lessons learnt is that there is a clear willingness on the part of employers and providers to communicate more effectively about employment opportunities, skills needs and training solutions, if given the time and opportunity. Both parties had a strong central driver – the need to attract more young people into the construction sector and train them appropriately so that they can find meaningful employment in London. The involvement of leaders from both sides undoubtedly underlined the status and importance of this process and helped to ensure its dissemination more widely within and between organisations. Moreover, it was clear that deep and regular communication was needed to support both parties in genuinely engaging with the other's concerns and ways of working in order to dispel the myths and misconceptions that can so often get in the way of partnership working. It was important that a distinction was made between the needs of large and smaller enterprises and an appreciation of the diversity of the sector, which meant that mapping skills needs was a complex task. The fact that the Leadership Exchange took place face-to-face, was undertaken over a relatively short timeframe and required the production of identified outputs and outcomes was vital. Crucially, this Project succeeded because it had clear short-term outcomes, made a virtue of strengthening and building on pre-existing local relationships as well as using regional networks, such as the London Region Construction Training Group, the London Enterprise Panel and the London Region Association of Colleges.

*'It has been challenging for SMEs to engage as fully as they would like and again BDC (Barking and Dagenham College) feel that using the LRCTG (London Region Construction Training Group) to reach employers will be a better and more efficient way of utilising both our time and theirs.'*

(Yvonne Kelly, Acting CEO, Barking and Dagenham College)

However as Steve Drury, Director of Roof Ltd commented:

*'The challenge to get people to attend face-to-face meetings will always be a problem and potentially more so with SME's but a good way to make contact is through the use of existing established networks, such as the LRCTG. If time had allowed within this project, it could possibly have been presented at one of the scheduled group meetings to try and get wider coverage.'* (Steve Drury, Director, Roof Ltd)

## Sustainability

As can be seen from earlier sections in this case study, there are a number of features of this Leadership Exchange that provide a strong basis for sustainability:

- The buoyant nature of the construction labour market in London and the need for skills development – an issue that is central to both the colleges and the employers undertake;
- The existence of the London Region Construction Group and its potential use value as a medium of communication, particularly when the new website and Newsletter have been completed;
- The strong links with the London Enterprise Panel with its focus on the construction sector and its establishment of a Construction Skills Advisory Group but also because of connections with its wider work on Career Clusters and Area Reviews;
- The on-going Action Plan produced as an output from this Project.

In addition, the lessons learnt from this Project will be disseminated widely through a number of sector-specific and more generic Two-Way Street events organised by the Education and Training Foundation, UCL Institute of Education and London Region Association of Colleges, as well as through reports, articles and websites.

## **Boston College in conjunction with T.H.Clements**

### **Case Study**

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#### Objectives

Boston is a market town set in a rural location, near to the Wash. While not isolated it is not on any communication corridors, and hence Boston College serves a fairly clearly defined geographical area. The nearest university is Lincoln. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) covers a much broader area within which the Boston area is a distinct sub region. The local economy is predominantly agricultural, with some small engineering firms, many of which have an agricultural focus. In recent years the area has attracted significant immigration from Eastern Europe filling the demand for low paid, often seasonal employment.

Boston College is situated near the centre of the town. It has a well-established Business Development Unit to broaden the traditional role of the college, respond to the changing environment and improve contacts with local industry, especially SMEs. The college has a developing relationship with the LEP.

The objective of this Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange project was to set up a dialogue with a significant local employer to examine how the College might work more generally with local employers and how it might improve its provision for them. T H Clements had been identified as a partner through the outreach activity of the business development unit. It is a reasonably large agribusiness, with a turnover in excess of £30 million, providing brassicas for supermarket chains. It is a high tech business, requiring a range of skills from low paid seasonal work, to supervision, management, human resources (HR) management and technical support. In the past TH Clements has used private providers for staff development. The HR Manager at T H Clements, was happy to work with the College to profile the development needs of local agribusinesses.

#### Roles

The College Principal took a central role in coordinating the project. The first Leadership Exchange meeting involved the Principal, the Head of Business Development, a representative from the LEP, the HR Manager from TH Clements, the Two Way Street Regional Coordinator and the Clerk. In later meetings these members were joined by the Head of the Business Department at the College and a Business Development Officer. Both the Principal and the T H Clements HR manager put in a great deal of energy into developing a dialogue around the perceptions of the College from an employer's point of view and the skills requirements of employers in the agribusiness area, from the most basic to those at a higher level. Consideration was also given to the seasonal nature of the business operation. The LEP was keen to be involved as this was an example of a project looking at meeting employer skills needs which is a high profile for them. The Programme Area Manager developed a management course, which became the first tangible outcome from the partnership. All parties agreed to contribute to the sustainability of the project.

## Outcomes and Impacts

The most significant impact lies in the greater understanding gained of the needs of local employers. The College realised early on in the partnership that despite believing that local employers were fully aware of how it could support their skills needs, this was not necessarily the case. It also became evident that the College's website was not sufficiently employer friendly. The College was interested to learn more about the size and high tech nature of the local agribusinesses. As the partnership developed the College was able to explore, with TH Clements, the potential for bespoke provision. As a concrete example, a new flexible course, at Level 4, has been developed suitable for management training for appropriate personnel at TH Clements and other local agribusinesses. The course will include a work-related project that is intended to improve systems and/or productivity. The College was able to reflect on how their existing business network meetings could be adapted to better ensure that employers fully understood what it was able to do for them. They also appreciated the need to develop a more accessible corporate image and the importance of continuing to build individual relationships with local employers.

On the employer's part there was an enhanced awareness of the potential of the College to provide skills training and management development at a more cost effective level than the independent consultants that had been engaged previously. They also gained a greater awareness of how the development could impact positively on their bottom line and appreciate that the College could potentially offer other skills solutions for them. For this reason they are now more likely to use the College as a first point of contact for other training needs.

## Lessons Learnt

The clear lesson is the importance of the College maintaining effective and open communications with local employers. On the employer's part it was clear that a key local business had been unaware of the potential of the local college to provide suitable and cost-effective support for its various training and development needs. On the College's part it has learnt lessons about the need not to assume that all local businesses understand fully how the College can support them with training needs and the need to improve its accessibility for employers. This is likely to take the form of an improved web presence, more networking and refreshed business network meetings. Curriculum managers will be supported to expand their curriculum offer and to employ new staff in order to be able to deliver specialist aspects of bespoke training.

## Sustainability

The college has had significant contact with the work of the Education and Training Foundation over the past year. To the impact of the Two Way Street project should be added the impact of two Teach Two projects. As a result, new ways of working with employers have been started at many levels in the college.

It has been helpful that the LEP has expressed support. They have indicated a number of networking opportunities where closer cooperation between the College and employers can be explored. TH Clements has undertaken to maintain a dialogue with the College, and to explore collaborative activity with other agribusinesses.

## **Buxton and Leek College in conjunction with the Institute of Couriers**

### **Case Study**

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#### Objectives

The Buxton and Leek Leadership Exchange, which was focused on the logistics sector, comprised a collaborative partnership between the Buxton and Leek College, Derby University, a range of local employers and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) D2N2. The transport and logistics sector is a significant employer in the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LEP area with over 28,000 employees. The sector makes an essential contribution to the success of many other sectors, providing the means through which supplies are obtained and goods are transported to markets locally, nationally and internationally.

The D2N2 Logistics and Transport Development and Action Plan (March 2015) identified a number of critical skills challenges including:

- Low skills levels of the current workforce, which do not match the needs of the sector, which encompasses communication, management, customer service, ICT and interpersonal skills. With the exception of vehicle driving, the skills needed by the transport and logistics sector are held by people working in other sectors.
- An ageing workforce – only seven per cent are aged under 25 years and the sector is not seen by young people or their parents as attractive
- New technologies and ways of working require high level specialist skills to maximise the effectiveness of innovations presented by new technologies such as radio- identification (RFID), and creative solutions to the demands of environmental legislation and 'last mile logistics'.
- Significant gender imbalances in the sector, with women only making up 24 per cent of the sector.
- Careers advisers in schools are not well informed about the sector and materials are required to attract young people and their parents to courses, qualifications and career paths in the sector.

The Leadership Exchange has provided the opportunity to drive this agenda forward through meaningful exchange between local employers, national employer representatives, education and training providers but also with schools and higher education (HE) providers. Engagement from employers was drawn together by Carl Lomas, Institute of Couriers, while the education and training provider side was led by Buxton and Leek College which has links to schools through the Peak 11 Federation, and also links to HE as it is part of the University of Derby group. Throughout the project the opportunity for employers to gain pedagogic skills has been emphasised to improve line management and on-the-job training by managers.

#### Roles

One of the key demands of this Programme was to hold three meetings of the Leadership Exchange. This has at times been challenging due to universities' and colleges' term-time timetables and breaks.

Len Tildsley, the Project Lead chaired two of the meetings with Nicki Moore (Clerk) and John Dilks (Regional Coordinator) producing reports and action plans. The delegates for these meetings changed and evolved throughout the project as it became clearer about the required inputs. So for example the Head of Skills for the D2N2 LEP attended meetings one and three, Derbyshire County Council lead for young people's information, advice and guidance was invited after meeting one to join the group and was able to advise the Leadership Exchange on the latest requirements for delivering impartial labour market information to young people. The Leadership Exchange was also able to recruit the careers education lead for one of the Peak 11 schools to the project and his advice has proved useful in understanding how to appeal to young people and what language to use.

Employers have been very helpful in supporting the Leadership Exchange. These have included both large employers (e.g. Boots the Chemist) and small organisations. Of particular note has been the support provided by employer organisations such as the Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport, The East Midlands Logistics Centre and The Institute of Couriers. In addition, the Leadership Exchange was able to recruit David Arnold who is a Director of the online careers resource icould.com. The website has an area devoted to the East Midlands and there is an agreement that some of the outputs from this Project could be included in this very popular online resource.

An early decision concerned the need to map existing resources to understand what was already available. This would ensure that no duplication took place and that the group could target their work at the most necessary resources. University of Derby staff undertook this activity and a document was produced – “a compendium of resources”. This was reviewed at the second meeting and a final version produced once the other project outputs are finalised and their location has been decided. This latter so that electronic links can be included.

The development of a skills escalator for the East Midlands Logistics and Supply Chain was conceived to dovetail into an existing D2N2 initiative to produce skills escalators for other sectors in the area. The escalator will be a resource for young people and career changers as well as the existing workforce so that they can join a skills and learning programme that will support their career ambitions in ways that coincide with the needs of employers across the region.

The Leadership Exchange commissioned Helen Gallimore, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (FCILT) to gather the data for the skills escalator and this has been integrated into the data for the other sector escalators.

## Outcomes and Impacts

The outputs from the Leadership Exchange have been developed rapidly over a short period of time and their impact will be seen in the medium (2 - 5 years) and the longer term (beyond 5 years). It will take time for the materials to be piloted, reviewed and embedded in programmes of career development, in advice and guidance sessions and wider labour market information and resources.

In the medium and long term it is expected that there will be greater interest in the courses and apprenticeships that are already offered at Buxton & Leek College, Chesterfield College and other regional colleges, as well as in higher education courses offered by the University of Derby. There

should also be an increase the work-based relevance of learning within those courses as enhanced links between employers and providers lead to the creation of a 'life-briefed offer' through enhanced placement opportunities, joint delivery of courses or elements of courses, and the use of blended learning modes.

It is clear at this stage of the Project (after 6 months) that there has been a greater degree of communication generated by all key players. Some outcomes of this are that there is more understanding of the skills shortages by career influencers, a greater degree of awareness of resources by all stakeholders and a genuine commitment to work together on this issue into the future. To track change, the College and University will monitor the uptake of relevant programmes of study to investigate the impact of the project. This will be disseminated to stakeholders through a variety of channels such as through D2N2 and other strategic groups.

## Lessons Learnt

It was clear from the outset that the Leadership Exchange lacked detailed information about the Logistics and Supply Chain sector in the East Midlands. There appeared to be a lack of leadership across the sector to coordinate the key stakeholders. The group commissioned Helen Gallimore (see above) to undertake research so that information could be compiled into a useful format for career decisions makers and career influencers.

### **Examples of key lessons learnt about the sector**

- VET providers were not meeting the workforce development needs of the sector.
- Employers were totally focused on filling staff vacancies of which there were many.
- VET providers and employers did not collaborate to share resources and improve the relevance of training and qualifications to improve recruitment and to close skills gaps.
- The workforce was ageing and workforce development, for example in new technology, was not keeping up with the pace of change.
- Although the University worked with D2N2 LEP there was a lack of joined up thinking between these organisations, employers and schools.
- Schools did not effectively promote jobs in this sector at key transition points in schools, therefore pupils and parents were not attracted to careers in the sector.

### **Examples of key lessons learnt about the Two Way Street, Leadership Exchange**

- It brought all of the key stakeholders together to form a potentially strong leadership group.
- Leadership skills were shared through listening, conversation and decision making in the meetings.
- It laid the foundations for collaborative working between, D2N2, the University and College, other VET providers and employers and schools. This was vital.
- The Leadership Exchange has developed leadership skills to focus attention on the objectives of the project and has dispersed, to some extent, political tensions between stakeholders
- The opportunity for the attainment of pedagogic skills by employers has been under developed
- It is the view of the group that the funding was too little particularly for the development of new initiatives and the length of the project too short.
- It was suggested that the project should be called Three Way Street – Employers, VET Providers – Learners.

- In the first meeting, each project should produce a memorandum of understanding agreed by the members of the exchange.

## Sustainability

Sustainability must be linked to the work that the D2N2 LEP is doing for logistics. The LEP need an employer to take the lead on logistics in the employers' advisory group. In the absence of a logistics sector skills council it plans to set up a sector skills group for logistics with a skills person to sit on this group. Members of the Leadership Exchange have committed to find employer(s) for these roles and will offer continuous support to the person or persons.

It is clear at this stage of the Project that the greater degree of leadership and communication generated by all key players in the Leadership Exchange will ensure that collaboration continues and will work to overcome the challenges described in the D2N2 strategy described above. The priorities for the sector have been highlighted through Two Way Street presentations at the AELP Logistics Forum conference and the D2N2 LEP transport forum, East Midlands Airport. This generated much conversation by employers and other stakeholders including words of commitment to work together within Two Way Street principles to solve personnel and skills shortages.

Further development is underway with the production and promotion of key outputs: Info graphic, skills escalator, video, compendium resources, and lesson plans. When completed, these will form a toolkit to go into schools. It has been agreed that the further development of components of the toolkit will be creative and concentrate on images, headlines, and data etc. that attract females as well as males. The D2N2 LEP is developing a collection of skills escalators for all of the key sectors in the region including logistics and transport. Derby University's design team is currently designing the suite of escalators and these will be available at the end of October. Dissemination and accessibility is key. The escalators will be disseminated through a number of channels such as online in electronic format (website and email) and made available as PDF documents for dissemination to schools and colleges. All of materials will go onto the icould.com careers website and the Compendium will also sit on the international centre for guidance web site.

It has been agreed that the D2N2 LEP will coordinate the delivery of the toolkit and approaches and visits to schools by employers, possibly utilising funding held by the careers service for this purpose. In the past, there has been a view from employers that VET providers have offered qualifications that don't necessary fit the knowledge and skills needs required. The LEP have taken responsibility for asking employers for action/business plans and to take them to VET providers to stimulate new qualifications and courses to meet the skills needs within employers' plans. In the absence now of a sector skills council for logistics, the LEP will also oversee the collaboration required to complete the Trailblazer Apprenticeship at Level 2 believed to be seen by employers as a useful qualification for young people starting in a job near the entry level of a career path.

Through the Leadership Exchange, relationships have been born and developed between key stakeholders, discussion has stimulated ideas and a much greater appreciation of the advantages of a Two-Way Street approach to solving the personnel and skills challenges is becoming embedded.

# Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College

## Case Study

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### Preamble

Ealing Hammersmith and West London College (EWLC) made every attempt to establish a Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange but in the course of the programme eventually had to accept that such a partnership was not to be forthcoming on this particular occasion. However, as agreed with the Programme Project Team and the Foundation, the college provided the Programme with an exploration of the issues involved which can be found below.

### Report

The original aim of Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College's (EHWLC) Two Way Street (TWS) project was to provide a short bespoke programme of learning focussing on Health & Safety English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for the construction industry. Additionally the aim was to deliver the training on-site, minimising time away from the workplace and ensuring that it was a short duration due to the frequency with which construction workers move to different jobs and sites.

The inception of this project stemmed from a meeting with a representative of a multinational construction company who approached EHWLC with an opportunity to deliver on-site ESOL training for a number of their contractors. Exploring this opportunity EHWLC discovered two crucial factors:

1. Of the 15 contractors, 10 had subsequently moved to different sites making it difficult for us to find one location to deliver the training.
2. It would require approximately a minimum of 120 hours of teaching to move up a single level, a benchmark of success under most funding streams.

Considering these two factors the project was built around the creation of a short qualification that could be delivered in approximately 12 hours in order to train overseas construction workers in basic 'health & safety' ESOL with the aim of reducing fatalities and generally improving health and safety on construction sites across the Capital.

A key aspect of our rationale for this project was how central EHWLC is to each area of this project. EHWLC has a large and highly experienced ESOL department providing a huge number of people with the skills and qualifications to transfer onto vocational programmes and employment each year. Secondly, EHWLC also has one of the largest construction departments in the region and has a vested interest in the ongoing safety and improvement of standards across the industry.

As well as our employer partner, EHWLC invited City & Guilds to partner on this project. Their expertise and experience in not only providing qualifications but also flexible delivery models added real value throughout.

Moving forward with this project in the planning stages was straightforward; arranging a meeting with the principal partners in order to explore the content, timeframe and delivery of a proposed

qualification in order to pilot training in July/August 2015. However it eventually became clear at the early stages that the project would run into difficulty with our employer partner. Passed from our initial contact to a significantly more senior person within the organisation it became a struggle to make contact. When EHWLC was finally able to engage with the employer it became clear that participation would only be possible if we were able to involve ourselves in the delivery of ESOL qualifications for the employer onsite in the Midlands. This request added an additional dimension to the project. Although not explicitly stated, the failure to progress with this employer, stemmed from the decision (made correctly) that the setup and delivery of qualifications in the Midlands would prove too great a disruption to EHWLC's core business.

Whilst the conversations were taking place the project moved forward with City & Guilds providing links to their ESOL and qualification development team. Through the structured meetings as part of Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Project, it was decided that the key factor should not be the development of the qualification but instead the provision of a short course of training and working with our employer partner to ascertain a marketable price/value for the course.

Once it was clear that the Project needed to find a new employer partner a number of possible contacts were engaged.

Firstly a leading Housing Association with activity spread across West London showed an interest before being unable to commit. The logic of working with a Housing Association was that they were working closely with a construction company (and EHWLC) to create opportunities for their residents to enter the construction industry. Non-English speakers are the hardest to reach candidates in terms of employment; the idea was that this Project could assist in their progression. Unfortunately the organisation was unable to participate in the leadership Exchange meetings and their involvement did not move past the exploration stage throughout summer 2015.

EHWLC approached a contact from another international construction company who showed interest but was not in a position to dictate the priorities of the organisation, nor was he able to be available for involvement in this Project. EHWLC had already worked with this contact through the delivery of apprenticeships so it is likely that the contact's priorities were not as compatible with the aims of the project as EHWLC would require.

The final contact made in relation to this project was a leading Southall based food manufacturing employer. Removed from the construction industry, this employer had similar needs in relation to ESOL. Firstly a significant proportion of their employees had language barriers and secondly the working environment at their plant has significant health and safety risks if procedures are not understood and followed. Despite the slight change in focus of the industry EHWLC saw this as in keeping with the spirit of the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Project. However the first conversations with this employer took place at the beginning of September 2015 which was too late for the timescale of the Project – there is the possibility that the bones of this project may move forward with this employer across 15/16.

The key difficulties in making EHWLC's Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange project reach fruition are similar to any project working with large employers: reaching the right person at the right time, ensuring that their priorities and availability match the dates, duration and deadline of the project and finally ensuring that internally EHWLC is able to prioritise the additional elements required to move the project forward.

Looking back, getting buy-in from our original employer was the crux to all of this. EHWLC found that our initial contact had the requirement (it was their priority to secure ESOL training for the construction works) but not the authority to drive the organisation's involvement. This is the key difference between working with SMEs and large businesses; large businesses have wide scopes of interests and the person able to make the difference deals with these on a daily basis. Their time and involvement in this case could only be released if EHWLC were able to assist with a more pressing requirement, notably the ESOL qualifications in the Midlands region. Dealing with SMEs it is much more likely that the person you are talking to is either the decision maker or a key influencer of the decision maker.

These difficulties are compounded when approaching additional employers to 'fill in a gap' as we found that a project which has been built around a definite requirement is relegated to an ideal that may not be a priority for the business when compared with their core activities. Availability also played a key role when trying to replace an employer, especially during the summer months when contacts are either taking annual leave or covering their colleague's responsibilities during their leave.

Finally the size and scale of EHWLC may have worked against this project. When EHWLC was unable to coordinate the delivery of the ESOL qualifications in the Midlands region, the priority for the employer was directed away from involvement in the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange to providing a solution for the above problem. EHWLCs offer, in effect, worked against the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Project.

When evaluating this Project and considering the conditions required for successful future projects there are a number of clear considerations to make:

1. Firstly the scope of building a project like this from nothing in the timeframe available was too ambitious;
2. Secondly, ensuring that employer partners have sufficient buy-in from decision makers; and
3. Finally that we have the ability to prioritise internal delivery to match an employer's involvement.

For future activities it is clear that the ambition of any project needs to be matched by our ability to achieve the aims. From involvement in the national Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange seminars, it was interesting to note that many of the projects were built on existing partnerships and indeed their projects formalised and explored their relationships rather than creating something from the beginning. With hindsight, trying to build and explore the inner workings proved to be too much for the duration of this Project.

Stemming from ambition is ensuring key stakeholders are involved at day one and have bought into the project. Although this may seem an obvious requisite, it is often the case that interested parties involved initially may need to formally request involvement from more senior members of their organisations.

Finally, having internal consideration (in this case delivery of ESOL in the Midlands region) only became a problem because the initial engagement of the project had not involved the key decision maker. However it is important to note that EHWLC's ability to deliver a significant number of qualifications across diverse curriculum areas led to the expectation that we could reposition equally

quickly to deliver qualifications outside our regional base. The idea of transactional relationship is significantly less desirable than strategic partnerships; however, at the core of such partnerships there is always some form of transaction and consideration. Future projects will look closely at this aspect as a potential barrier to success as it can quickly impact the workings of a previously secure relationship.

# Fareport Training Organisation in conjunction with The Theo Paphitis Retail Group

## Case Study

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### Objectives

The Leadership Exchange aimed to increase opportunities for progression into management roles for colleagues across The Theo Paphitis Retail Group (TPRG), comprising three distinct retail businesses. The purpose of the Leadership Exchange was to increase retention within the TPRG workforce, address gaps in management skills, raise aspiration for management roles and increase productivity.

The specific objective of the partnership was to develop a bespoke suite of management and leadership development programmes from Level 2 to Level 5 offering both internal certification and external accreditation.

### Roles

The two partners worked together to design, develop and recruit to a suite of management development programmes.

In designing the programmes Fareport Training trainers worked alongside colleagues from TPRG's in-house training and development team. TPRG colleagues shared their analysis of the skills needs of the workforce and outlined a programme of development to meet the needs of the business. Fareport Training colleagues mapped the core skills areas and objectives for the programmes against national standards and developed appropriate criteria for assessment to enable participants to secure external accreditation and to access external funding for eligible candidates. TPRG's internal training materials have been combined with provider-led training to create a programme that is tailored to the employer's needs.

In recruiting colleagues to the programmes, TPRG led on raising awareness among the workforce through briefings to managers and aspirant managers. The delivery of the programmes (scheduled to begin after the initial project lifespan) will be led by a team comprising Fareport Training trainers and supported by TPRG development team members.

### Outcomes and Impacts

A shared outcome of the Leadership Exchange for both the provider and the employer is the establishment of a sustainable relationship based on a shared ambition to improve skills and productivity, a mutual recognition of the areas of expertise brought to the partnership by each organisation and an understanding of each other's objectives and business needs.

Fareport Training has benefitted from an opportunity to work in close partnership with a significant employer to develop a bespoke programme of training which closely meets the employer's needs and which conforms to the requirements of external accreditation and funding. The organisation will

be able to use this experience to inform future work with TPRG and to develop similar models of working with other local and regional employers.

As a result of close working with staff from the employer's training and development team, training staff from Fareport Training have gained valuable insights into the needs of the business and have tailored their plans for the delivery of training accordingly. In turn the employer has seen benefit from the involvement of Fareport Training's trainers who they have described as an 'extension' to their in-house training and development team.

The short-term outcomes for the employer are the development of bespoke Level 2, Level 3 and Level 5 leadership and management training programme available to colleagues at a variety of levels and in a range of job roles across the three businesses within the TPRG. The partnership has successfully raised aspirations for these development opportunities and consequently recruitment to the programmes has significantly exceeded initial targets.

In the longer-term, as a result of the workforce development provided by these programmes, the employer expects to increase productivity by 21 per cent and will increase the percentage of managers qualified to Level 4 or above from the sector average of 31 per cent to 42 per cent. The programmes will offer a pathway to management and leadership roles within the organisation and support TPRG in its talent-management and succession planning to ensure that it reduces the number of management vacancies below the sector norm of 13 per cent. The business hopes to have fewer hard-to-fill vacancies and to reduce recruitment overheads.

## Lessons Learnt

The Leadership Exchange has identified a number of lessons learnt about how an employer and a provider can work together towards outcomes that improve vocational education and training.

Communication between the partners has been a key factor in the success of the project. From the outset partners agreed a shared vision for the outcomes of the project and took time to understand each other's' business vision, ethos, preferred ways of working and language. Regular meetings were scheduled and planned to encourage open and constructive discussion and reflection; these Leadership Exchange meetings have been important in providing a regular and structured opportunity to review progress and plan next steps. A clear action plan was developed and responsibilities allocated according to areas of expertise.

As a result of the strong foundations build through early communication partners were able to adapt and respond flexibly to the changing context, without losing sight of the core aims and objectives of the programme of work. The employer in particular valued highly the flexibility and willingness of the training provider to tailor the training and timelines to meet the employer's needs. For example, when recruitment significantly exceeded expectations the partners needed to manage a process of selecting the first cohort, which resulted in adjustments to the schedule for first delivery and the planning of future cohorts.

The Leadership Exchange recognised the different perspectives, areas of expertise and objectives of an employer and a training provider and agreed impact measures that supported both partners. As a result the training has been designed to enable learners to develop their individual skills and

gain accreditation that will improve career progression, combined with a clear focus on the skills and behaviours that will secure direct impact on the success of the employer in relation to improved retention, productivity and sales.

## Sustainability

The Leadership Exchange between Fareport Training and TPRG will continue. In the short-term it will focus on the successful delivery of the Level 2 and 3 programmes and the further development of and recruitment to the Level 5 programme. The partners will continue to work together to deliver the programmes and plan to continue monthly face-to-face meetings to review programme resources and learner evaluations as well as to monitor impact against the agreed key performance indicators.

Fareport Training hope to be able to use the Two-Way Street approach and the 'blueprint' developed by this Leadership Exchange in a new regional partnership to develop employer-led leadership and management programmes to address skills gaps in the Solent area. This new partnership (subject to funding approval) will comprise Fareport Training, Fareham College, Solent LEP and an employer consortium who will work together to establish a local Leadership Academy. The new partnership, which will include small- and medium-sized employers as well as larger employers, aims to safeguard and increase at least 210 jobs in the Solent region, create 200 new Higher Apprenticeships in Leadership and Management and increase the proportion of the local workforce holding a Level 4+ qualification. It will build on the principles of Leadership Exchange in increasing the employer's involvement in the development and delivery of training to improve productivity and retention.

## Kirklees College in conjunction with Syngenta

### Case Study

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#### Objectives

This project enabled partners to work towards the development of Level 2 and Level 3 Process Manufacturing Apprenticeships to be showcased in the 'centre of excellence' new process manufacturing centre that sits alongside the Kirklees College Engineering Centre. An effective dialogue had already been established between the college and the main employer, Syngenta, and further local engineering employers joined the project during its course: Nufarm, BASF, Esecco and AGFA. This project gave employers the opportunity to influence directly the curriculum for the Apprenticeships and investigate transition and technical requirements at higher levels. A connection with the University of Huddersfield was also established to look at higher level provision and any gaps in the market.

In addition to the development of the curriculum, the plant at the process manufacturing centre required enhanced leadership skills and a greater understanding of the career pathways and progression in order to ensure that the plant meets rapidly-changing industrial requirements.

#### Roles

Coordination of the project was undertaken by the representatives from Kirklees College, with additional oversight from the vice principal. The core employer partners had already worked together for more than two years and saw this project as opportunity to engage with existing Northern-based networks. Employer partners saw networking as a key contribution to assess technical and leadership need across process manufacturing in Yorkshire and the north of England. The number of employer partners engaged during the life of the project increased from two to five.

#### Outcomes and Impacts

Outcomes for the provider organisation and staff:

- Development of Action Plans with evidence of follow-through on agreed actions/timescales by team leaders in the college, detailing plant and curriculum requirements
- Contribution to meeting LEP and other local strategic priorities – process manufacturing and the chemical industry is a priority area within the Leeds City Region
- Planning for extending or creating new or more strategic Two-Way Street relationships in other STEM subjects
- Contribution to meeting regional occupational sector priorities – development of technical skills and meeting 'churn' requirements of an ageing workforce.

Impact for employers and learners:

- Workforce development opportunities identified by employers and VET providers as a result of the project – mapping of progression opportunities from Level 3

- Clear evidence of leadership development – via engagement across an extended network of industrial partners, settings and environments
- Increase in employer involvement in and co-design and delivery of vocational programmes
- Evidence of greater employer utilisation of the resources of the VET sector – through the new Process Manufacturing Centre
- Fresh opportunities for students to learn in an environment where employers visibly and frequently engage and a culture of continuous skills exchange is encouraged and embraced
- New learning programmes that coming on stream in September 2015 (e.g Laboratory Technician Level 3)
- More learners on high quality vocational programmes – promotion of the present provision and development of the plant, training opportunities and associated curriculum (at higher levels) will realise an increase in volumes.
- In the longer term, it is anticipated that there will be increased retention, achievement and employment destination opportunities for students - a focus on 'line of sight to work'.

## Lessons Learnt

A key learning point arising from the discussions at the Two-Way Street meetings was the need for a core curriculum offer with optional units pertinent to different employer needs. It was acknowledged that the development and lead-in time required to change the curriculum was lengthy and it was important to manage expectations on timescales. The time commitment involved in talking to other employers was quite considerable and this was considered an investment and key to the aim of becoming part of a wider network and 'Northern hub'. Not all the employers in the group started from the same understanding of curriculum development and admitted that there was a lot to take in and absorb in short timescales.

The project acknowledged the importance of wider networking and will send representatives to the Leeds Skills Conference in October 2015 to make contacts and share information with other industry leaders.

In addition, the transition from Framework to standards for Apprenticeships and from Science to Engineering required capacity building within college and employer partner workforces requiring careful planning and delivery. One of the problems encountered was the transient nature of the workforce in process manufacturing – recently, Syngenta lost a high-performing member of staff who could not see immediate progression/promotion opportunities in the company and so moved to another region to take up a better/higher level job. The group recognised that higher level opportunities need to be available locally as soon as possible, within the right qualification framework.

In considering equality and diversity issues, project members made initial overtures to WISE (Women into Science and Engineering) and further discussion will take place, with a view to championing engineering/process manufacturing to girls in local schools.

Having the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange as a strategy group to oversee and monitor capacity-building developments has been valued by all members. The work will continue to 2017 and potentially, longer.

## Sustainability

All partners agreed that the Leadership Exchange has been a golden opportunity to broaden the present platform for skills development within a regionally significant market segment of industry. Specifically, this project prompted the establishment of a longer-term conversation and forum for engagement relating to future requirements for technologies and skills. It is the intention too that the work in process manufacturing will also facilitate a model to replicate across other STEM sectors and contexts.

# South West Association of Training Providers in conjunction with North Bristol NHS Trust

## Case Study

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### Objectives

This project was designed to support the NHS trust in identifying effective approaches to the planning, sourcing and delivery of training for staff working in specialist areas within the hospital. There was a particular focus on developing apprenticeships outside the more traditional areas such as health care and business administration where they are well used. Although the trust is a large employer many of the specialist areas in the hospital have some of the characteristics associated with SMEs and require similar approaches to engagement and continuing support from the training provider.

### Roles

The relationship between SWATPro and NBT is not simply that of an external provider with an employer. NBT is a provider of training in its own right, delivering SFA provision funded through the SWATPro partnership and training and development funded by Health England. It is a leading member of SWATPro (<http://www.swatpro.co.uk/>) which is a partnership it formed with a group of similar organisations to provide mutual support and, where appropriate, access to SFA funding. Support can be obtained from other members and SWATPro's professional staff.

Within this project the role of NBT has been to identify and promote opportunities for training, principally within smaller specialist areas of the trust such as orthotics, prosthetics and renal technology. The role of SWATPro has been to help identify appropriate training programmes or apprenticeship frameworks, funding opportunities and delivery partners within and outside the partnership. The LEP has been concerned to identify wider opportunities for collaboration and links with its own and wider priorities.

### Outcomes and Impacts

The immediate outcome of the Leadership Exchange has been an improved understanding by all partners of the context in which they work. SWATPro professional staff are better informed as to the structure of NBT, its overall training needs and issues faced when communicating with specialist units: NBT is clearer about the opportunities that SWATPro can provide and those that can be sourced more widely and the LEP has a much better insight into the needs of a sector that did not originally figure in its priorities. These outcomes are evidenced by documentation produced as part of the project and in particular a scoping paper that seeks to link NHS job roles with apprenticeship frameworks and delivery options but also local data on employee volumes and turnover rates.

It is not possible within the timescale of the project to produced evidence of completed training but the project has enabled the partners to set out on a programme of work which they are committed to continue. It has helped develop improved links with departments within NBT and also established a basis for progressing the work by building on existing collaboration with bodies such as Health

Education England (South West), the Health Education Academy, the Academic Health Science Network and the Skills for Health Centre of Excellence initiative. It has drawn attention to the detailed information collected by NBT on equality and diversity including recruitment and turnover rates which will help identify priorities for training and support a better informed dialogue with departments.

As a result of the Leadership Exchange health has become an emerging priority sector for the West of England LEP and knowledge gained through participation in the project will help inform the development of a local Sector Skills Statement for Health and Life Sciences. It has also demonstrated how the Health Sector can relate to the thematic priorities of the LEP including the improvement of Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance and the development of supply chains to promote growth and productivity.

## Lessons Learnt

Although the distinction between the roles of training provider and employer are not as clear cut in this case study as in some other contexts much of the learning by participants is still transferable. Those whose role has been primarily concerned with training have developed a deeper understanding of the complexity of issues affecting employers: the tension for example between the need to fill an operational vacancy quickly to meet a business need and the desirability of developing an apprenticeship route that can ultimately deliver an employee with skills better aligned to their specific role. For those located within the employer the learning has primarily been about how best to navigate the complexity of the training system and in particular the range of apprenticeships and apprenticeship training providers potentially available. The project has underlined the fact that there is no 'simple guide to choosing a relevant apprenticeship that can readily be taken 'off the shelf'; it is necessary to work with providers and intermediary bodies to build that knowledge.

At a more specific level both partners have learned not to take certain things at face value. An employer's (or departmental head's) initial description of the type of apprenticeship they need may be based on superficial characteristics rather than an understanding of the skills actually involved. In a similar way the title of an apprenticeship may not give a full indication of the potential scope of training that it might cover. A readily available electronic engineering apprenticeship for example may meet the highly specialised needs of a renal technology department even though the title gives no indication that this is the case.

For the LEP the principal learning has been about the scale and variety of occupations in the Health and Life Sciences sector and how developments in the sector can align with its wider aims of promoting productivity and growth and supporting local employment. All those involved have developed an improved awareness of the range of intermediary bodies working in and with the sector and through the scoping activities that the project has helped them start to develop now have a clear agenda around which to develop collaboration.

## Sustainability

This Leadership Exchange has built on and further developed a strong collaboration between a major employer and a training organisation that focuses on helping employers deliver their own

training programmes. The agenda initially set out by the partners has not been fully delivered but its completion will be the next step in an ongoing relationship that both partners see as long term. The engagement of the LEP as a third interested party will help both maintain momentum and extend reach.

In more specific terms the scoping activity that has been central to this project will be the subject of discussion with the regional manager of Health Education England seeking to develop a pattern of supply and demand across the region. The inability of the partnership to identify such material from existing sources suggests that there will be widespread interest in other trusts. The difficulty of establishing provision for highly specialised units within one trust also suggests that shared programmes may be the only viable solution.

The SWATPro network in itself provides a mechanism for dissemination and wider engagement across other related sectors such as Care and Early Years. The partners also intend to deliver a presentation about apprenticeship possibilities to the Directors of NBT with a view to establishing a Leadership and Management apprenticeship programme within the trust later this year and publicising their achievements within National Apprenticeship Week 2016.

# The Skills Company (on behalf of Engineering Futures) in conjunction with The Hyde Group

## Case Study

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### Objectives

This Leadership Exchange sought support to enable Engineering Futures to develop an Engineering & Manufacturing Employer Leadership Partnership Cluster that brings together employers, training providers, colleges, young people, parents, schools, the Local Enterprise Partnership and local communities so that meaningful and longstanding partnerships are created that:

- Join key skills providers and employers to further develop the skills and apprenticeship offer for the engineering and manufacture sector that meets the needs of the economy whilst creating higher level pathways for entrants into the sector
- Create a collaborative and supportive environment to drive sector investment, development and growth
- Develop relationships between employers, training providers, colleges and schools to better equip and prepare young people for employment within the sector
- Improve the image of the sector and clearly present the excellent high level career opportunities

The overall aim was to increase the uptake of learners wanting careers in STEM, and to make the STEM curriculum more vocationally relevant, by listening to the needs of employers.

### Roles

Engineering Futures is the name given to a partnership formed by three Greater Manchester based providers to meet the skills challenges facing the engineering and manufacturing sector. It consists of The Skills Company, Trafford College and Tameside College. Engineering Futures' role was to act as secretariat and clerk for the exchange and to provide a brokerage service between employers, colleges and training providers, universities, schools and the LEP.

Employers provided curriculum advice to colleges and training providers, supported visits into schools and provided access to modern equipment for colleges and training provider's trainees. They also deployed support and challenge techniques to inform Education and Training providers and enable change in delivery.

Schools allowed their learners to participate in careers events, and hosted various events and contributed to discussions on STEM careers advice.

Universities engaged by providing 'live briefs' from their research facilities for the school children to work on, this has led to an enhanced relationship between employers and the institutions. Previously employers thought of universities as only interested in research and degrees, but through the project they have realised that universities can actually provide solutions to 'real world' issues, and have given them access to SME's – something that had not previously existed.

## Outcomes and Impacts

Lack of awareness was identified by employers as one of the key factors affecting the take up of STEM careers, and had led to employers have difficulty in recruitment at all levels. There was also an “image problem” where a STEM career was often not seen as desirable, achievable or relevant by many learners (and their families). Addressing this problem was as seen as a priority by employers. One of the specific areas identified at the Leadership Exchange was the lack of information available to learners, clearly mapping the available opportunities available from skills providers across Greater Manchester at Level 2, 3 & 4 as well as progression opportunities. It was agreed that Engineering Futures should provide information about the ‘journey’ available to learners through collaboration between the training providers.

A programme of school engagement activity was developed and is being delivered across Greater Manchester, which employers have contributed towards, by allowing current apprentices to participate in school assemblies and workshops to providing site visits and factory tours.

Working on this common goal has served to build a much stronger relationship between the sector and employers, and has developed leadership skills in both parties, including system leadership skills, and a greater awareness of the needs, capability and boundaries of each other’s sectors.

During the process of engaging, a trust relationship was established whereby employers felt they could challenge the skills providers in an open and supportive environment, which led to open discussion as to what employers actually need from the Apprenticeship process. New pathways were discussed which would ensure that learners would not only be able to operate machinery but also fix and maintain it. This is also now being considered as a potential method for employers to use to up skill their existing workforce, and the curriculum leaders from each skills provider are assessing how such a programme could be implemented.

Through these Leadership Exchange discussions, Engineering Futures has deliver 13 events within schools which included providing assemblies, delivering talks to classes on engineering career opportunities, liaising with employers to facilitate and deliver a number of “meet the ambassador” events & “have a go” workshops and the planning and delivery of a full day event for National Women in Engineering Day (NWED). Employers also arranged site visits and factory tours for school children and teachers so that they can clearly see what happens inside organisations within their local area.

As a result of this activity the project has already directly engaged with over 900 students and has promoted STEM at Careers Fairs attended by approximately 2000 students. The Leadership Exchange has also engaged with a number of external partners including Women in Science & Engineering (WISE) and STEMNET and has facilitated role models from Network Rail, Sandy Brown Associates, AMEC Foster Wheeler, BAE Systems, Cavendish Nuclear Limited and William Hare Group, Clancy Consulting and the Royal Air Force (RAF).

The development of the relationship between employers, the education and training sector and schools has certainly been achieved, as has the objective to improve the image of the sector and clearly signpost the range of opportunities available in STEM, including progression to high level career opportunities. The project funding has enabled Engineering Futures to provide support

material such as postcards and a video, showcasing the fantastic STEM career opportunities available.

The project has achieved considerable trust between all participants, including between different education and training providers. Previously it was rare to have three competing skills providers talk openly about their provision in a meeting.

The relationship between the leadership team at the skills providers has developed and blossomed; employers have been urged to challenge the providers, and the feedback, although sometimes difficult to listen to, has really helped to shape future provision to make it more vocationally relevant for learners and employers.

## Lessons Learnt

The Leadership Exchange encouraged mutual trust and respect. A particularly noteworthy feature of this Leadership Exchange partnership is the way the project managed to successfully engage with a wide range of partners. For example, employers are cautious not to have their time wasted when asked to become involved with schools and education providers. They also have to be careful not to give a competitive advantage or share commercially sensitive information with other businesses in the region. Unsurprisingly, the same rubric held true for the Colleges and providers that were involved.

Nevertheless, this project managed to successfully engage with both employers and education and training providers. Employers were ultimately driven to engage in this activity by their workforce needs: the lack of quantity and quality of people with the right level of skills to meet business demands. Colleges and providers were driven by the struggle to gain access and practical knowledge of new and emerging techniques and disciplines in a way that would enhance the curriculum and learner and trainer knowledge, whilst also potentially promoting new progression pathways for future apprentices.

Because of the advocacy of Engineering Futures as the honest broker between the engineering sector, the education and training sector and the schools, project members have seen that there are advantages to collaborative working in this way.

The project set out to discuss the skills shortages within the sector, and identified very early on that the only way to do this was to improve the image of the sector, dispel the myths and misconceptions about the industry which had been allowed to grow over recent years. To dispel these myths they had to win over the pupils, but more importantly (and certainly more difficult) the parents, carers and teachers. Having built a two-way trust relationship between the employers and providers, the project learned it needed to be extended into a three way relationship between employers, training providers and schools. It did this by providing schools with a service that previously had not existed and one that all parties valued.

Training Providers have learnt that engineering and manufacturing qualifications as they stand do not all provide the basic breadth of exposure to a range of engineering disciplines that meets employer needs. Either qualifications do not exist for the skills areas in question, or the syllabus is too inflexible or outdated to meet the demands of the modern workplace.

Employers learned how to challenge the skills providers positively, and providers learned how to listen. This has led to open discussion as to what employers actually want and need from the Apprenticeship process and how this might also be adapted for upskilling the existing workforce.

## Sustainability

Funding may be a key factor in sustaining this Leadership Exchange. One of the main reasons that employers and others engaged with the Leadership Exchange was that it was free at the point of delivery. Requiring employers or universities to pay for its services would certainly be off-putting. It is perceived that to sustain this activity in the future will require funding. Engineering Futures have managed to secure some additional funding that will enable the meetings to continue into the New Year, but its sustainability beyond that date without further resources may well be in question.

## Wirral Metropolitan College in conjunction with Unilever Ltd

### Case Study

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#### Objectives

This Leadership Exchange built upon an already existing relationship between Wirral Metropolitan College and Unilever Ltd, a partnership which has been delivering an 'apprenticeship' programme in conjunction with the University of Liverpool for a number of years. The apprenticeship programme is highly innovative and is based upon learners completing a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in one year, with Wirral Metropolitan College, on a day-a-week basis. The achievement of this qualification acts as the entry requirement for the second year of an Honours Degree at Liverpool University, which is undertaken on a part-time basis for one year. Progression to the third year of the degree is completed at the University on a full-time basis, although the projects undertaken by Unilever's employees, now University students, are work-based and Unilever focused. The programme has been particularly successful at attracting and recruiting females. The Leadership Exchange aimed to explore what the key enablers of this relationship were, with a view to developing similar schemes in different disciplines and to examine how transferable the model might be to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Wirral area. The focus here was on two SMEs, Arvia Technology and Altus Science.

Both Arvia Technology and Altus Science are 'hi-tech' chemical businesses based at Daresbury Science Park. The college is delivering Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) and Advanced Apprenticeships in partnership with both these companies and the Leadership Exchange sought to further develop this collaboration and explore transferable models. The college had also, at the start of the project, recently appointed a Science Industry Skills Sector Manager who worked specifically to meet the workforce development needs of businesses at the Daresbury Science Park. She acted as the Clerk to the Leadership Exchange.

At the start of the project it was anticipated that the impact on learners and employers, would include:

- Increased involvement by the three employers in the co-design and delivery of the vocational programmes within the college.
- Greater use of college resources by the three employers supporting them to grow their business.
- The creation of new strategically significant opportunities for learners through more HLAs, Apprenticeships and Traineeships in chemical and related sciences and technologies.
- Evidence of increased employer and learner satisfaction

During the lifetime of the project Wirral Metropolitan College was also successful at securing Local Enterprise Council (LEP) funding for the development of a STEM Learning Centre. This added a new dimension to the provider/employer relationship as input from the employers was sought on the resources to be purchased for the Centre and how they might benefit employers, learners and the provider.

## Roles

Central to the Leadership Exchange's considerations was the establishment of an outward facing Employer Services department in Wirral Met College that works closely with the various College departments as well as employers. Whilst acting as the 'employers' voice' within the College, it is seen as a one-stop shop for employers, with a particular focus on supporting the science and technology assets in the region.

The project involved senior members of the College management team; the Vice Principal for Quality and Business Development, the Science Industry Skills Sector Manager and the College's STEM Lead. The College's senior leadership team was represented by the Vice Principal.

Representatives from Arvia Technology Ltd and Altus Science also participated in the Leadership Exchange along with Unilever's representative from its Research and Development team. The Liverpool City Region LEP was represented at one of the Exchange meetings and played an important role in identifying the LEP's priorities. Various attempts were made to secure the presence of representatives from the University of Liverpool at meetings of the Leadership Exchange but without success. This is explored in a later section.

## Outcomes and Impacts

With a particular focus on learners, the Leadership Exchange has established, clear pathways/opportunities for potential applicants to progress into apprenticeships/traineeships in chemical and related sciences and technologies.

The model is now more formalised and systematic and has demonstrated transferability to other companies. The intention is that this robust model be used to reach out to other employers and apprentices, thus creating high expectations and opportunities in the local community/economy.

Clearly related to the development of the pathways are the embedded processes now in place for employers to be involved in co-designing and delivering elements of programmes with the College. A Science Industry Employer/provider Network is well established, with a shared plan in place to meet local LEP priorities and occupational sector priorities. This work is complemented by a shared online resource that showcases best practice through case studies, interviews, and reports related to the outcomes of the two-way street model of working.

To assist the College/Unilever partnership input has been sought from senior Unilever management, who can ensure effective lines of communication between the college and the employer. Feedback has also been sought from on-scheme and ex-apprentices, to understand the merits and weaknesses of the scheme from their perspective. One notable aspect of this particular scheme is its high level of success in attracting female applicants, so the opportunity was taken to canvass opinion from this group specifically.

Another anticipated component of the work of the Leadership Exchange was to strengthen the tri-partite relationship between the College, employers and the University of Liverpool. However the active engagement of the University in Leadership Exchange meetings was never achieved. The active involvement of the University requires further development.

## Lessons Learnt

An early risk assessment undertaken by the Leadership Exchange resulted in two major learning points:

- Engagement from the SMEs, Liverpool University and the LEP(s) is vital
- The need for the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange to be seen as useful and engaging for employers and apprentices as well as for providers.

Communication is key to the relationship with employers. Learners should also have a clear vision of how the partnership is to run, with the right people in place to ensure that outcomes match the vision. It is the learners who walk up and down the two-way street; employers and providers at each end must ensure consistency of message and practice with a clear line of sight to work. This means that communication must be frequent and open to facilitate joint problem-solving and development.

*The college "... will continue to listen to all partners and be ready to involve other parties to add value and bring knowledge to a project where there may be a skills or knowledge gap. Leaders of any project such as Leadership Exchange should be encouraged to be involved with all partners and discussions where possible as this will bring better understanding of challenges faced and achievements won by employers and providers of VET."* (Sue Ennis, Project Clerk, Wirral Metropolitan College).

Finally, the project team was disappointed that colleagues from the University of Liverpool were unable to attend the Leadership Exchange meetings as their collaboration was and continues to be fundamental to the design and success of the pathway. Feedback suggests that engagement was sought at an inconvenient time in the University calendar.

The Leadership Exchange, as several others, set out to explore the issue of female participation in the Chemical Industry. Wirral Metropolitan College and Unilever's Research and Development team have an existing track record of working together on the promotion of careers for women in the STEM industries and this appears to be paying off. The Leadership Exchange began some research into the factors that have led to the popularity of this apprenticeship pathway for women.

The partnership continues to work towards stimulating growth in STEM pathways between education and work with apprentices and past apprentices acting as advocates to industry leaders. The partnership will also continue to engage with the LEP and other external sector bodies to drive the agenda forward with a positive message.

## Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is dependent on all partners (Wirral Met, Unilever, the current SMEs, University of Liverpool, the LEP(s)) continuing to engage, and reaching out to new employers and apprentices to ensure this VET system continues to exist and grow. Full commitment still needs to be gained from the university and the LEPs, alongside the deepening employer/provider partnerships. Moreover, these activities are particularly dependent on the College's curriculum staff and continued investment in the outward facing Employers' Services department.

## Appendix B. Leadership Exchange Report Formats

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Each of the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges were provided with a template for reporting after each meeting. This ensured that the meetings followed a similar structure enabling the Regional Coordinators to make comparisons and to draw out collective lessons. As a result of advice from the first Advisory Group meeting, each report started with two separate sections: one was for completion by the Employer Lead and the second for completion by the Provider Lead in isolation from each other. This allowed the Project Team and each of the Leadership Exchanges themselves to identify the differences in perspective that employers and providers brought to their partnership.

Each template also ensured that specific and different issues were considered at each of the three meetings. Equality and diversity issues were, however, constant across all three meetings.

1. The first meeting report template was designed to ensure clarity and consensus in terms of aims, vision and intended outputs.
2. The second report template focused on steps towards achievement of the declared aims and/or vision and issues related to leadership and management.
3. The final template drew attention to questions of sustainability, dissemination and government VET policy.

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## Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Projects First Meeting Report

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### Introduction

All Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges are required to provide a brief report after each of the three Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange meetings. This is the format for the report after the first meeting. The formats for second and third meetings will be different again but will be designed to increase all of our learning about establishing effective two-way street provider and employer partnerships to the benefit of all, including learners, in an enhanced system of vocational education and training.

### Section 1: Lead Provider Information

<b>Lead Provider Organisation</b>	
Name of Clerk	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

## **Section 2: Employer Questions**

*To be completed by the lead employer organisation **prior** to the meeting and shared with all Leadership Exchange members as part of the agenda of the first meeting. This may be completed by an individual senior leader in the organisation or in conjunction with other colleagues.*

<b>Employer partner organisation name</b>	
Name of contact and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

1. What is **your vision** for the Leadership Exchange in one year's time and in three years' time as a result of this two-way street partnership?
2. What do you believe are the next steps, or in some instances the first steps, that are necessary to be taken after your first Leadership Exchange meeting?
3. Who will take responsibility for what in making these steps?

## **Section 3: Provider Questions**

*To be completed by the lead provider organisation **prior** to the meeting and shared with all Leadership Exchange members as part of the agenda of the first meeting. This may be completed by an individual senior leader in the organisation or in conjunction with other colleagues.*

<b>Lead Provider partner organisation name</b>	
Name of contact and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

1. What is **your vision** for the Leadership Exchange in one year's time and in three years' time as a result of this two-way street partnership?
2. What do you believe are the next steps, or in some instances the first steps, that are necessary to be taken after your first Leadership Exchange meeting?
3. Who will take responsibility for what in making these steps?

## **Section 4: Leadership Exchange Questions**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator following the first Leadership Exchange meeting*

1. What are the aims of the Leadership Exchange between now and September 2015?
2. What will be the tangible outputs produced by the Leadership Exchange for sharing with other similar partnerships nationwide?
3. What will be the Equality & Diversity issue that the Leadership Exchange will explore and report on in September 2015?

4. What are your current challenges?

### **Section 5: Leadership Exchange Considerations**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator following the first Leadership Exchange meeting*

In the light of how the Leadership Exchange defines the relationships between and roles and responsibilities of both providers, employers and any other agencies please comment on your perceptions of:

- **Risks** for the Leadership Exchange partnership
- **Sustainability** of the Leadership Exchange partnership

### **Section 6: Leadership Exchange Considerations**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator following the first Leadership Exchange meeting*

What key issues have been missed by the report format?

# Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Projects

## Second Meeting Report

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### Introduction

All Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges are required to provide a brief report after each of the three Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange meetings. This is the format for the report after the second meeting. The format for the third meeting will be different again but will be designed to continue to increase all of our learning about establishing effective two-way street provider and employer partnerships to the benefit of all, including learners, in an enhanced system of vocational education and training. **It is suggested that the questions contained in this report format are considered during discussion at your second Leadership Exchange meeting so that the report clearly contains jointly agreed statements and actions.**

### Section 1: Lead Provider Information

<b>Lead Provider Organisation</b>	
Name of Clerk	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

### Section 2: Employer Questions

*To be completed by the lead employer organisation **prior** to the meeting and shared with all Leadership Exchange members as part of the agenda of the first meeting. This may be completed by an individual senior leader in the organisation or in conjunction with other colleagues.*

<b>Employer partner organisation name</b>	
Name of contact and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

1. What, in your opinion, has been clearly **achieved** by the project since your first meeting?

### Section 3: Provider Questions

*To be completed by the lead provider organisation **prior** to the meeting and shared with all Leadership Exchange members as part of the agenda of the first meeting. This may be completed by an individual senior leader in the organisation or in conjunction with other colleagues.*

<b>Lead Provider partner organisation name</b>	
Name of contact and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

1. What, in your opinion, has been clearly **achieved** by the project since your first meeting?

## **Section 4: Leadership Exchange Questions – progress**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator following the second Leadership Exchange meeting.*

1. In the light of the agreed aims for the Leadership Exchange (reported from your first meeting), what do you all agree have been the project's overall achievements to date?
2. What progress has been made with your previously identified tangible outputs?
3. In the light of what you previously reported as your current challenges:
  - What has been resolved and how?
  - What challenges are remaining and why?
  - What new challenges, if any, have arisen since your first meeting?
4. What developments have there been in exploration of your Equality and Diversity issue(s)?

## **Section 5: Leadership Exchange Questions – focus on leadership**

*To be completed by the Clerk, reflecting discussions at the second Leadership Exchange meeting, with the support of the Regional Coordinator.*

1. The Leadership Exchanges bring together leaders from the worlds of employment and education and training to work on a common agenda. On the basis of your experience to date what advice would you give to others starting out on a similar task?  
(Issues that might be considered include the partnership's vision, values and culture; the personal qualities of partnership leaders as well as their knowledge and competence; modes of adaptation and innovation; ways of working with others; and, system leadership<sup>7</sup>.)
2. What have you learned in relation to tackling your Equality and Diversity issue?
3. What have you learned about leadership development needs as a result of your partnership?
4. How do you anticipate meeting these development needs?

## **Section 6: Leadership Exchange Issues**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator following the second Leadership Exchange meeting*

1. Are there any other key considerations for your partnership not referenced elsewhere in this or your previous report?

## **Section 7: Quotations**

Please provide any attributed quotations that may be used in any interim or final report. These may be from partners, key stakeholders or learners. Please provide the name, position and organisation of the person being quoted.

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<sup>7</sup> Based on the outcomes of the 157 Group's *Leadership Conversation* funded and commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation.

# Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Projects

## Third Meeting Report

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### Introduction

All Two-Way Street Leadership Exchanges have been requested to provide a report after each of their Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange meetings to date. This is the format for the report from the third funded meeting. The format for this report focuses on key learning points, project outputs plus sustainability and dissemination. **It is suggested that the questions contained in this report format are considered during discussion at your third Leadership Exchange meeting so that the report clearly contains jointly agreed statements and actions.**

### Section 1: Lead Provider Information

Lead Provider Organisation	
Name of Clerk	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

### Section 2: Employer Questions

*To be completed by the lead employer organisation **prior** to the meeting and shared with all Leadership Exchange members as part of the agenda of the first meeting. This may be completed by an individual senior leader in the organisation or in conjunction with other colleagues.*

Employer partner organisation name	
Name of contact and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

1. What, in your opinion, have been the **key learning points** from your project for establishing meaningful Two-Way Street partnerships for the delivery of high quality vocational education and training?

### Section 3: Provider Questions

*To be completed by the lead provider organisation **prior** to the meeting and shared with all Leadership Exchange members as part of the agenda of for the third meeting. This may be completed by an individual senior leader in the organisation or in conjunction with other colleagues.*

Lead Provider partner organisation name	
Name of contact and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

1. What, in your opinion, have been the **key learning points** from your project for establishing meaningful Two-Way Street partnerships for the delivery of high quality vocational education and training?

### **Section 4: Sustainability**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator **after** the third Leadership Exchange meeting.*

1. Will your Leadership Exchange meet again after your third meeting?
  - a. If so, which organisations will be invited to participate?
  - b. What issues are you likely to discuss or take forward?
  - c. What resources, if any, will you need utilise to keep the Leadership Exchange going?
  - d. If your Leadership Exchange meeting will not continue, what is the reason?

### **Section 5: Policy**

*To be completed by the Clerk, reflecting discussions at the second Leadership Exchange meeting, with the support of the Regional Coordinator.*

1. Current Government policy is focusing on aspects of vocational education and training (VET) utilising skills to increase productivity and grow the economy. This is evidenced in new targets for increasing apprenticeships and a new emphasis on employer involvement in VET. How has this project assisted in moving forward this agenda? (E.g. increased apprenticeships, increased involvement of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), active employer engagement in curriculum design)

### **Section 6: Dissemination**

*To be completed by the Clerk, reflecting discussions at the second Leadership Exchange meeting, with the support of the Regional Coordinator.*

1. Will you be engaging in any local/regional or sub-regional dissemination activities as a result of your Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange?
2. If so what will these be?
3. If appropriate, please indicate your willingness to be called upon to support any future national dissemination activity by completing the table below.

Name of contact, organisation and job title	
Telephone number (office)	
Email address	

### **Section 7: Additional Leadership Exchange Issues**

*To be completed by the Clerk with the support of the Regional Coordinator following the third Leadership Exchange meeting*

1. Are there any other key considerations for your partnership or issues that you would like to raise that have not been referenced elsewhere in this or any previous reports?

## **Section 8: Quotations**

Please provide any attributed quotations that may be used in the final report. These may be from partners, key stakeholders or learners. Please provide the name, position and organisation of the person being quoted.

## **Section 9: Outputs**

After completing the table below please attach or provide links to your final outputs from this project including your exploration of your Equality and Diversity issue.

Title of Output	Brief description of the output and how it can be used by others	Title of document or web link
<b>Example</b> Two-Way Street Memorandum of Understanding	A memorandum of understanding detailing roles and responsibilities of provider and employer partners. This could be used or adapted by other similar partnerships.	MOU.doc Or MOU.pdf Or <a href="http://www.kmdq.ac.uk/ed/mou/">www.kmdq.ac.uk/ed/mou/</a>
Title of Equality and Diversity Exploration	Brief description of what was explored by the partnership	Title of document or web link

## Appendix C. Programme Outputs

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### **BARKING AND DAGENHAM COLLEGE with ROOFF LIMITED**

**Sector: Construction**

<b>Title of Output</b>	<b>What is it?</b>	<b>Web link</b>
Barking and Dagenham College Action Plan	Partnership Action Plan for establishing a Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/ne9mwra">http://tinyurl.com/ne9mwra</a>
London Region Construction Training Group (LRCTG) Website	This London Region Construction Training Group (LRCTG) grew out of the partnership Leadership Exchange and is now under construction	<a href="http://lrctg.co.uk/">http://lrctg.co.uk/</a>

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### **BUXTON AND LEEK COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DERBY with VARIOUS EMPLOYERS**

**Sector: Logistics and Transport**

<b>Title of Output</b>	<b>What is it?</b>	<b>Web link</b>
Leadership Exchange Project Report – University of Derby	An overview of the work of the Leadership Exchange published by the University of Derby	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/poj99b8">http://tinyurl.com/poj99b8</a>
Logistics and supply chain compendium of resources	A resource of logistics and supply chain related careers and promotional material for young people seeking to work in the sector.	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/pe3zkcd">http://tinyurl.com/pe3zkcd</a>
The UK Logistics Sector Overview	The report provides a basic level of understanding of the role of the UK logistics sector and the key challenges and opportunities for the industry.	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/na h3kyv">http://tinyurl.com/na h3kyv</a>

## FAREPORT TRAINING ORGANISATION with THEO PAPHITIS RETAIL GROUP

### Sector: Retail

Title of Output	What is it?	Web link
Blueprint of how to develop an effective partnership using the Two Way Street approach.	A guide of how both large or SME's can structure programmes and how to manage change or overcome challenges. Expected business outcome s e.g. increased productivity, reduction of recruitment costs due to increased internal promotion and maintaining long-service colleagues	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/ogqq4wv">http://tinyurl.com/ogqq4wv</a>
Two Way Street Project Action Plan Template	A template to be used to support the development of a local/sub-regional effective Two-Way Street project	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/pvbh pfd">http://tinyurl.com/pvbh pfd</a>

## KIRKLEES COLLEGE with SYNGENTA and NUFARM

### Sector: Process Manufacturing

Title of Output	What is it?	Web link
Memorandum of Understanding	A template Memorandum of Understanding used by the partnership which may be personalised by similar partnerships.	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/ptdq6sa">http://tinyurl.com/ptdq6sa</a>

**SOUTH WEST ASSOCIATION OF TRAINING PROVIDERS (SWATPRO) with THE NORTH BRISTOL National Health Service (NHS) TRUST**  
**Sector: Health**

Title of Output	What is it?	Web link
Apprenticeship scoping document	This excel spreadsheet shows NBT priority job roles linked to relevant Frameworks and these are mapped across to delivery partners. It highlights what can/possibly be delivered in – house, externally and where there are no options. From this several priority actions have been identified for further work and progression	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/q4gjnqn">http://tinyurl.com/q4gjnqn</a>
North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT)Apprenticeship / Job scoping pilot context paper	A brief outline of the data contained within the excel spreadsheet, together with background and usage.	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/px455ke">http://tinyurl.com/px455ke</a>
SWATPRO operating outline paper	This paper shows the uniqueness of the SWATPRO model, the background, how it was formed and why. A useful reference document for others contemplating a similar partnership	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/no4dmd6">http://tinyurl.com/no4dmd6</a>
North Bristol Health Trust position statement	A short paper on NBT present position as Apprenticeship deliverer and the areas likely for expansion	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/oxysxb9">http://tinyurl.com/oxysxb9</a>

**THE SKILLS COMPANY / PREVIOUSLY SKILLS SOLUTIONS (ON BEHALF OF ENGINEERING FUTURES) with THE HYDE GROUP**

**Sector: Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing**

Title of Output	What is it?	Web link
Raise awareness of the sector	New materials that support the Cluster objectives and promote the sector to schools and young people across the region	<p><b>Engineering Futures - Full Film</b>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/136623250">https://vimeo.com/136623250</a>                      Password: EF</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzMjazq8A1k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzMjazq8A1k</a></p>
Attracting the future workforce	Damaging perceptions are making it much harder for providers to fill apprenticeship vacancies and leading to many of the best engineering graduates being attracted into other sectors. We are working with all parties to promote the sector within schools.	<p><b>We're all engineers</b>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/136613598">https://vimeo.com/136613598</a></p> <p><b>Short - Space</b>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/136611987">https://vimeo.com/136611987</a></p> <p><b>Short - Plane</b>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/136611986">https://vimeo.com/136611986</a></p> <p><b>Short - Phone</b>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/136611985">https://vimeo.com/136611985</a></p> <p><b>Short - Jenga</b>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/139705544">https://vimeo.com/139705544</a></p> <p>Password: EF</p>
Easier routes into advanced manufacturing / engineering	Manufacturing is a complex sector to understand. Confusion about vocational career paths combined with a negative image of the sector is discouraging many young people from considering it as an employment opportunity and routes by which young people can progress into a career in the sector need to be much clearer.	<p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Q8tNiCb5Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Q8tNiCb5Q</a></p>
Report on Higher Level Skills Needs in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Companies in Greater Manchester	The report aims to stimulate and inform discussion and planning by New Economy working in partnership with Engineering Futures and other stakeholders involved in helping the sector to meet the skills challenges needed for growth and competitiveness.	<p><a href="http://tinyurl.com/q87hy68">http://tinyurl.com/q87hy68</a></p>

**WIRRAL METROPOLITAN COLLEGE with UNILEVER**

**Area: STEM Occupations**

Title of Output	What is it?	Web link
The Learner Experience: Sophie Richardson and Emma Brown	Video of the benefits of the Wirral Met from the experience of learner Sophie Richardson  Video of the benefits of the Wirral Met from the experience of learner Emma Brown	<a href="https://vimeo.com/132906802">https://vimeo.com/132906802</a>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/132906518">https://vimeo.com/132906518</a>  Password: wirral

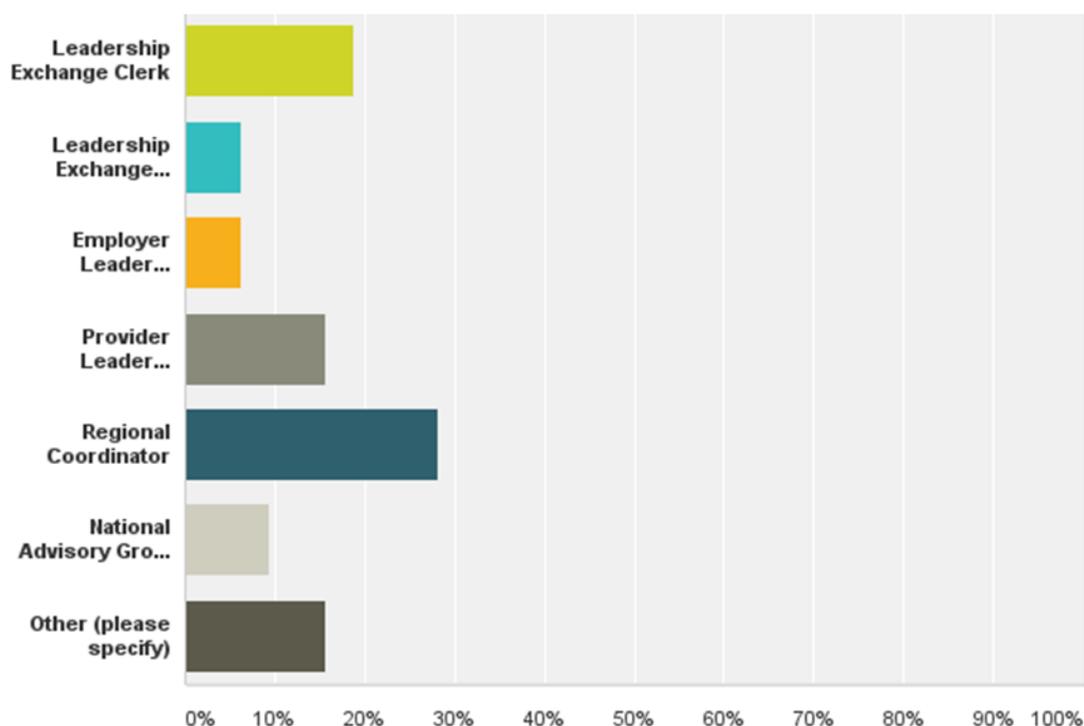
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## Appendix D. Summary of Questionnaire Findings

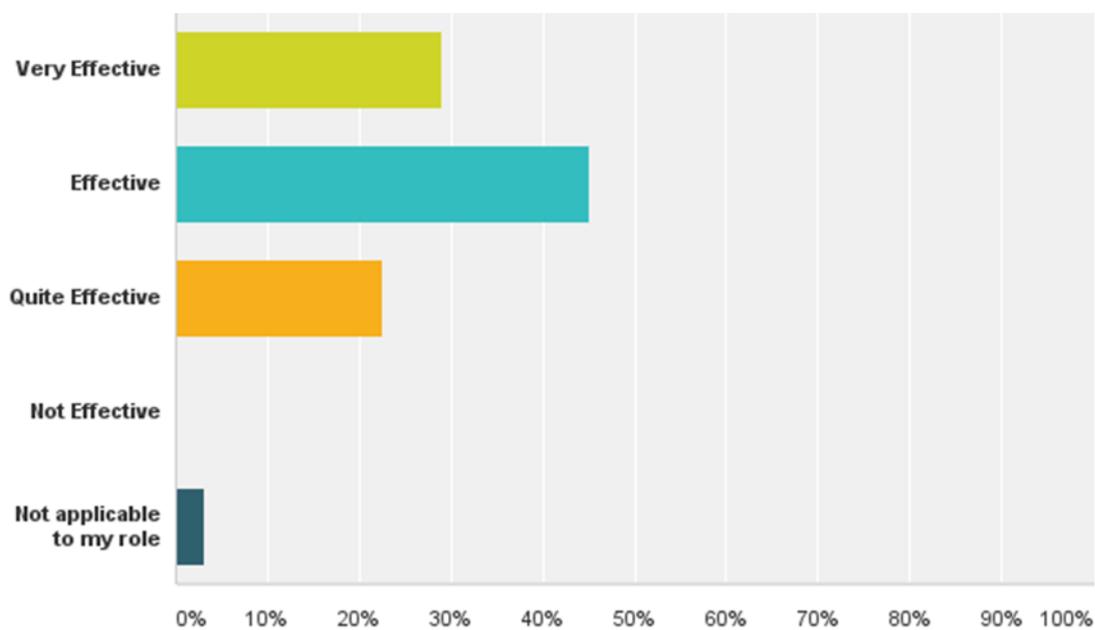
A survey was sent to all those actively involved in the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Project to ascertain how effective it had been according to a number of different criteria. It generated 32 responses out of a potential 48 which was considered to be a reasonable sample from which to draw some conclusions. The largest group of respondents was Regional Coordinators, although there was also a good response from the Clerks to the Leadership Exchanges. The 'Others' included two representatives from LEPs and two provider representatives who held no formal role in a Leadership Exchange.

### Q.1 What is your role in the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme?



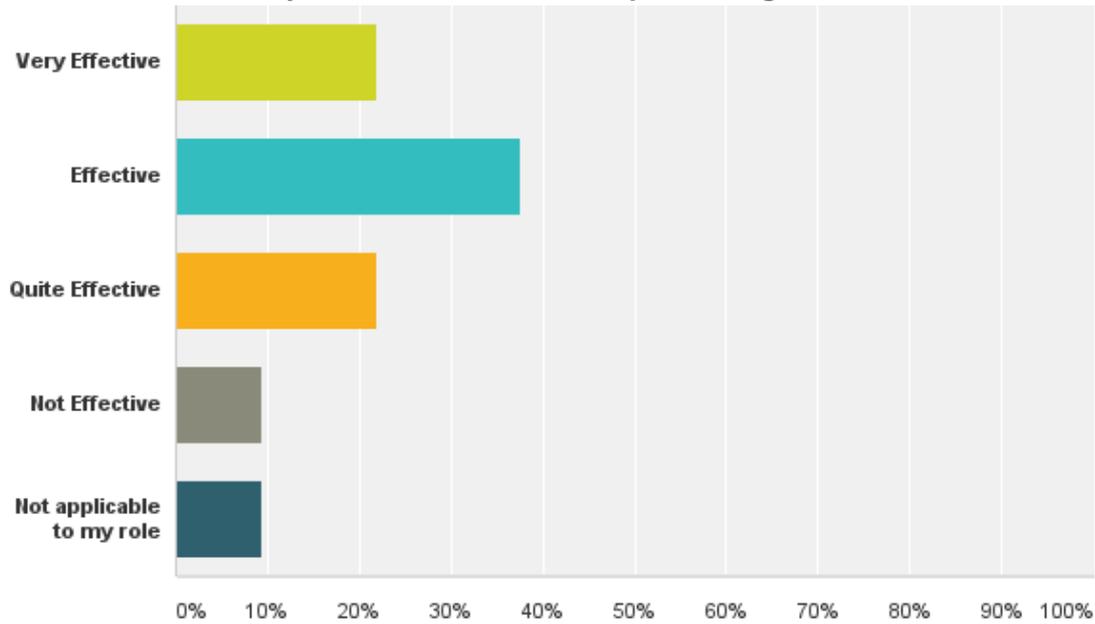
Answer Choices	Responses
Leadership Exchange Clerk	18.75% 6
Leadership Exchange Project Lead	6.25% 2
Employer Leader Representative	6.25% 2
Provider Leader Representative	15.63% 5
Regional Coordinator	28.13% 9
National Advisory Group Member	9.38% 3
Other (please specify)	15.63% 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

None of the respondents found the Leadership Exchange to be in-effective in building meaningful employer/provider partnerships whilst 74.2% of respondents found them to be effective or very effective



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Effective	29.03% 9
Effective	45.16% 14
Quite Effective	22.58% 7
Not Effective	0.00% 0
Not applicable to my role	3.23% 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

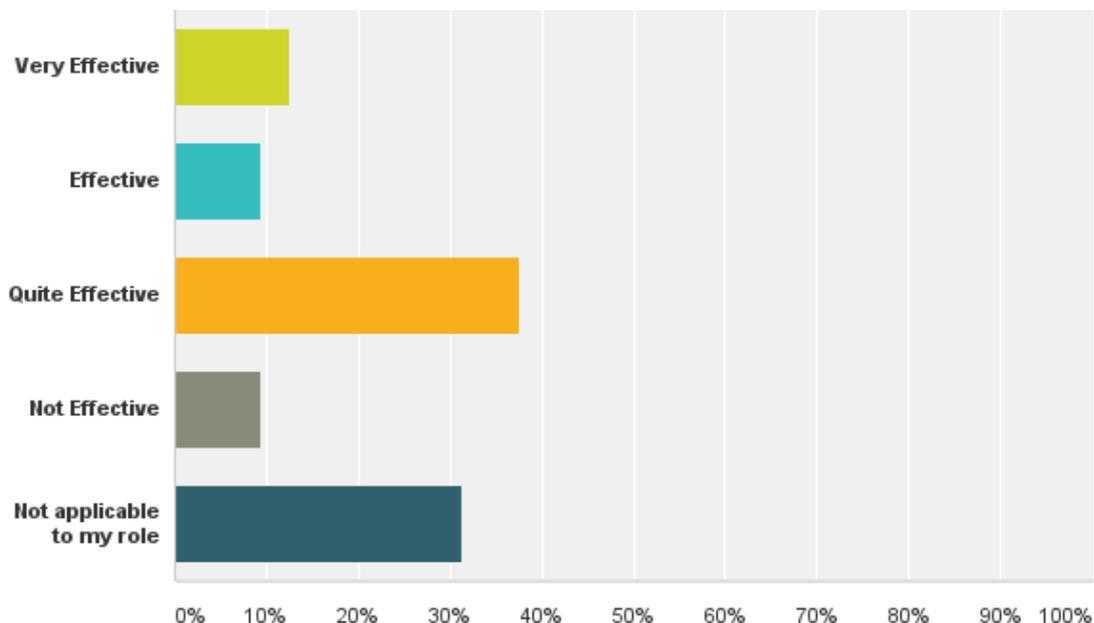
**Q.3 How effective have you found the Leadership Exchange for curriculum development?**



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Effective	21.88% 7
Effective	37.50% 12
Quite Effective	21.88% 7
Not Effective	9.38% 3
Not applicable to my role	9.38% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

Although there was support for the effectiveness of Leadership Exchanges in terms of curriculum development – 59.38% of respondents saw them as very effective or effective - there was a wider spread of responses, with three respondents seeing them as ineffective in this respect.

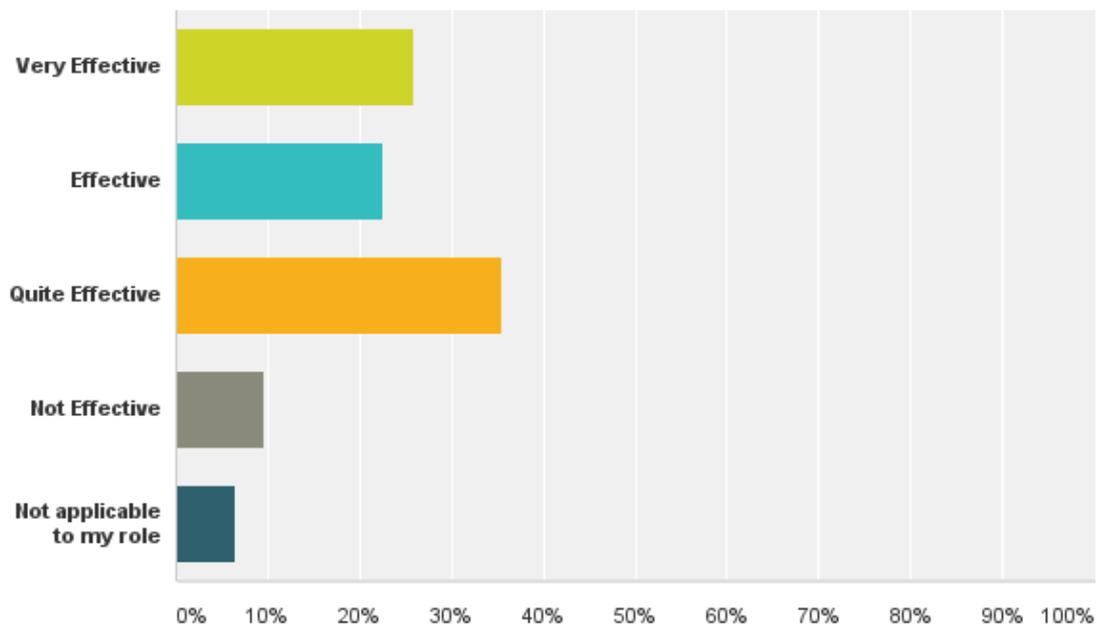
**Q.4 How effective have you found the Leadership Exchange for supporting appropriate employee recruitment and selection or improving the workforce supply chain?**



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Effective	12.50% 4
Effective	9.38% 3
Quite Effective	37.50% 12
Not Effective	9.38% 3
Not applicable to my role	31.25% 10
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

It was clear that although a sizeable minority of respondents saw the Leadership Exchange Programme supporting appropriate employee recruitment and selection or improving the workforce supply chain there was less agreement about this aspect of their work. It is also noteworthy that nearly a third of respondents did not feel able to comment on this question.

**Q.5 How effective have you found the Leadership Exchange for supporting leadership development?**

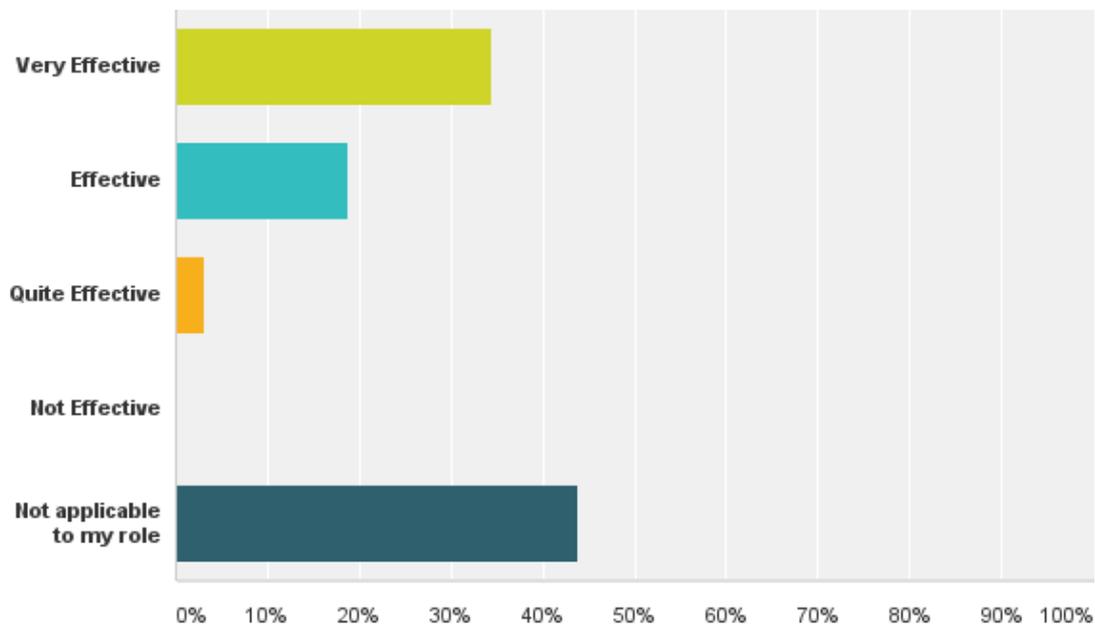


Answer Choices	Responses
Very Effective	25.81% 8
Effective	22.58% 7
Quite Effective	35.48% 11
Not Effective	9.68% 3
Not applicable to my role	6.45% 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

There was stronger agreement about the effectiveness of the programme in supporting leadership development, although three people did not see it as effect in this way and two respondents declined to comment.

### Q.6 How effective was your Regional Coordinator for supporting the work of your Leadership Exchange project?

The survey indicates strong support for the role of the Regional Coordinators in supporting the Leadership Exchanges. Those identifying it as not applicable to their role were Regional coordinators themselves.



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Effective	34.38% 11
Effective	18.75% 6
Quite Effective	3.13% 1
Not Effective	0.00% 0
Not applicable to my role	43.75% 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

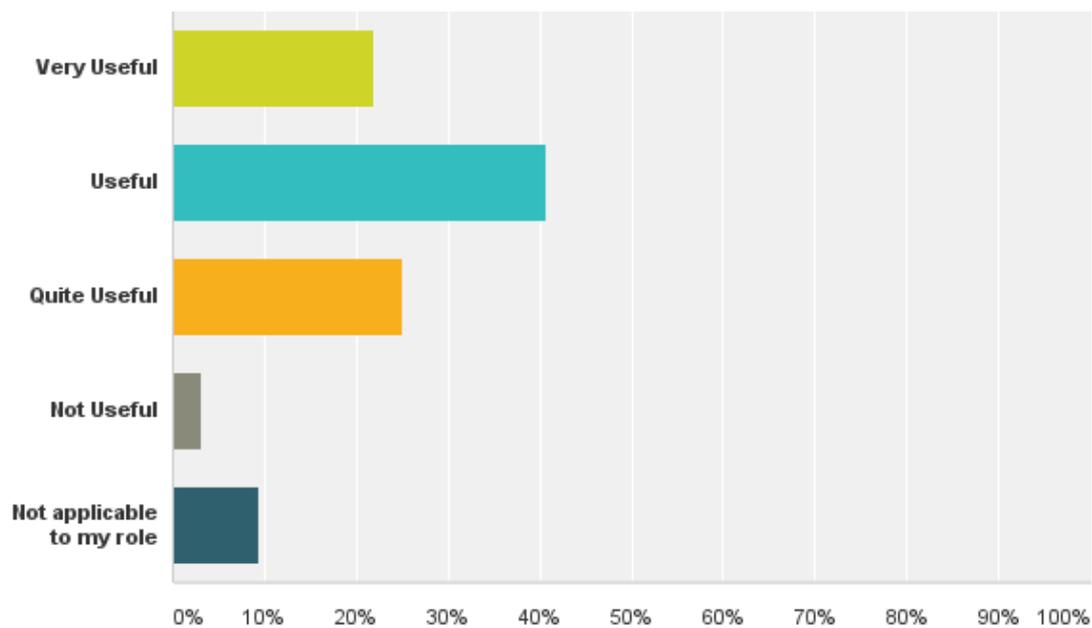
Comments associated with this question included:

- ‘Felt I had good feedback and support throughout the project.’
- ‘Always supportive, offering advice and guidance on how to sculpt the project.’
- ‘Very supportive.’
- ‘(Our Regional Coordinator) has helped us focus and never ensured we kept leadership on the agenda - when it was easy to forget the individual’s developmental needs within the project.’
- ‘Our regional coordinator supported all meetings and continued dialogue between meetings. Their knowledge of the sector was helpful.’
- ‘Was knowledgeable and offered helpful suggestions to enable effective working.’

- ‘The Regional Coordinator kept us informed of the requirements of the project throughout and was very responsive with any queries that we had.’

In reporting back on the usefulness of the various planning and reporting formats respondents found these useful. Only one person didn't find the formats useful.

**Q.7 Were the various planning and reporting formats useful in supporting the work of the Leadership Exchange project?**



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Useful	21.88% 7
Useful	40.63% 13
Quite Useful	25.00% 8
Not Useful	3.13% 1
Not applicable to my role	9.38% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

The survey results also suggest strong support for the reporting structures that were used within the Programme. Typical comments associated with this question included:

- ‘They helped keep people focussed on the task and on meeting deadlines.’
- ‘Found them useful for setting agendas and steering the project.’
- ‘Concise and informative.’
- ‘Helped to plan things and record outcomes - keeps things on track.’
- ‘Allowed both employer and provider perspectives to be contrasted.’
- ‘The monthly report format was helpful on forming the agenda and ensuring we kept to task.’

- ‘The planning and reporting formats provided a useful format to structure the meetings around, ensuring we focused on discussing and capturing useful information.’
- ‘Was useful to be structured.’

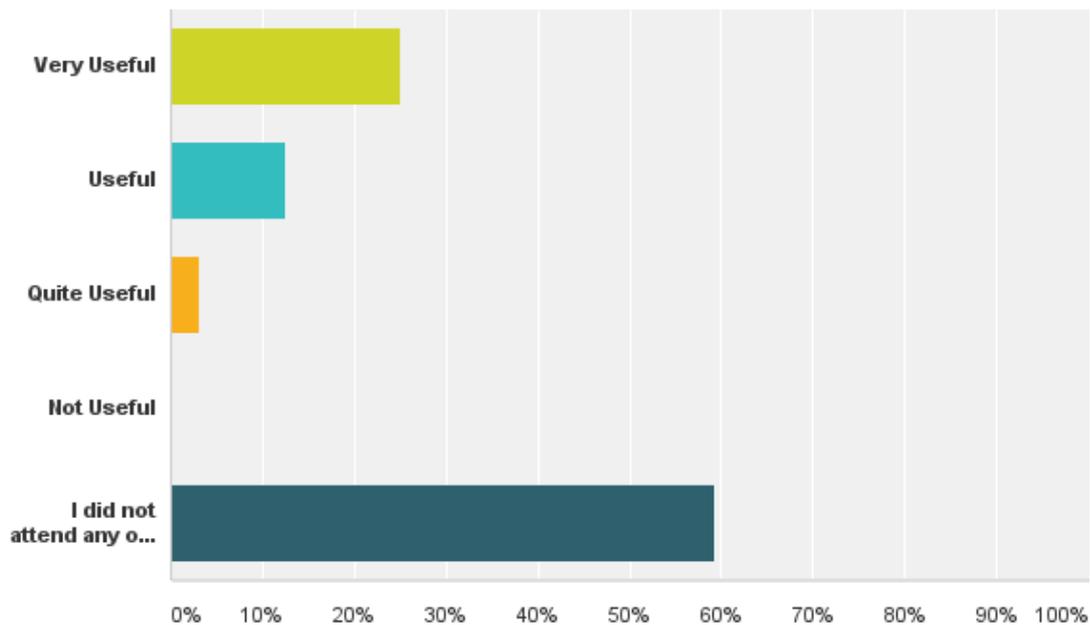
One person noted that ‘Although I was not involved in these the fact that the project was successful leads me to feel these were useful.’

There were some issues however as represented by the following three observations:

- ‘Some sections were repetitive and not always relevant to the initial aims and objectives of the initial bid submitted.’
- ‘Too restrictive and not sensitive to individual organisation’s needs. Also the timing of the project was not helpful in regard to the academic year and summer time.’
- ‘The templates were in general very helpful for capturing information but some of the sections were a bit too focused on impact achieved - unrealistic to complete within the short timescale of the project.’

### Q.8 How useful did you find the national seminar(s)?

The national seminars were found to be useful to all those who responded to the survey.



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Useful	25.00% 8
Useful	12.50% 4
Quite Useful	3.13% 1
Not Useful	0.00% 0
I did not attend any of the seminars	59.38% 19
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

Four participants chose to feedback further on this question indicating that the networking with other projects and meeting and hearing from other projects was the most useful aspect of the Programme. The highly participative nature of the events was welcomed.

#### **Q.9 How likely is it that your Leadership Exchange will continue after the life of this project?**

Only one Leadership Exchange indicated that it was unlikely to continue beyond the life of the funded project.

#### **Q.10 What contribution, if any, do you think that Two-Way Street working between employers and education and training providers can have on the development and improvement of vocational education and training REGIONALLY?**

All of the comments provided in answer to this question are given below.

- 'An important contribution in aiding communication and thereby promoting high quality learning opportunities.'
- 'Bringing together key stakeholders to start conversation, build partnership leading to the development and delivery of the skills escalator. Including improving and developing as aspects of the skills escalator, including curriculum and qualifications.'
- 'I think that it has been useful for an employer to see how their training needs could be met locally in an area of the country where staff training usually involves travelling long distances or paying high amounts to get someone in to train staff at the premises.'
- 'Within agreed protocols and driven by a regional body/agency two-way street working would have real benefit in addressing regional concerns around skills, support for local employers, and refining curriculum offers.'
- 'I think the relationship between employers and training providers to improve VET is vital to address the skills shortage currently and that will exist over the next five years. However, unless OFSTED insist and make part of the review criteria that schools must engage with employers the issue will never fully be resolved. Schools are all too keen to shield their 'bright stars' from VET, and in my experience are all too keen to perform 'interventions' when the traditional route, i.e. GCSE-A Level-Degree isn't adhered to. Therefore to have any sort of impact employers, both large and small need to make enough noise so that their needs are met, and this especially helps if you have the ear of the Local Enterprise Partnerships.'
- 'The model of working together has proved fruitful in the specific case study and this approach can be shared and used as a basis for future collaboration between other employers and training providers in the region. If the work remains focused on improving skills to impact on productivity then the impact will be felt in employment, career progression and business development.'
- 'I think this project has been useful but very short term. The impacts will be seen over the next few years but they will be there.'
- 'Inform of current and future emerging training needs.'
- 'Response to employer demand for specific skills training.'
- 'There can be a HUGE impact on vocational education regionally by these sort of partnerships. The curriculum offer becomes much more vocationally focussed and relevant to the needs of employers.'

- 'It certainly raises awareness of issues affecting both groups. It can also raise the profile of regional training organisations.'
- 'This initiative is vital in aligning local FE provision with the real and changing needs of employers.'
- 'We intend to share the results with the SW Health Education England management team - it will be interesting to see if some of the work / outputs are adopted by others.'
- 'The Two-Way Street encourages engagement between the different partners and stimulates thinking about the real issues. To be effective at a regional level it will need to identify the relevant major players on the education and training side and get them to be closer to regional employers. A suitable forum would need to be used, such as a CITB regional training group, which already brings together both sides, to further the two way exchange process.'
- 'Lessons learned from TWS can be used to develop provision nationally. Networks of projects can also be created to share best practice.'
- 'Intelligence to support the development of a Local Sector Skills Statement for the West of England LEP.'
- 'This is potentially the most useful aspect. It is clear from the Leadership Exchange that I have been observing is having a regional effect but this is because it involves not just one employer but a regional employer organisation. Also more than one college is included.'
- 'Encouraging networking and information sharing especially on qualifications and employment opportunities.'
- 'There are lots of lessons to be learnt from how to successfully work with employers to meet common objectives. We can take these lessons forward to other relationships we have regionally'
- 'This project has had a direct impact within our region (Solent) as we have approached a local college and together have approached a cohort of employers to undertake an employer led Leadership Academy which will hopefully be funded via the local LEP. The Two Way Street approach will be used within the planning and hopefully delivery of the new Academy if we are successful. The Two Way Street approach has been cited within the funding application as a model we would like to adopt to support project implementation success.'
- 'Could share outcomes with other colleagues in Federation of Lincolnshire colleges.'
- 'The two-way street leadership exchanges are great examples of good practice, which - if shared with other providers within the region - can support further such working.'
- 'Attune provision much more to the needs of the local economy.'
- 'I think the two-way street working can make a valuable contribution regionally. Derbyshire is in the heart of England and ideally placed for optimising the movement of goods in a multitude of supply chains. It is very frustrating for me to experience the lack of progress made by the Buxton project due to a complexity of issues including the overlap with the long University summer holidays, and the disconnection between the lead employers and lead provider. There are other issues, such as the amount of funding which is modest and has not incentivised leaders to maintain commitment over 3 months. It is not just the meetings that need to be funded but also the work required to complete action plans between meetings and after the third to maintain sustainability. A counter argument, particularly in the D2N2 LEP area is that a strategic body such as the Leadership Exchange should be a priority for the logistics sector in Derbyshire.'

**Q.11 What contribution, if any, do you think that Two-Way Street working can have on the development and improvement of vocational education and training NATIONALLY?**

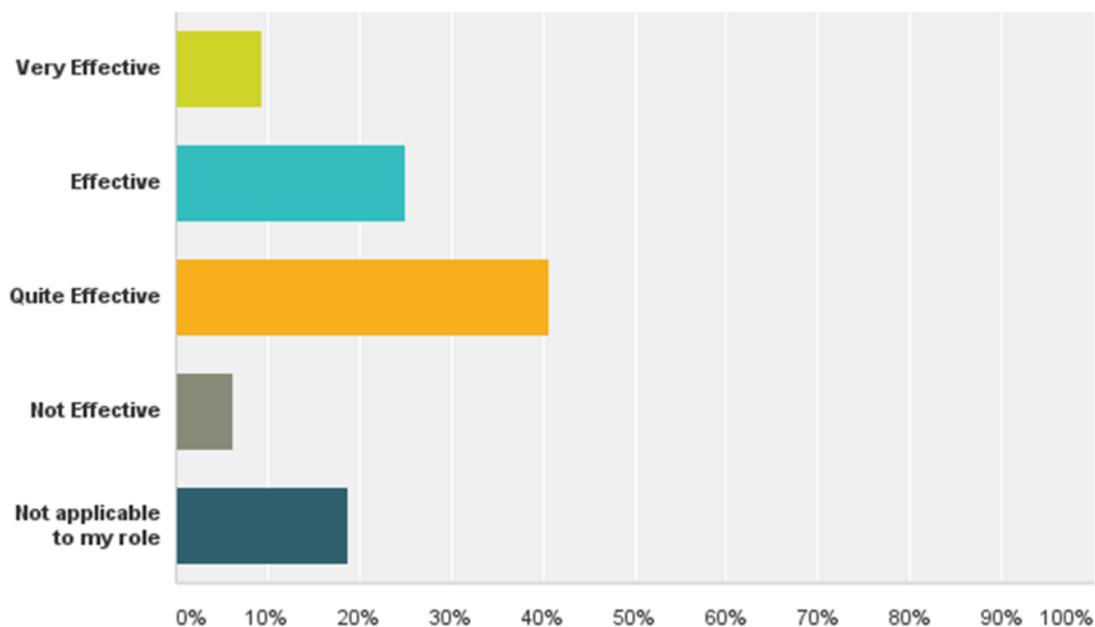
- 'To the extent that local participants are part of national networks good practice can spread and influence policy.'
- 'Two Way Street working would be very effective for VET nationally if further stages of the project were nationally focused and coordinated nationally, and government introduced enabling instruments.'
- 'The need to keep dialogue open so that training remains relevant to local industry.'
- 'Two Way Street working provides a clear sense of the contributions that educational providers and employers can make to skills formation, shortages, and deficits. It therefore enables not only regional profiles and activities to be made fully visible but also enables the articulation of national interest at regional levels (e.g. equality and diversity evidence - not targets). Such contributions would need to be underpinned by a national articulation of Two Way Street by a steering group that would enable dialogue between skills bodies and interests (UKCES; CBI; IoD; TUC; BIS etc) and begin to form a more coherent shape to skills, labour market demands, and educational interests and expertise (ETF).'
- 'It has the potential to offer a model that can be used with large national companies as well as smaller local projects.'
- 'We have tied our regional approach to the approach developed by the UKCES. This makes for coherence for young people in our chosen sector'
- 'Inform of current and future emerging training needs.'
- 'Sharing good practice.'
- 'Each two way street project combines to form a national network of providers and employers working together. The lessons learned can be built upon'
- 'By raising awareness of the issues.'
- 'Our project was very focussed on the expansion of training within one health sector employer and the development of them as an employer / provider. NBT& SWATPRo is pretty unique and there maybe interest in the model across the national landscape. It remains to be seen if others adopt this model.'
- 'If headway can be made at a regional level, then those examples can be brought together to establish a wider national picture. The CITB training group network would be an ideal base format for such a model.'
- 'The curriculum offer may differ nationally based on national sector requirements however best practice on how to engage with and shape curriculum with employers could be shared.'
- 'Inform Apprenticeships delivery.'
- 'I think this is more problematic. It is not the answer to many of the big challenges that face the system - voluntarism, resources, SMEs etc.'
- 'A standard for all industries to aspire to, permits constant updating, reflective, 360 degrees.'
- 'It would be brilliant to see more employer and provider collaboration projects at a national level.'
- 'By sharing with others the outcomes of the projects. It's important to talk about the problems as well as what went well.'
- 'Could have positive impact on building relationships between employer/provider as very focussed on facilitating roundtable discussions, face to face and ensuring actions are carried out.'

- 'To be much more end user sensitive.'
- 'I think the Two Way Street working can make a valuable contribution. However, I think that there needs to be a more direct connection with Teach Two. Clearly there is an operational - strategic natural relationship between the two projects.'

The projects thought that they were reasonably effective in exploring their Equality and Diversity issue.

**Q12 How effective was your Leadership Exchange in exploring an issue associated with Equality and Diversity (E&D)?**

The majority of responses to this question were positive, although two respondents did not feel the Programme had been effective in exploring and equality and diversity issue.



Answer Choices	Responses
Very Effective	9.38% 3
Effective	25.00% 8
Quite Effective	40.63% 13
Not Effective	6.25% 2
Not applicable to my role	18.75% 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

One observation made was:

'This Leadership Exchange was very aware of the disparity that exists in terms of under-represented groups, including women and BME groups, across a range of careers in STEM. Both employers and providers are aware that the manufacturing sector is not seizing the competitive advantage

opportunities of gender and ethnic diversity in the workforce As one of the core remits of the project was to encourage young learners to consider a career in a STEM related profession, the project set about ensuring that this E&D issue was directly addressed as part of our strategy.'

**Q.13 what are the key lessons that you have learnt as a result of your participation in the Two-Way Street Leadership Exchange Programme?**

The programme survey elicited a wide variety of individual responses to this question. These are all given below:

- 'Arrangements for apprenticeships are even more complex than I thought.'
- 'Memorandum of understanding is essential.'
- 'The importance of listening to the unique needs of each local employer.'
- 'The state of play in regard capacity of colleges, educational providers to engage with employers.'
- 'Set clear objectives.'
- 'Good communication between employer and training provider is key.'
- 'Employers must be involved in curriculum development.'
- 'Importance of including relevant personnel at meetings.'
- 'The project builds a trust relationship between employers and providers which can be long lasting.'
- Importance of joint working of employers/providers. It is not a 'sales' relationship.'
- 'Time is a great constraint for SMEs.'
- 'Better understanding of the work of Wirral Met.'
- 'To be absolutely sure of the leadership requirements from the start.'
- 'The importance of the personal relationships between providers and employers.'
- 'Difficult to engage with SME employers due to business activity constraints.'
- 'Though SME's are willing to engage, time constraints make this challenging. Work via an established employer group to reach SMEs.'
- 'Health sector skills challenges.'
- 'It takes time to get this type of work underway.'
- 'Much of this work was already underway.'
- 'Involving all key stakeholders from the start and having clear division of responsibility.'
- 'The importance of common objectives.'
- 'The value of face to face communication.'
- 'The importance of really listening to employers.'
- 'We need to have face-to-face meetings with employers to ensure training is tailored to their needs.'
- 'Finding time in common is a key obstacle, particularly for SMEs.'
- 'It's good to have a stimulus to bring people together.'
- 'Timing of the project in the year.'
- 'Issues faced by SMEs are also faced in large organisations.'
- 'A strategic funding plan is needed for sustainability.'
- 'The need for colleges to appear relevant to local industry via their website and publicity.'
- 'The needs of employers in respect of educational expertise, curriculum development, and educator expertise.'

- 'Develop trust by operating a transparent reporting mechanism.'
- 'Having a clear shared purpose with mutual benefit to all partners is key to success and to sustainability.'
- 'Employers must drive the development of training / funding and qualifications.'
- 'Need for engagement of LEP representatives.'
- 'Funding really helps to oil the wheels of the relationship.'
- 'Confusion of LEP priorities where providers/employers are near LEP boundaries.'
- 'Employers are unaware of the constraints that providers work under.'
- 'Better understanding of Unilever.'
- 'Always focus on the outcomes.'
- 'The need to ensure that dialogue between providers and employers is grounded in a shared desire to respond to an identified need.'
- 'The short duration nature of the project is not compatible with providing firm outputs.'
- 'Shaping curriculum is a huge undertaking so do in bite-sized chunks.'
- 'Job roles and mapping to apprenticeship frameworks.'
- 'Employers and providers speak a different language and have different needs so there are bound to be some compromises.'
- 'College time to give to projects like this is very limited: it requires greater commitment.'
- 'Regular calls and meetings outside of the formal meetings to monitor progress.'
- 'Understanding one another's perspectives and using the right language.'
- 'True understanding of both partners e.g. Provider understanding employer business needs and peak time and the employer understanding funding requirements and other restrictions.'
- 'The need to improve our website for business.'
- 'There is a willingness from both employers' and colleges' side to work together.'
- 'There was excellent clarity of purpose, which was comprehended by all parties.'
- 'Review of funding.'
- 'Employer providers face similar issues to colleges or PTPs when dealing with operational departments.'
- 'All LE members should make a strong commitment to attend meetings and complete agreed action points.'
- 'The importance of equipping learners with employability skills and sound careers advice.'
- 'The scale of the challenge regarding educational and labour market interests.'
- 'Discuss issues as and when they arrive.'
- 'Each partner brings particular expertise to the joint endeavour and together then forge a solution which increases skills and productivity.'
- 'Need for engagement of HEIs.'
- 'External monitoring gives extra impetus and helps to accelerate the drive and agenda forwards.'
- 'If employers and providers are at the ends of the two way street we must never forget that it is learners who walk up and down the street.'
- 'The training needs of SME can differ greatly.'
- 'Ensure you have the right level of participation - especially in such a large & diverse organisation such as a health trust.'
- 'The need for any employer/provider group to have a broad membership and critical mass if it is going to be sustainable.'
- 'Greater understanding of the wider picture around education and training provision.'

- 'There are lots of initiatives happening within the sector, would be useful to have this mapped somewhere.'
- 'There is no substitute for face-to-face dialogue but it needs to be extended and supported by electronic means website, newsletter etc.'
- 'Timing over the Easter holidays and summer holidays made communications and progress difficult.'
- 'Creating a common vision for the programme.'
- 'While employer and provider collaboration is essential, you need to be mindful of and work in the boundaries of government, SFA and LEP priorities.'
- 'The importance of reflection by all parties to aid progression.'
- 'Ideas to change our business network meetings to be more focused on skills needs.'
- 'Many of the misunderstandings are related to the different language used among providers and employers as well as the lack of understanding of the environment they work in (e.g. funding conditions, planning cycle).'
- 'Colleges need to integrate further in to their local economic systems.'
- 'Assessment of commitment at the bid stage of lead employer and provider.'
- 'Despite a government focus on encouraging employers to contribute to the costs of training there is still a strong view that a key role of providers is to help employers access free training funded by the state.'
- 'That the LE is just the foundation stone leading to strategic development and achieving VET impacts.'
- 'The need for providers to be flexible with training packages to meet bespoke needs (in terms of length of course, times, venue etc).'
- 'Learning about the focus and needs of fellow advisory group members.'
- 'A commitment from partners to the progress of the work is important, including senior level involvement and regular dialogue.'
- 'Timing of projects is crucial, short term projects give providers additional hoops to jump through.'
- 'Messages to learners must be as one from both employers and providers.'
- 'Providers need to regularly review their provision with local employers.'
- 'With Area Based Reviews on the horizon the need for two way dialogue between employer and provider has never been stronger.'
- 'The importance for each partner to adopt appropriate language e.g. Team Member instead of Staff if this is the employer ethos.'
- 'Don't make assumptions about employers.'
- 'The LEP can play a vital role in brokering further collaborations.'
- 'Some overt synergy needed between Teach Two and Two Way Street.'

**Q.14 Please feel free to add any further comments below**

Additional comments made in conclusion included:

- 'The implications of working in such an influential and engaged advisory group has enabled two further outcomes. The first is the understanding of what particular constituencies need and are currently experiencing regarding educational and training development. The second is the results of the projects which could well feed into our own project work - in other words

the intelligence around what employers need or what skills need developing has a direct impact on how we or other interested parties could help with.'

- 'The project was a delight to work on and I learned a lot about the Construction sector and how employers and training providers within it are working to ensure skills shortages are addressed through tailored training provision.'
- 'I have really enjoyed the opportunity to be personally involved in a structured project like this.'
- 'Thank you.'

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