



**REGIONAL FORUM  
NORTH EAST  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2009

Commencing at 10am

Held at Middlesbrough Teaching & Learning Centre, Middlesbrough

**Present**

Mr. John Hornby (JH) - Aker Solutions - **Chair**  
Mr Don Atkinson (DA) – ECITB  
Mr. Tony Featherstone (TF) – ECITB  
Mr. Mark Rae (MR) - ECITB  
Mr. Alan Roberts (AR) - C&A  
Mr. Martin Foster (MF) – NETA  
Mr. Grahame Bell (GB) - NETA  
Mr. Ian Muscroft (IM) – Aker Solutions  
Ms Fallon Faulkner (FF) - Aker Solutions  
Ms Sam Fleetham (SF) – Cordell  
Mr. Colin Myers (CM) – Studsvik  
Mr. Neil Watson (NW) – AMEC  
Mr. John Stoddart (JS) – AMEC  
Mr. Geoff Wilson (GW) – ECIA Northern  
Mr. Dave Crabtree (DC – ECIA

**In Attendance**

Miss L. Young - Secretary

**Apologies**

Mr. Peter Bauckham – Argos Inspection  
Mrs. Lynn Day – Cleveland Bridge  
Mr. Tom Shepherd – CT Steel  
Mr. David Bilton – David Bilton Engineering  
Mr. Gary Milne – Hydratight  
Mr. Neil Guest – Matrix Power  
Mr. John Meehan – Ovalway  
Mr. David Burton – Siemens Transmission  
Mr. Charlie Gibbs – Whessoe  
Mr. Russell Coleman – TTE  
Mr. Paul Griffiths – IMH Industrial  
Mr. Martin Hottass – Siemens Power

**Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**

JH welcomed all present to the Forum but stated that we really must encourage a wider attendance, especially from the SMEs.

## **Minutes of Last Meeting for Approval**

The minutes were approved and passed as a true record.

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Review of 2008**

DA produced a review of what happened in 2008 and reported that 2008 was a very positive year.

#### **Apprenticeship Programmes**

- 94 apprentices completed 1st year off the job, placed with companies employed status
- 123 apprentices recruited in North East region, of which 81 for North East companies
- Majority of apprentices being trained at NETA, small number at Northumberland College also Siemens Newcastle
- 17 Apprentices completed their Advanced Apprenticeship

#### **Regional Discretionary Fund**

- £167,000 spent on various training courses
- 408 learners supported through RDG North East in 2008
- 11 Companies received Regional Discretionary Funding

#### **Management and Professional**

- Approximately 307 employees attended SMTD courses
- Project Management Courses
- Primavera
- Cad Training
- Active Cup
- Post Graduate Courses – MSc in Project Management

JH and IM reported on the Active Cup and agreed that it had been an excellent week-end.

## **TECSkills (Training in Engineering Construction Skills)**

- Level 2 registrations 42
- Level 3 Registrations 30
- 33 Level 2 VQ,s Awarded

## **Other North East Achievements in 2008**

- Total of 206 ACE registrations 2008
- Careers Open Evening attracted 1500
- ECITB School Roadshow – positive feedback
- New Schools Diplomas started – this was the first year, we have to wait and see what happens
- Good feedback from the Customer Satisfaction Survey

## **2. North East 2009 Plans**

### **Apprenticeship Programmes 2009 Plan**

- Target to recruit approx 100 apprentices for North East companies
- Company pledges stating numbers, disciplines and recruitment method  
We would ask all companies to put Pledge Forms in
- All applications will be dealt with in regional office
- Employer open evening on Wednesday 4th March
- Testing and Interviews in March/April/May
- Company interviews May/June
- Company offer letters sent out June/July
- Company contracts/learner registration forms issued and returned prior to apprentices starting
- Apprenticeship start date early September

DA reported that last September we took on five Project Control apprentices who at present have no employer. We are looking for employers to take them on over Easter.

TTE have 75 apprentices leaving their Centre - mechanical/ instrumentation and electrical. They are looking for employers to take on to enable them to complete their NVQ L3.

A discussion took place regarding the non-employment of these apprentices and concern was expressed that this could do serious damage to the ECITB intake for 2009.

Concern was expressed that the North East had only 20 pledges to date. This time last year the numbers were 60-70.

DA reminded the meeting that a £10,000 grant is available and asked employers to complete Pledge sheets as soon as possible.

## **2009 Regional Discretionary Fund**

- £50,000 total allocated in 2009 budget
- Approximately £31,000 committed to date
- 126 Candidates Supported to date
- £19,000 Remaining
- 8 Companies have received Regional Discretionary Funding
- All invoices MUST be submitted by 30th November 2009

JH reported that an extra £100,000 was available for upskilling and training which had to be committed by July and that we needed to spend it

DA reported that lots of companies were doing training whilst business is quiet. This was the perfect opportunity for upskilling.

## **New Structure**

- Apprentices
- Skills and Technical – replaces TECSkills
- Management and Professional (Including Safety Passport) – replaces TS&MP
- Qualifications
- Card Schemes, e.g. ACE, Passport, etc.

TF reported that Skills and Technical is mainly Work Based Learning aimed at those looking to upskill staff. The TECSkills material that we have developed includes material for apprentices on WBL.

## **2009 Targets**

### **TECSkills – Training in Engineering Construction Skills**

40 Level 2

40 Level 3

- Knowledge courses delivered in the North East on demand.

DA reported that grants were available for TECSkills if learners achieve training to NVQ Level 2 & 3 or upskilling of existing crafts people. (L2 - £2,000) (L3 - £6,000-£8,000 per person)

## NE Targets

Apprentices	100
Additional Skills and Technical	55
Additional L2	80
Additional L3	40
Management and Professional	77
Management and Professional	450
Regional Discretionary Grant Learners	150
ACE	300

## Additional 2009 Plans – National

SMTD Changes – Network of licensed providers grants -post March 09

- £90 per learner per day
  - £125 per learner per day (Offshore only)
  - £100 for successful completion of task assignment (Per module)
  - £500 for Silver Card
  - £1,500 for Gold Card (Completion Of NVQ level 3)
- Allocation of additional funds - £100,000 per region
  - Funding for MBA/B.Eng to CEng
  - Train to Gain Compact Manager – Duncan Weeks
  - Work Based Learning Manager – Brian Marchant

Changes will be made to SMTD programmes from April 2009. Phoenix Training will continue until 31<sup>st</sup> March. From 1<sup>st</sup> April training providers will also be asked to provide SMTD (Norman Harrison is working on this at the moment).

We would like a network of licensed providers; the licence fee is £2,000 per annum.

TF reported that under the old system companies had to apply for grants, these are now paid automatically, when the training programme is completed.

The full SMTD programme is 7 modules to gain the Silver card

A discussion took place regarding L3 in Management (generic). It was suggested that some of the grants may be paid to learner as an incentive which is discretionary from the company.

Funding is available from Train to Gain to cover assessment on NVQ's. Train to Gain money will go direct to the training provider, so companies do not have to pay training providers.

The WBL Manager (BM) will co-ordinate TECSkills monitoring and coaching courses to ensure that all learners are looked after in the NE, Y&H and NW regions.

## **National ACE Information**

- 2009 Targets – 1300 registrations (260)/1200 Completions (200)
- Funding (Train to Gain, DCELLS, Scottish Enterprise)
- ECITB Discretionary Funding
- ACE ISG
- Automatic Issue of ACE cards on achievement of ECITB NVQ level 3
- ACE Renewal Process
- Inclusion of non ECITB Qualifications
  - Total Registrations – 6851
    - Candidates in Assessment – 1280
    - Completions – 5,571

JH reported that ACE ISG meets every two months in London. They are looking at inclusion of non-ECITB L3.

A discussion took place regarding the number of people completing. It was found that sometimes some people were only on site for 1-2 months, e.g. Shut downs, and it was very hard to complete candidates.

The question of whether this scheme should be expanded to incorporate engineers e.g. HNC/D level will be brought up at the next ACE Steering Group.

Discussion took place with regards safety cards. Are there too many cards? Do we only need one card?

### **3. ECITB Customer Satisfaction Survey**

JH reported that every year the ECITB employs a third party consultant to gauge Customer Satisfaction. The NE region had the best response.

Thanks went to the staff/team at the ECITB NE office.

### **4. NEBOSH L3 National General Certificate**

A NEBOSH L3 National General Certificate course was mentioned. The course is to be offered at Middlesbrough College, any one interested please contact ECITB.

The course runs 1 day per week over 11 weeks starting on:  
Thursday 9th April 2009 - 9.00am – 5.00pm.

The cost is £850.00 per person including registration and exam fees.  
The exam is to be held on Thursday 2nd July 2009.

Course fees and examination fees are to be paid for by the ECITB.

## **5. Supervisors Academy**

JH reported that this was a route to NVQ L4 – senior supervisory and site management. It was initially a strategy to raise the status of the competent supervisors and develop them further. To make this work companies and all interested parties must commit to the proposed terms of employment.

This item was brought up at Regional Chairs meeting last week and caused lots of enthusiastic discussion in light of the recent government statements on Site productivity and the BERR/DIUS survey about to be commissioned.

There was unanimous agreement and support for the NE to develop and pilot the Supervisor Academy (JH note – I think we should rethink the title as the Academy handle is becoming too popular!).

Funding is available and the onus is now on JH to call interested parties together to thrash out the whole basis for the pilot scheme. Jimmy Skivington at the GMB Union has agreed to participate..

**Action: JH to organise the initial meeting.**

## **6. Any Other Business**

JH reported about the off site region he would like to take any offsite issues at the North East meeting.

JW reported on the excellent Nuclear Skills Academy presentation of awards held in Manchester. The standard was outstanding.

2008 Results and 2009 Skills Action Plan was issued. Any comments please contact DA/MR.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next two Regional Forums will take place on

Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2009  
Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

DA is looking at suitable venues. Company suggestions would be appreciated.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:30 p.m. and JH thanked everyone for attending.