****

***Supported by GPRS Recruitment***

**GMLPN Network Meeting**

This Conference Report should be viewed in conjunction with the conference slide pack which can be [accessed here.](http://gmlpn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/GMLPN-Members-Meeting-26-April-2017-.pdf)

Mark Currie welcomed attendees and explained the purpose of the first session. There had been a recent meeting of OfSTED’s regional reference group and at that meeting there had been a very useful presentation and discussion on how the Common Inspection Framework is being adapted to meet the introduction of standards and also on how providers should be responding to the new challenges and also preparing themselves for inspection.

It was also reported that independent providers are now invited to identify 8 weeks a year when they will not be inspected to cope with annual leave etc. Providers have until the 15th May to notify OfSTED of their 8 weeks. You do not have to complete the survey but by doing so, you will help to ensure the inspection goes smoothly for you, your staff, learners and inspectors. The information you provide will be held securely. Please click on the link to complete the survey: <http://questionnaire.ofsted.gov.uk/201617/fes-providers-54249-37bd9c7>

Anne Gornall then provided information on the most recent trends in OfSTED grades and how providers in Greater Manchester compared with regional and national trends. Anne also outlined the Governments’ new accountability framework for Apprenticeships and the eight organisations which are now involved.

The session concluded with an exercise in which providers identified particular issues and challenges and areas where collective action and support would be helpful. In discussion key issues identified included:

* Concerns amongst providers that they were no longer sure what OfSTED are looking for
* How will OfSTED examine and assess progress now that units and qualifications were disappearing in some of the new standards
* End point assessment and whether this is in scope for the CIF
* What does outstanding progress looks like – what are the best in class doing
* Inspectors appear to be judging providers on how well they are planning for the 20% off the job requirement.
* Does the 20% apply to historic learners – how will they be treated and there was a need for greater clarity as to what constitutes learning
* Developing resilience amongst learners to cope with EPA – OfSTED
* How do you embed current thinking and work into your SAR and delivery programmes
* Providers must have an opportunity to explain to OfSTED in the planning meeting the delivery models for each standard. Need sectoral groupings to brief OfSTED

**Chris Jones – OfSTED – HMI Specialist Adviser on Apprenticeships**

Chris initiated his presentation by stressing that for the Apprentice things will not change. They need to be on the Apprenticeship standard which is right for them, that they are progressing and that they are demonstrating the behaviours and competences required.

OfSTED will focus on the end to end learner journey as they do now and will wish to see:

* Apprentices are on the right level of standard
* Providers can demonstrate the active involvement of employers in the delivery of learning and the assessment of progress
* Make progress through the journey as we inspect now

Chris also made the following observations:

* The very real differences between Standards and Frameworks
* The considerable variation in both standards and the associated assessment plans
* Pass or distinction is also a differentiation –and providers will need to demonstrate why Apprentices are on their particular pathway
* Standards are occupationally specific and this will inevitably impact on the volume of data and it will be some years before there is statistically reliable comparative data for all standards
* The specified behaviours within standards are very different. For example compare the appropriate behaviours for the care sector with those for engineering.
* End Point Assessment. Whilst the actual testing was outside the scope of inspection the Gateway is in the control of the provider and the employer. Providers need to have arrangements in place in respect of retention for those who ‘fail’ the test and require a second opportunity.
* Providers need to be very clear about the employer’s role in delivery – making clear the involvement and engagement of employers and how providers evidence this .
* OfSTED will not be auditing the 20% off the job time – not checking programmes are compliant but will be keen to ensure that Apps are progressing and the quality of the Apps
* English and maths – Level 2 – providers need to be able to demonstrate how they can progress – OfSTED will not look at pass rate for E&M
* At the core is the learner journey – skills and development plans need to demonstrate longer term planning - how does the learning plan fit into a career

Broader Issues

* Issue of driving demand in industries without growth is a real challenge for government
* All abilities – people have to be able to achieve –the volume of Level 4 Apps ready or in development is significantly higher than current volumes. In some occupations there are no level 2s but we have very large volumes of young people needing opportunities at those levels.
* The viability of delivering standards in occupations with very high rates of staff turnover e.g marketing and sales and health and social care

**Implications for inspection**

* Changes have been published for CIF
* Slide pack sets out comparisons and what providers need to be doing to address the changes

Issues Raised

* Booking EPA four months in advance with one EPA and one 3 months – risk register – how do you know.
* Clear provider / agreement that they are kept on if they fail for at least one resit

**Study Programmes**

**ALIN – ETF = Managing Work Experience – work placement – requirements going forward will be very different – maths and English within work experience**

* The project had involved over 20 providers and in turn over 4000 practitioners had been involved .
* **John Kendal from Hugh Baird College** described the considerable benefits they had gained from the project and how they had completely revised their delivery models and the roles and contributions which staff made. As a consequence student progress had improved considerably as had the employer experience and their willingness to offer additional placements.

**Chris Jones – OfSTED**

* Technical education plans – relevance
* Relevance and relationship to the development of vocational competence – do we sufficiently challenge learners – example L3 Bus Admin – require Level 2 English – looking at the work they are doing – notes, minutes letters to customers writing report – vocationally expecting more than Level 2 in English and maths
* Eg level 3 engineer better than L2 maths – relevance – challenging young person teasing out more around higher level skills
* Working to industry expectations BDWL - - L&M attendance and behaviours don’t correlate – expectations of high attendance in work experience
* Whilst OfSTED don’t endorse products – the technical flyer available at the network meeting – what E&M is required for that occupation and the application in the industry is an example of good practice

**GMLPN Agreement with GPRS Recruitment Agency**

Nikki Bardlsey from Kaplan and a member of the GMLPN Advisory Board introduced the item setting out that providers often had problems with recruitment agencies including a lack of understanding of work based learning, inappropriate and poor quality candidates etc. Having been involved in the rigorous selection process she endorsed GPRS as a good fit.

Sarah Ogden from GPRS described:

* Their specialist knowledge of WBL and the training sector.
* They had been in existence for 10 years and had a database of clients and 55,000 professionals from across the sector
* They have a high commitment to quality and all recruitment consultants professionally qualified.
* Guarantee 4/5 best candidates – no candidates no fees if leave within 3 months like for like free replacement , training providers

**Sarah also described practices which if adopted would improve recruitment their - Good Recruitment Campaign**

* Learner experience (candidates) applies to students and learners
* Candidates are becoming very discerning and there are real skills shortages so they have more choice
* Social media – candidates are sharing bad experiences with their circle and this will impact on reputation and brand
* GPRS had a top ten tips to recruitment (see slide)

**Innoved**

Innoved described the multiplicity of systems on the market and how they often failed to communicate with each other and thos was an ongoing issue for providers. Innoved is a fully integrated and easy to use system which operates in three primary areas of business need: MIS with direct ESFA interface, Virtual Learning Environment and e-Portfolio. GMLPN members can contact them as follows:

John Oates, 07808572986, johnoates@pro-streamlimited.co.uk

**Nic Hutchins – Greater Manchester Combined Authority**

Nic Hutchins described the pilot project offering subsidised travel for Apprentices living in Greater Manchester. Providers wishing to get involved should contact Nic on 07973 876926 / Nic.Hutchins@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

**Travel Offer**

* Free bike offer – refurbished bike etc
* Travel card offer provided one free month of travel for Apprentices s living in GM
* Travel for GM were also able to provide free personal travel plans using their on line system– system – time efficient and best price for travel planning
* To date quite disappointing 25 bikes and 15 travel card applications

**Public Sector Procurement of Apps**

* GM Combined Authority currently working on the procurement for the 10 Local Authorities . GM Police, Fire and Rescue and 13 NHS health trusts, CCGs in order to maximise the investment £25m of Levy – ambition to maximise use
* The 2.3% public sector target means 3000 Apps new starts per year across GM
* Public service reform and Apps need to be fit for purpose for the future
* Apprenticeships will be at the heart of public sector workforce planning and the Levy is driving this
* Looking at collective approaches – Memorandum of Understanding agreed and now publicly available on the GMCA website
* Health Trusts parallel process using a Dynamic Purchasing System
* Common elements of training looking to standardise T&Cs across organisations career pathways to increase mobility
* Greater Jobs – public recruitment portal

**Procurement**

* Public procurement regulations apply using a preferred supplier list – this will be in place by September and October
* **There will be a market testing event in advance and GMLPN will alert providers**

**Apprenticeship Allocations**

The Apprenticeship allocations for the period from May to December 2017 had been announced. Providers at the meeting were indicating allocations which will not meet their planned starts and would not allow for any growth. Some providers were indicating that they had received less than half what they felt thy required. This was an issue being taken up across the sector by AELP and there was considerable coverage in FE Week.

Providers had the opportunity to submit a business case and were encouraged to do so and GMLPN offered to support providers.

**Skills for Business Awards**

The Awards recognise and celebrate the direct impact learning has on businesses, individuals and communities in Greater Manchester. The ceremony will be held on 30 November at The Point, Lancashire Cricket Club. Now in their 4th year, the Awards are now well-established as the annual showcase skills & business event.

* Tell your employers about the awards ceremony and how they can get involved and have their achievements recognised;
* Nominate the businesses, learners, schools that you work with;
* Sponsor an Award Category – take a look at our [sponsorship brochure](http://www.gmchamber.co.uk/system/attachments/1649/original.pdf). This year we are promoting our sponsors and the Awards through the press, Chamber Brief and to over 30,000 Social Media followers.

The categories and nomination forms are now available at [www.skillsforbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.skillsforbusinessawards.co.uk) together with a guide to help organisations with their applications. The deadline for entries is **30 June 2017** and the shortlist will be announced in early September.