

Higher Apprenticeships Support Service

Making the business case for Higher Apprenticeships Project overview

1. Introduction

A needs analysis of the 21 Higher Apprenticeship providers participating in the Higher Apprenticeship Fund round one was carried out by LSIS in June 2012. This identified engagement of both employers and employees as key challenges in order to generate starts on Higher Apprenticeship programmes, along with the financing of Higher Apprenticeships. Specific needs identified under each area included the following.

Engaging employers

- Making and promoting the business case.
- Understanding and segmenting the market.
- Recruiting employers.
- Skills competitions, World Skills.

Engaging employees

- Making and promoting the case.
- Mapping and understanding transition routes.

Financing Higher Apprenticeships

- Financial models for providers.
- Analysis of costs and return on investment for employers.
- Financial options for apprentices.

Subsequently, LSIS was commissioned by the National Apprenticeship Service to provide a support service for organisations funded through the Higher Apprenticeship Fund, which included supporting collaborative learning and development activity between Higher Apprenticeship project organisations. This report is one of three such development projects that were undertaken late 2012 and early 2013.

2. Objectives

In autumn 2012 LSIS facilitated a project with a number of Higher Apprenticeship Fund organisations to share and develop emerging practice on making the business case for Higher Apprenticeships. The objectives of the project were to:

- enhance understanding of the financial and business case for Higher Apprenticeships through peer to peer learning, exchange of effective practice and networking for providers;
- improve engagement and marketing strategies to increase the up-take of Higher Apprenticeships through sharing resources, key contacts, links and examples to act as templates for marketing materials;
- provide case studies for promoting Higher Apprenticeships which show effective routes to engaging with employers, learners and providers; and
- identify how financial and funding information can be used to support the promotion of Higher Apprenticeships.

3. Participants

The organisations which participated in the project by attending workshops or by supplying resources and examples are listed below.

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ City of Bristol College | ■ Financial Skills Partnership |
| ■ PERA Innovation | ■ City of Islington |
| ■ Hull College | ■ Skills for Care |
| ■ Newcastle College Group | ■ Leicester College |
| ■ Northwest Automotive Alliance | ■ Creative Skillset |
| ■ Peter Jones Foundation | ■ Workpays |
| ■ Leeds College of Building | ■ EU Skills |
| ■ NW Kent College | ■ People 1 st |
| ■ Association of Project Management | |

4. Activities

Workshop one

Workshop one, held in November 2012, aimed to bring participants together to share their marketing techniques and identify the key messages for both employers and learners. LSIS facilitators delivered presentations on three key strands.

- Segmenting and engaging with employers.
- The financial case for Higher Apprenticeships.
- The learner perspective and establishing benefits of Higher Apprenticeships.

Following the presentations participants took part in two facilitated exercises. The first involved identification of existing effective practice and available resources against each of the key strands, followed by discussion on how these could be consolidated and shared across Higher Apprenticeship providers. The

second activity involved identification and prioritisation of development areas, followed by action planning and task allocation.

Follow up exercise: Mapping of techniques and resources

In a follow-up to the workshop a template was circulated to both those who had attended, and other providers, asking them to identify the techniques and resources which they were using to make the business case to employers and learners and which had been the most effective. Project facilitators used this information to produce a summary of what had worked and what had not.

Workshop two

The second workshop, held in December 2012, sought to explore marketing messages and methods with participants. Key themes from the three LSIS webinars delivered from September to October 2012 (*Employer Engagement*, *Employee Engagement* and *Financing Higher Apprenticeships*) to support Higher Apprenticeship providers were presented. The results from the follow-up mapping exercise were shared and discussed. Participants considered marketing messages and methods, and took part in facilitated activities to develop a positioning statement for Higher Apprenticeships and how to overcome employers' objections.

Follow-up exercise: Development of case studies

Following the workshop, some participants chose to develop case studies to share their experiences and resources more widely in how they have engaged employers and employees and sought to develop understanding of Higher Apprenticeship funding arrangements.

5. Resources

The following resources have been produced as a result of the project:

Case Study: Developing a Higher Apprenticeship Marketing Strategy – City of Bristol College

This case study explores how the City of Bristol College in partnership with five other Colleges (Weston College, City of Bath College, Northern Radstock College, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and the University of the West of England) have developed a comprehensive marketing strategy utilising a range of media to promote Higher Apprenticeships as a brand, and to promote the offer to employers and potential apprentices. It will be of interest to partnerships and providers seeking to develop a Higher Apprenticeship marketing strategy and gain ideas about media options.

Case Study: Developing a Marketing campaign for Higher Apprenticeships – SusCon@North West Kent College

This case study describes how North West Kent College and the University of Greenwich developed a targeted Higher Apprenticeship marketing campaign. Sport was identified as a possible vehicle for attracting both employers and learners, and the case study describes some innovative approaches being trialled using this. It will be of interest to partnerships and providers seeking to develop a Higher Apprenticeship marketing strategy and those wishing to adopt innovative solutions.

Case Study: Developing a single brand to promote the Higher Apprenticeship in Sustainable Built Environment (HASBE) – Leeds College of Building (lead partner) and Leicester College (delivery partner)

This case study explores the development of a clear brand identity for the HASBE framework and an associated website, which provide a single entry point for both employers and learners. It will be of interest to partnerships and providers seeking to brand their framework and developing an associated website.

Case Study: Helping employers understand the funding available to support Higher Apprenticeship costs – City of Bristol College and the Peter Jones Foundation

This case study shares some of the tools developed by City of Bristol College to help develop employers' understanding of the costs and funding available to support Higher Apprenticeship delivery. It also shares how another Higher Apprenticeship provider, Peter Jones Foundation, has used these resources to support it in its own work. The case study will be of interest to partnerships and providers who are seeking to further develop both employers, and their own understanding of Higher Apprenticeship funding arrangements.

Case Study: Using Higher Apprenticeship frameworks to accredit in-company training programmes – People 1st

This case study shares some of the experiences of People 1st in working with employers and learners in delivering the Higher Apprenticeship in Hospitality Management, including the embedding of employers' in-house training programmes within the delivery model. It will be of interest to partnerships and providers who are seeking to develop approaches to working with employers and learners.

Template: Approaches to overcoming employer objections

This template, identifying employers' objections to Higher Apprenticeships and suggested ways to overcome them, was developed during workshop two. It has been supplemented further by information from the Marketing and Consultative Selling Skills Workshops delivered through the LSIS Higher Apprenticeship Fund

Support Service. It will be of interest to partnerships and providers who are developing approaches to engaging employers, and also delivery staff who are marketing Higher Apprenticeships directly to employers.

Workshop one - Slide presentation

This set of power point slides includes the presentations and activities used in workshop one, held in November 2012.

Workshop two - Slide presentation

This set of power point slides includes the presentations and activities used in workshop two in December 2012.

6. Future Planning

For many providers the delivery of Higher Apprenticeships commenced in the latter half of 2012. Partnerships and providers are evaluating their experiences on an on-going basis and using this information to further develop approaches to making the business case for Higher Apprenticeships.