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TEC/CCTEs, Careers Services and Work-based Training for Young People

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Raising Standards Division
Quality and Performance Improvement Dissemination Unit
Level 3 North
Moorfoot
Sheffield
S1 4PQ

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**QUALITY and PERFORMANCE
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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The study was undertaken by ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd on behalf of QPID to investigate the relationship between TECs[1] and careers services (CS) with regard to the delivery of work-based training for young people. Work-based training includes National Traineeships (NTs) and Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) (now known as Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships respectively) as well as other training. It is intended that the findings should inform the development of the Learning and Skills Council and the Connexions Service, as well as careers services.

Background

1.2 New organisational arrangements have been announced for the provision of information and guidance and delivery of work-based training for young people. The Learning and Skills Council will be operational from April 2001. A new Connexions Service is also being developed. This study is timely in that it can inform these new arrangements and the provision for work-based training for young people from the outset.

1.3 This study is also opportune because of the wider context of increasing take-up of post-16 learning, and widening participation.

Aims and Objectives

1.4 The main aim of the study was to investigate patterns of joint working between TECs and CSs. There are many good practices amongst TECs and CSs that need to be retained in the transition to new organisational arrangements. The strength of the relationship between TECs and CSs varies from area to area, and some TECs work with more than one CS (and vice versa): it is necessary to learn lessons from these situations.

1.5 The study investigated which aspects of work-based training for young people were associated with joint working between TECs and CSs. The knock-on effects of such joint working (for providers, employers and young people) were also of interest – the extent to which the benefits of joint activity accrued to these parties.

1.6 The study examined the perceptions of Government Offices (GOs), TECs, CSs, providers, employers, other key agencies and young people in relation to the following:

- current issues in work-based training for young people;

- characteristics of partnership arrangements between TECs and CSs, and with other agencies;

- patterns of joint working between the TEC and CS, and awareness of this amongst the wider network;

- benefits or 'added value' of this activity; and

- lessons learned.

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1. Throughout this report the term TEC or TECs is used to represent both Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) and/or Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTEs).

Approach to the Research

1.7   The study began in February 2000 and fieldwork was undertaken between March and May. Four GO regions were involved in the research, and the study commenced with structured discussions with staff in each GO area with an interest in work-based training for young people. These discussions provided useful background material and informed the development of topic guides for the remainder of the study. Representatives from TECs and CSs in 12 case study areas were also interviewed, leading into further discussions with representatives from selected providers and employers (3 of each per case study area) and young people (up to 9 in each area). Discussions were also undertaken with individuals from various key agencies (e.g. Employment Service (ES), Education Business Partnerships (EBPs), New Deal partnerships and Learning Partnerships (LPs)). Findings from each stage of the fieldwork are summarised in Annex 2.

1.8   GOs were contacted to determine which regions were interested in participating in the research. Subsequently case study TECs/CSs were selected. This process took account of the following:

- the need to include a case study TEC which works with (at least) two careers services;

- the nature and history of TEC/CS relationships, to ensure a range of relationships are covered whilst focusing on those which are positive; and

- a range of geographies/labour markets.

The case studies participating in this study are identified in Annex 1.

Structure of the Report

1.9   This report comprises the following sections:

- Section 2 presents conclusions from the study and identifies the main lessons for TECs and CSs;

- Section 3 raises a number of policy issues that emerge from the study;

- Section 4 identifies the key issues in relation to work-based training and examines arrangements for, and patterns of, joint working between TECs and CSs;

- Section 5 discusses joint working around the development of work-based training, including planning, information and marketing activities; and

- Section 6 examines co-operation around support for young people on work-based training.

2. CONCLUSIONS AND EMERGING ISSUES

Variations in patterns of joint working

2.1   The study findings suggest that TECs and CSs work together in a variety of ways to develop and implement work-based training for young people. The content of this joint work varies considerably, however, both between and within regions and ranges from little co-operation through to apparently sound working partnerships. The nature of these relationships seemingly impacts on the effectiveness of any joint activity and, in turn, has implications for the development and delivery of work-based training. In areas where partnership working is successful a number of benefits can be highlighted, and include a greater potential to solve problems, the sharing of resources and knowledge, and the opportunity to avoid duplication of activity.

Factors Supporting Partnerships

2.2   The partnership between TECs and CSs seems to be strongest where other partnerships (e.g. Learning Partnerships and New Start) tend to be strong, or where there is a history of partnership work. The best partnerships take a broad view of the partnership 'environment' and are networked into numerous other bodies and partnerships. In many areas LPs have been found to play an important role in providing a wider partnership framework within which TECs and CSs co-operate. This allows staff at all levels to develop good working relationships with their counterparts in other organisations and facilitates the exchange of information and ideas. Furthermore, a broad view of partnership also allows other key organisations (for example providers, employers) to be included in discussions, and allows information to cascade down from the TEC and CS.

2.3   Partnership agreements are beneficial to TECs and CSs because they bind the two organisations together and set the ground rules for joint activity. However, the informal working that takes place around these formal agreements is also very significant; informal working is most likely to take place when there are good personal relationships between staff at the TEC and CS. In areas where partnerships are strained the contract dominates the relationship, with little work occurring outside the formal arrangements.

2.4   The extent to which senior staff at the TEC and CS support collaborative working is also an important influence on subsequent activity. The study findings suggest that joint activity proceeds more quickly when there are higher levels of inputs from senior officials; this ensures that discussions lead to action and avoids the potential problem of meetings serving merely as talking shops yielding few real results. However, the study also illustrates the need for strategic inputs to be balanced against an involvement of staff at the operational level; this ensures a different ('grass roots') perspective is obtained on work-based training and helps cascade information down through the organisations.

2.5   It also appears that partnerships are more successful when their focus is on collaboration rather than competition. Whilst TECs and CSs recognise that they have different perspectives and priorities, they are also aware that it is important for them to focus joint activity in order to meet the needs of young people and improve work-based training provision.

Factors Constraining Partnership

2.6   The fact that TECs and CSs have different priorities is one of the main constraints on partnership working. For instance, whilst TECs are to a large extent driven by a series of targets and have to meet standards set by GOs, the main aim of the CS is to provide impartial information and guidance to all young people. This creates a range of problems, and leads both TECs and providers to call for the CS to take a more strategic role in work-based training, even though they recognise that this may hinder the CSs' ability to provide impartial advice covering all post-16 options. Another conflict arises from the client focus and advocacy role of the CS against the TEC's focus on providing and 'selling' its provision. For example, whilst the CS may like the TEC to provide placements for all training requested by young people, the TEC has to consider the cost effectiveness of new provision.

2.7   The impartiality of the CS has also led some TECs to be critical of it for seemingly having an indifferent attitude to work-based learning, especially in areas of high academic achievement. This is a view reiterated by providers, who feel that the CS should help them gain better access to young people in schools. Again this issue stems from the need for the CS to remain impartial, but also suggests the need for better promotion and awareness-raising of work-based training by all organisations and not just the CS.

The Wider Impact of Partnership Working

2.8   The wider impacts of partnership working are often difficult to identify. Although TECs and CSs are able to identify a number of benefits attributable to joint activity, many of the providers, employers and young people involved in the fieldwork do not appear to identify any obvious link between these activities and their impact on the delivery of work-based training.

2.9   There are, however, cases where providers and employers have developed good links with the TEC and CS; this is usually when there is a wider history of co-operation and communication between all parties. In these cases providers and employers have a good knowledge of the joint activity that takes place between the TEC and CS. Greater awareness regarding the activities of the TEC and CS has led to providers and employers being able to identify some of the benefits for this work. These include greater consistency in the information received from the TEC and CS, as well as a more efficient co-ordination of provision to match local labour market needs.

2.10   A number of providers and employers are also involved in networks and groups attended by the TEC and CS. Although these providers/employers may not be aware of any specific areas of joint working, many feel that networks are beneficial because they lead to a quicker response to cases, help them fill placements quicker and improve the quality of provision.

Key Features of Successful Working Relationships

2.11   There are a number of practices that support the efforts of TECs and CSs to collaborate. Most importantly, the findings of this study indicate that TECs and CSs and their successor bodies should:

- clearly identify their aims, objectives and responsibilities in relation to work-based training;

- hold discussions with their partner TEC/CS (and any other TEC/CS covering its patch, as appropriate) to determine parallel interests;

- be clear about their separate roles and responsibilities and, where their interests overlap, these should be set down in a formal partnership agreement;

- discuss key issues and concerns in relation to work-based training, and realise opportunities to address these;

- meet to discuss new initiatives, policy directions and the implications of these for work-based training;

- provide joint responses to such developments, for example to the GO;

- be clear about what the potential for joint working is at all stages of work-based training and in respect of all partners:

    - Planning;
    - Marketing;
    - Delivery;
    - Monitoring and evaluation;

- specify the objectives and added value of any such activity;

- have established internal processes for formal communication involving staff at all levels;

- enable their staff to meet informally on a regular basis, or have other means to liase on an informal basis;

- establish networks of providers and employers as a means of dissemination; and

- involve other partners in discussions and business planning around work-based training (e.g. EBP, ES, New Deal partners, LPs).

3.   POLICY ISSUES

3.1   A number of issues emerge from this study which potentially have policy implications. These are set out in the following paragraphs.

Provision for the Facilitation and Mediation of Partnerships

3.2   Within the current arrangements, GOs play an important role in supporting partnerships between TECs and CSs. This includes support through regional events where the common interests of these organisations in particular issues is evident, and a mediation role between TECs and CSs in response to specific problems. With the advent of local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions, there will be a continuing need for such a role, however it is unclear as to how such a function might be provided.

The 'Network' of Partnerships and the place of the Learning and Skills Council and Connexions within this

3.3   This study highlights the fact that although TECs and CSs do work jointly in certain areas, they also interconnect with other partnerships (LPs, EBPs) and networks.

3.4   The over-riding need is to optimise the overall strength of partnerships and the added value associated with this. Therefore, whilst it is clear that local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions will have overlapping areas of interest in relation to work-based training, wider consideration needs to be given to the interests of other partners. A piecemeal approach which considers the inter-linkages between selected parties only is unlikely to be in the best interests of the overall partnership, and the potential to support wider policy context in relation to widening participation, lifelong learning and competitiveness may not be fulfilled.

3.5   There is a need to identify all the organisations involved in 'learning', and to map out current relationships, networks and partnerships. This should include, for example, NTOs and schools as well as LPs and so forth. This 'map' needs to be reviewed in relation to future organisational arrangements to determine the priorities for co-operative working. The concern is that the drive towards 'joined up government' is/will cause organisations to forge links on account of it 'being a good thing', as opposed to developing links within a framework which identifies the rationale and 'added value' of such action.

3.6   So, in the example of local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions, certainly their areas of mutual interest need to be considered, whilst the linkages with, say, LPs also need to be thought through.

Establishing Links Between local Learning and Skills Councils/ Connexions, their Delivery Mechanisms and Clients

3.7   In addition to identifying the pattern of linkages between all partner organisations, the fostering of links between the local Learning and Skills Councils/Connexions on the one hand and their 'customers' on the other also requires consideration. This study has

found that providers are serving as gatekeepers, filtering information between the TEC/ CS and young people; there is potential to exploit this position. Whilst it is recognised that Learning Partnerships have a key role in co-ordinating local planning and delivery, it may be that the role of providers could be extended to support the development of linkages between individuals, their training and any work experience and subsequent employment. Indeed, this may provide an effective means by which employers might be more actively engaged in the development and delivery of work-based training programmes.

3.8   In relation to the new local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions partnerships, there is possibly a tension between the need for them to be sufficiently large to be strategic, yet small enough to be representative (of the local situation). Where these new structures draw together more than one TEC/CS area, clearly there will be a new pattern of relationships, which will take time to bed down.

Development of Strategic Frameworks for Joint Working

3.9   Although TECs and CSs have been successful in establishing joint working in relation to work-based training for young people, this study indicates that the approach has been 'patchy'. Whilst TECs and CSs are generally aware of the benefits (or potential benefits) of joint working, overall it seems that insufficient consideration has been given to the full range of possibilities. Initiatives for collaborative working have been developed on an individual basis, rather than being fully embedded within the practices and cultures of the organisations involved. Consequently the potential to extend joint working across a wider range of actions has not been realised, and accordingly the full potential for collaboration and added value is not being realised.

3.10   There is a need for a more strategic approach. Rather than building up collaborative activity on an incremental, piecemeal, basis - which has hitherto been the case, joint working needs to be planned carefully. There is a need for each partner (this could be other partners in addition to the local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions) to clearly identify what they need to achieve in relation to their strategic objectives. Opportunities for individual partners to support/add value to the activities of others should also be identified. Strategic objectives could then be set in relation to partnerships and joint working, thus providing a platform to drive and give rationale for such activity.

3.11   The possibilities for joint working emerging from the exercise would in all probability support the actions already being taken by TECs and CSs. However it is also likely that gaps will emerge, both in terms of organisational arrangements and in delivery processes.

Determination of Roles and Responsibilities

3.12   This study clearly demonstrates that TECs and CSs benefit from each other's activities and expertise. In order to realise the full potential of this, and as part of the work (outlined above) to develop a strategic framework for co-operation, there is a need to determine the roles and responsibilities of each partner involved in the process. Within this it is necessary to define 'lead' responsibilities, and also to ensure that sufficient attention is given to practical arrangements to realise the full potential of added value.

3.13   Examples include:

- **Planning of provision** – provision is demand led. Currently, the CS amasses information on the preferred options of young people coming to the end of compulsory education. This is of great potential value to the TEC in terms of the planning of provision. This value is not fully realised under current arrangements, however, due to (a) the fact that the CS cannot 'guarantee' the options will be followed through, and (b) the timing of such information becoming available does not fit into the TEC planning cycle.

- **Information** – the need for a single 'one stop shop' for information and advice, rather than the possibility of both the TEC and CS providing (possibly conflicting) advice to an individual.

- **Assessment** – early leaving is an issue in many areas. Assessment, combined with monitoring and tracking, is key in tackling this problem. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on assessment to allow individual needs to be identified and addressed.

Strategic Objectives and Targets

3.14   A recurring issue throughout this study is the potential for 'culture clashes' between the TEC on the one hand and the CS on the other. This arises at least in part from the range of targets against which the two organisations are monitored.

3.15   The need for a strategic framework with overall objectives has already been noted. Previous experience of partnerships, and indeed of joint working between TECs and CSs (for example in relation to their approaches to targeting disaffected young people), is that effective approaches are underpinned by shared values and common goals. The current operating framework for TECs and CSs does not provide a solid foundation to progress partnership. There is a need for common targets against which both (and other involved partners) will be monitored.

Parity Between the Work-based and Academic Routes, and Conflicts of Interest

3.16   Finally, also recurring throughout this study has been concern about parity between the work-based and academic routes. 'Competition' is not confined to work-based versus academic routes though. This study also indicates a shift from work-based training to New Deal and, further, some TECs and CSs have concerns that greater take-up of MAs is at the expense of NTs. A strategic partnership that extends widely could ensure a focus on the needs of 16-18 year-olds in a more collective way than has hitherto been the case. As part of this, account needs to be taken of whether any of the partners have vested interests. For example, this study has shown that TECs may have an interest in work-based training – either because they have their own trading arm or through an involvement in the CS. The extent to which this might become an issue in relation to local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions should be considered.

3.17 In relation to the question of parity between post-16 options, it is also evident that further consideration needs to be given to the provision of information to young people to enable them to make informed choices. It is the current generation of young people who will contribute to the development and sustainability of the local labour market and economy and clearly it is important that they understand the workings of the labour market. It seems that schools have an important role to play here, yet relationships with schools seem weak.

Issues include:

- how to get employers and providers involved in schools, to provide information on work-based routes;

- the role of schools in the decision-making process (given that the 'loss' of a pupil to work-based training has financial implications); and

- how to introduce work-based routes as a possible option earlier on in school (so that it is a destination of choice rather than the option which is considered once the academic route has been discounted).

4. WORK-BASED TRAINING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOINT WORKING

Overview

4.1 GOs, as well as TECs and CSs, recognise that work-based training is playing an increasingly significant role within local and regional economies. In particular it can increase the size, diversity and range of capabilities, capacities and competencies of the local labour market. It is also recognised that a great deal of co-operation and communication occurs between TECs and CSs due to their shared interests in combating the social exclusion of young people. This section provides an overview of partnership work between TECs and CSs and highlights some of the views of providers, employers and key agencies. It focuses on the following:

- key issues regarding work-based training;

- an overview of the relationship between TECs and CSs and some of the factors that can influence partnership work;

- the perceived benefits and added value of partnership work;

- the organisational arrangements for joint work; and

- the key areas for joint work between the TEC and CS.

Key Issues in Relation to Work-based Training

4.2 GOs, TECs and CSs have a number of concerns; these range from the wider operating context through to factors relating specifically to work-based training, which often focus on issues of supply and demand. A widely held view is that there is potential to address these issues (at least to some extent) through greater or improved partnership work between TECs and CSs and, indeed, through the wider involvement of other partners. Seemingly too there is a general desire to develop partnership approaches in order to improve the delivery of work-based training and, furthermore, to have an approach that puts the needs of young people at the centre. It is however recognised that effective partnership arrangements require the different perspectives of each partner to be acknowledged and, further, that there needs to be sensitivity towards possible 'partnership fatigue' amongst the organisations involved.

4.3 The study findings suggest that generally GOs, TECs and CSs facilitate and encourage joint working arrangements; however it seems that there needs to be a clearer commitment to joint activity at all levels. This implies the involvement of all staff and a clear demarcation of responsibilities. The findings also reveal concerns that certain key individuals (typically those with a strategic role in the organisation) who have the ability to encourage and promote greater partnership working are sometimes reluctant to do this, often due to a lack of trust amongst organisations that traditionally have had few ties.

4.4   One set of issues has emerged around the operating arrangements for TECs and CSs. One instance where GOs have identified concerns is the case of the focusing of careers service activities. Over the last two years careers services have been asked by the DfEE to focus their efforts where they will make the greatest difference and in particular on those young people who have generally become disaffected with the education system or are disadvantaged by personal circumstances. For example, in many regions the introduction of New Start Partnerships is illustrative of the greater emphasis currently being placed on disaffection and social exclusion. This has led to a number of changes which GOs consider the CS has found difficult to absorb: the onset of Connexions combined with the Learning Gateway has created a sense of unease within the CS, particularly in regions with poorer socio-economic conditions where effective provision is vital. However, it has also been suggested that this shift in emphasis could encourage the CS to pursue a greater ownership of the work-based training process and to identify gaps in its provision so as to take it forward.

4.5   Also at an operating level is the issue of annual targets. Both TECs and CSs have a series of targets and the requirements on them to meet these give rise to a series of concerns. As an example, the recent introduction of Life Skills and its associated targets is a particular source of concern; neither TECs nor CSs consider that the targets reflect local or regional socio-economic conditions, and would like to see greater flexibility. This would apply in the case of rural areas for instance, which are likely to be characterised by seasonal shifts in employment, which in turn impacts upon the provision of training places. Following on from this, further concerns have been raised by TECs and CSs about Life Skills. There is a commonly held view that many young people on Life Skills will need more time to become ready to move into mainstream provision and, as a result, are likely to become New Deal clients as places in work-based training will not always be available.

4.6   There is also widespread concern over the level of demand for work-based training from young people and, associated with this, the lack of parity perceived between academic and vocational routes post-16. A key issue in many areas is the decline in take-up of work-based training; this situation reflects the increasing numbers of young people staying on in school. Certainly there is a widespread view that not only has government policy worked against work-based training, but that there is a need for attitudes towards work-based training to be challenged. For example in some schools vocational qualifications are viewed as being inferior to academic qualifications, and across the country pupils – particularly the more able ones - are being encouraged to stay on in full-time education. In addition initiatives such as the Education Action Zones and Education Maintenance Allowances are aimed at increasing the number of students in further education (FE). Whilst there have been attempts to increase awareness of work-based training (such as through the work of the EBP in promoting better links between education and employment), many young people still favour the academic route. There is a view that the introduction of new arrangements at Key Stage 3, which will place greater emphasis on vocational related work, might go some way to redressing this imbalance.

4.7   Many young people who do choose the work-based route do not complete their training. Early leaving is a problem that both TECs and CSs want to address; there are two reasons for this. TECs and CSs recognise that young people who do not complete their training lose out in the longer term; many leave without gaining qualifications and are not aware of the long-term benefits of completing their training. One factor contributing to early leaving is that employers offer young people a full-time job before they have completed their training; this suggests that employers may not be as committed to the training of the young person as they might be. It is recognised that tackling early leaving will also require improved assessment, monitoring and support from the TECs, CS and providers.

4.8   An example of the magnitude of the problem of early leaving is illustrated by the example of one area which has approximately 6,500 young people in training at any one time. In this case it is estimated that 3,000 of these will not complete their training. The main reasons for early leaving are identified as being the offer of a permanent position with an employer and lack of job readiness. A small number (around 100) of these early leavers will have attained NVQs but will not have fulfilled other aspects of their course, such as key skills.

4.9   In addition to issues about the overall level of demand for work-based training, there is also growing concern about the perceived mismatch between the types of training demanded by young people and the requirements of the local labour market. Both TECs and CSs feel that they should support training provision that realistically reflects the local labour market and job opportunities. There are tensions though because both TECs and CSs are sensitive to young people wanting training in an occupation that interests them, but where there may not necessarily be jobs at the end of it. As part of their quest to provide appropriate vocational training, both TECs and CSs consider that patterns of provision should reflect the needs of the local labour market rather than following national trends. To aid this they highlight a need for improved sign-posting of new or alternative forms of education and/or training in order to encourage greater take up of training that is more appropriate for the local economy.

4.10   Both TECs and CSs recognise that the commitment of employers is a critical success factor in the delivery of work-based training programmes. Employer commitment seems to be particularly lacking in areas with a small employer base and lack of small and medium sized enterprises. There also appears to have been a decrease in employer commitment following the introduction of New Deal; this is attributed to the fact that New Deal offers a subsidy to employers, whereas this is not perceived to be the case for young people on work-based training. TECs and CSs feel there is some scope to address this issue through improved marketing and heightened awareness of work-based training, but feedback from employers suggests there is further potential for relationships to be developed. Many of the employers consulted as part of this study lack awareness of and information about work-based training.

The Relationship between TECs and CSs

4.11   In many of the case study areas a number of factors appear to impact on the characteristics of the partnership between the TEC and CS. In some areas the TEC works with more than one CS, or vice versa, and in these cases relationships are rather more complicated. In some cases most of the TEC (or CS) area is covered by one CS (or TEC), with only a small part of its area being covered by a second CS (or TEC). The strengths of inter-relationships can vary, with better relationships being apparent between the two main partners. The fact that three-way relationships are sometimes associated with tensions has implications for the forthcoming local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions partnerships, particularly as the Connexions Partnership will be broken down into a number of Local Management Committees.

4.12   The annually negotiated Partnership Agreements between TECs and CSs clearly provide a basis for joint working. Partnership Agreements are welcomed because they set the ground rules for the interface between the two organisations. The value that is placed on such agreements is demonstrated in one case study area by the fact that both the TEC and CS are setting up similar arrangements with training providers. Although Partnership Agreements do set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the TEC and CS, they are not rigid; there is recognition on both sides that effective partnership means flexibility in roles and responsibilities as and when appropriate.

4.13   There are also areas of activity which, though outside the scope of the Partnership Agreements, are associated with collaboration. In particular some of the new arrangements (Learning Gateway and Life Skills) are not currently incorporated within these agreements, but since both TECs and CSs have a direct interest in them they are working together. This is reinforcing partnership arrangements in relation to work-based training at both strategic and operational levels.

4.14   Collaboration is also a result of TECs and CSs wishing to utilise each other's expertise and knowledge. The CS for example is recognised as being more in touch with young people and schools and is therefore well placed to act as an adviser to the TEC particularly in relation to the types of provision that is required.

4.15   The fact that many TECs are major stakeholders in CSs is very significant in determining the relationship between the two organisations. Clearly this establishes a legal relationship between the two organisations, and since the TEC will be represented on the Board of the CS this provides it with an opportunity to exert influence. In many cases this provides a strong framework for partnership both operationally and strategically, as well as facilitating communication. At the same time there is some suggestion that CSs in this situation feel they are the lesser partner.

4.16   Organisational and personal history is a further factor that influences relationships. Some of the case study areas have a history of joint working that pre-dates the current organisational arrangements. As a result longer-standing staff have strong personal relationships with staff from other organisations, this facilitates partnership work since, as one consultee put it, "you trust the individual, not the organisation". Where TEC staff have previously worked in the CS, or vice versa, they are also more able to forge close working relations since they understand the role and culture of both organisations and are able to network widely. Where organisations are relatively new it can be difficult to establish relations.

Why do TECs and CS Work Together?

4.17   Consultees have identified a number of benefits and added value from joint working:

- More efficient use of financial and staff resources: if TECs and CSs understand each other's priorities and collaborate, this avoids duplication of activity. In addition, if they can standardise the advice and information given to young people and others, this ensures consistent messages. Overall, collaboration allows TECs and CSs to provide more information about work-based training and promote it better.

- It ensures that the focus on young people is maintained: collaboration can both improve and speed up the referral/placement process by creating a 'one stop shop', it also ensures a rounded approach towards the delivery of work-based training. Partnership can be a means of overcoming red tape, which helps maintain the focus on young people. It also improves planning, feedback and evaluation and offers greater scope to tackle problems such as early leavers and assessment procedures.

- Pooling of knowledge and expertise: TECs and CSs have different perspectives and expertise, which is an aid to problem solving. It also facilitates the design and implementation of new initiatives and developments. Transparency can help reduce competition and tensions between TECs and CSs.

Organisational Arrangements

4.18   In the majority of the case study areas partnership activity appears to take place at all levels and is one of the most effective ways of encouraging effective partnership working. The frequency and degree of formality of such contact varies however. At a strategic level contact between the TEC and CS tends to involve formal meetings between senior staff and directors on a monthly or quarterly basis. It has been discovered that joint work tends to proceed more quickly when there are higher levels of inputs from senior officials.

> In one area the TEC and CS had developed the following organisational arrangements.
>
> **Chief Executives** : Meet quarterly at board meetings
> **Operations Managers** : Meet 3 times a year
> **Area Managers :** Meet on a monthly basis
>
> In addition to this the TEC and CS meet weekly to resolve issues such as the Guarantee.

4.19   At an operational level staff generally meet on a weekly or monthly basis. As well as regular meetings, some staff also maintain daily telephone or e-mail contact with other partners. In addition to the frequency of contact increasing at the operational level, so too does the informality of contact. Informal consultation and collaboration is likely to take place as and when staff feel it is necessary. In areas where the relationship between the TEC and CS is less successful there is considerably less informal contact, and joint work tends to remain within the guidelines set down in the Partnership Agreement.

4.20   A number of TECs and CSs also work together to ensure that staff receive information and training on issues that are of concern to both organisations. For example in one area a series of joint training events and seminars have been held, and in another there has been joint training on the Learning Gateway. As well as saving on resources, this approach to training ensures that staff at both the TEC and CS receive the same information. Many areas also encourage staff secondments; this facilitates the exchange of ideas and perspectives. In some cases this has not been very successful mainly because benefits are not always equal. TECs and CSs both report that information exchanges occur naturally when staff have worked for the other organisations in the past.

Areas of Joint Working

4.21   The main areas of joint working identified through the research are:

- sharing of Business Plans and other planning process;

- sharing of information to facilitate the planning of provision such as assessments of needs and LMI;

- dissemination of information regarding new developments and initiatives;

- provision of advice and information to various groups such as young people, employers and providers;

- marketing materials such as the development of newsletters and magazines, and organisation of workshops and conferences;

- collaboration on the Guarantee;

- initial assessment and endorsement; and

- tackling problems such as early leaving.

4.22 Not all TECs and CSs collaborate in all of these areas; indeed, there is a good deal of variation between individual TECs and CSs. Further, the content of joint working also varies somewhat; it may entail joint decision-making, planning and implementation, or may be limited to consultation once key decisions have been taken.

4.23 Overall the most extensive partnership activity is associated with those areas where there is also support from other partnerships and networks. LPs, for instance, play an important role in some areas in providing a wider partnership framework within which the TEC and CS can co-operate. Collaboration is also being facilitated in the majority of regions by the GOs through meetings, quarterly reviews and conferences.

5. PLANNING AND INFORMATION

5.1 Each of the TECs and CSs included in the study collaborate to some extent in planning the provision of work-based training; they share information to facilitate this process. They also seek to work together in many aspects of delivery. A key finding from this study, is that awareness of these efforts to co-operate has not spread to other partners and organisations. In particular, very few providers and employers are directly aware of 'their' TEC and CS undertaking joint work, although many assume that it does take place. Individually, however, both TECs and CSs have established quite strong links with providers and employers. Providers in particular seem to be quite clear about the different roles and responsibilities of the TEC and CS, and approach each organisation individually according to need. One such example is the provider which has contact with the CS mainly in the context of referrals, whereas its contact with the TEC tends to focus on monitoring and auditing.

5.2 TECs and CSs seek to disseminate information more widely to providers, employers and young people through a series of marketing activities. The form that these joint marketing activities takes varies from area to area, and includes leaflets and magazines, workshops, seminars and conferences, information packs and plays.

> In one area the TEC, CS and EBP have used a local theatre group to give presentations in schools in order to promote work-based learning and all other post-16 options. It is felt that this is a more appropriate method of raising interest in work-based learning than leaflets and newsletters, as it helps to improve the image of work-based training as something new and interesting.

5.3 Joint marketing arrangements focus on the activities and issues where TECs and CSs have a shared interest. The majority of examples identified in this study relate to the following:

- new initiatives and developments;

- engaging providers;

- engaging employers; and

- advice and guidance to young people.

The Work-based Training Programme

5.4 TECs and CSs co-operate in planning the overall programme of work-based training. Some of this effort is at a strategic level, where work-based training for young people is one of a series of activities being considered. However, far more significant, is the extent of collaboration between staff at an operational level, as evidenced by the frequency of contact between TEC and CS staff. Some areas have established Operational Working Groups that meet every 6-8 weeks. These include a range of staff from both the TEC and CS and involve discussion around a number of operational issues, including work-based training for young people. The agenda for these meetings is often discussed between the TEC and CS beforehand, but some feel there is a need for more "open meetings" to allow further potential for collaboration to be identified.

5.5   Many TECs and CSs highlight the role of different networks and groups in facilitating collaboration on planning and information issues; these encourage the involvement and input of more people and organisations. For example, one area has a joint working group that includes representatives from the TEC, CS, employers and providers. Although the group initially focused discussion around the New Deal, discussion has now been extended to include other training programmes such as work-based training. Similarly, in another area a consultative group has been set up; this includes all key agencies and discusses all aspects of education and training at both an operational and strategic level. These groups allow open discussion about all training and education issues and facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

> In one area a regional group has been established which meets monthly to discuss a wide range of issues associated with young people. A further group has been set up which involves representatives from the each of the TECs in the region. This group has, amongst other things, established regional guidelines in relation to quality control and has developed a joint regional plan in order to ease administration. In the regions networks are seen as providing a good forum for planning and information exchange as well as allowing the involvement of other organisations such as providers and key agencies.

5.6   Both TECs and CSs feel that there are important lessons for local Learning and Skills Councils and Connexions partnerships about the need for effective communication. There is a strong view that if sub regional and local factors are to be taken into account in the planning process, the dialogue between the relevant organisations will need to be as strong, or stronger than, the existing arrangements between TECs and CSs.

5.7   This study is also interested in levels of awareness amongst other partners and organisations about developments in work-based training, as well as their extent of involvement in the planning process. Networks seem to be a useful way of cascading information to providers and employers, since it is the providers/employers who are involved in networks with the TEC and CS who have greatest knowledge about partnership work. In one area, for example, providers are involved in a number of groups/networks that the TEC and CS also attend. Many are also involved in forums or working groups specifically to discuss work-based training; this can help improve the delivery of work-based training and also allows the TEC and CS to provide a consistent message to its providers. In some areas employers have already established their own networks to exchange information and to review and plan training provision.

> In one area the TEC and CS have been operating a project funded through the Single Regeneration Budget that focuses on the transition to special needs training and trying to co-ordinate an approach to ensure that necessary information is passed to training providers. The main focus of the project is to raise awareness about the types of special provision and the range of client needs.

Sharing of Data

5.8   Most TECs and CSs exchange data and information in order to facilitate the planning of provision. This ranges from informal arrangements that occur as a result of the personal contacts developed by certain members of staff, through to formal agreements that all information will be shared. Although the type of information exchanged varies, it is generally accepted that as the CS has links with schools and young people it is well placed to

provide information about training needs and destinations. TECs on the other hand, are better placed to provide information regarding employer needs and the requirements of the local labour market. In one case the TEC provides monthly lists of starts and finishes and the CS provides lists of jobs outside work-based training on a monthly basis.

5.9   Some CSs have registered concern that the information they provide to the TEC is not always taken on board. This leads CSs to feel that their partnership with the TEC is not equal. Some providers and key agencies express similar concerns, although this was not always the case. A number of providers are of the view that there is scope to match labour market requirements more closely with the aspirations of young people. However, others feel that joint planning and information exchange between the TEC and CS means more efficient co-ordination of provision which helps match the demands of industry with those of young people.

5.10 CSs also feel that issues about the exchange of information need addressing, particularly as ultimately TECs are the main decision-makers regarding provision, and have the ability to act on information and implement changes. If the exchange of planning and other information is not carried out efficiently, nor acknowledges the input of all partners, there is a danger that this will have a negative impact on work-based training provision. This has led respondents to suggest that the role of the CS could be strengthened, particularly in terms of providing feedback on provision. This could involve taking partnership working further to include collaboration and discussion on information rather than just making the information available. This would also give the CS a greater insight into the needs of the local labour market, something which employers in particular feel it currently lacks. It is also suggested that greater collaboration in the generation of data could allow information provided by TECs and CSs to be published in a more proactive, consistent and useful way.

5.11 Despite these current arrangements, many providers and employers suggest that work-based training would benefit from greater links and information exchange between the TEC/CS and providers/employers. An issue for many providers though is that information exchange and openness is not encouraged where there is perceived competition, for example if the local TEC has its own training arm. Providers often feel that information they may offer to the TEC (employer vacancies for instance) will be passed onto other providers. In some areas providers are also starting to approach employers individually in order to identify their training needs as the TEC is not passing this information on.

5.12 Providers in this study emphasis the need for TECs and CSs to help them access more information from schools regarding the aspirations of young people. This reflects the difficulties that many providers have in accessing schools and pupils pre-16.

New Initiatives

5.13 Nearly all TECs and CSs work together in developing new initiatives; this has been particularly evident in relation to the Learning Gateway and Life Skills. Discussions have also been undertaken at different levels. In areas where the TEC is a stakeholder in the CS the CS Board meeting usually provides an arena for planning arrangements to be formalised. Although many TECs sit on the CS Board, this arrangement in not reciprocal, so the CS does not have equal inputs into TEC processes. This study has highlighted that although CSs are on occasion concerned about the equality of their partnership with the TEC, the best partnerships are found in areas where the TEC has the co-ordinating role. This is in part due to the fact that TECs have the capacity to implement changes and have access to funding.

5.14   Discussions also take place outside of Board meetings. In one area, in addition to formal meetings 'planning days' are organised; these allow greater communication and the exchange of planning information. In another example the TEC and CS combine their work to produce a joint Learning Gateway plan; the majority of this planning is carried out at the strategic level by senior staff and directors on a quarterly or monthly basis. Joint work also takes place in the development of business plans, with many TECs and CS feeding information into each other's plans. In one case this included the TEC and CS submitting a joint Learning Gateway plan as an appendix to their business plans for 1999/00.

5.15   In addition to planning new initiatives jointly, TECs and CSs co-operate in relation to promotional activity. The Learning Gateway is a good example: many TECs and CSs have worked together not only to develop the framework for the Learning Gateway but also to inform providers and other organisations about the implications for them.

> The TEC and CS in one area held a seminar to inform providers about the new Learning Gateway programme. As well as an information session the seminar involved case study examples to illustrate how the Learning Gateway would operate.

5.16   Many providers view such events positively and suggest they are beneficial not only as a source of information but also as a way to meet other organisations and develop better working relationships. For example a training provider that is new to the area might see these events as an ideal opportunity to establish themselves in the area. However, it has been suggested that large marketing campaigns and conferences are no substitute for one to one contact, and it is still important for the TEC and CS to develop individual relationships.

5.17   The development of good working relationships with providers is also found to facilitate the exchange of information about developments in work-based training in general and new initiatives. For instance in one case study area providers have been regularly informed about changes in the demand for particular types of training, allowing them to tailor their provision to meet the needs of the young people. One example involved the TEC and CS holding briefings to involve providers; this has been found to be a useful approach and seems to provide a more consistent message than in other areas where there is less co-operative working and where meetings are held on an individual basis.

Engaging and Informing Providers

5.18   From the discussions with providers it is clear that marketing events and the provision of information are important means by which the TEC and CS can engage providers. This study has found that there are many ways in which TECs and CSs have marketed their activities to providers including annual and more regular presentations to inform them about new policy developments and good practice. For instance bi-monthly communication events are held by one TEC for its providers. This allows the TEC to keep providers up to date on recent initiatives or policy developments and gain feedback from the providers.

> In one area a Policy Group has been formed, comprising representatives from the Training Provider Network and the TEC. This group can influence the planning of work-based training, for example through discussions on funding and labour market information.

5.19   Some providers acknowledge the assistance offered by the TEC and CS as being useful. In one case it has been noted that joint activity has raised awareness of innovative new practices and ideas. Providers also suggest however that greater assistance could be offered to them in terms of their own marketing and publicity. As already mentioned, one of the main issues identified by providers in relation to work-based learning has been their inability to gain access to schools due to the fact that schools view them as competition. Providers feel that the CS in particular should use its links with schools to promote or at least inform young people about their services. For example in some regions although booklets are distributed to young people detailing the range of providers, the providers do not have any input into these publications.

5.20   Provider networks are also an important mechanism for engaging and informing providers. Such networks bring providers into direct contact with the TEC/CS and enable greater involvement in discussions about work-based training and other issues. This study found that providers welcome networks because they allow information to be shared; they also recognise that networks are a good forum by which to promote best practice, which ultimately benefits young people.

Engaging and Informing Employers

5.21   Some TECs and CS are working together to engage local employers and provide them with information about work-based training and other programmes. One aim of this joint work is to make employers more aware of work-based training; this is particularly important since many employers apparently favour New Deal over work-based training due to the additional financial benefits they gain under New Deal.

> The TEC, CS and ES have produced a marketing pack; this provides information on all their services and details subsidies on offer to employers if they became involved in vocational training. A "Train a Young Person Week" was also held which involved careers advisors, ES marketing teams and the TEC contract team going out to visit local companies to market their services.

5.22   TECs and CSs recognise that employer involvement is important to the success of the work-based training programme. They need to have employers on board, in particular to try and ensure that young people complete their training rather than leaving early to take up work (as previously described under early leaving). Thus TECs and CSs are seeking to make employers aware of their responsibilities when recruiting a young person, and are promoting work-based training as a long term commitment that should consider the future development of the young person. A number of case study areas have carried out promotional work in relation to time off for study, for example by working together to approach employers about work-based learning or by producing an employers information pack about time off for study.

5.23   However, it seems that despite such efforts, insufficient information reaches employers. Some employers involved in this study feel that although marketing events and material may be useful, they derive greater benefit from more direct contact and communication with the TEC and careers CS when necessary.

> One training provider has a very good working relationship with the TEC due to the quite high level of personal contact. This has facilitated discussions regarding the planning of provision, time off for study and monitoring/tracking young people, as well as ensuring that the advice is tailored to the needs of the employer.

5.24   Some employers do have direct contact with the TEC/CS; this tends to happen when good relationships have built up over time; many employers however still feel quite isolated. One suggestion coming out of this study is that outreach support would help address this problem. Outreach would be particularly useful for small businesses as many of these expressed an interest in increasing their involvement in training. The TEC and CS could beneficially seek the development of greater links with employers jointly; this would avoid duplication of activity, provide a collective front for employers and reduce the amount of information and bureaucracy that can deter employer involvement.

5.25   Many employers are isolated from TEC and CS activity, particularly as they often recruit directly from providers and therefore have no contact with the TEC or CS. Evidently providers act as a link between the TEC/CS and employers. For example in one area although employers do not sit regularly on the networks attended by the TEC or CS, one employer has been involved in the training provider network. This is perhaps something that TECs and CS could exploit in order to improve links and filter information down to employers.

Advice to Young People

5.26   The majority of the case study areas provide marketing information to young people. Again this takes a variety of different formats from written magazines and leaflets through to theatre productions.

> In one area a magazine setting out different post-16 options is distributed to all year 10 students annually. There are currently plans to make this available on the web from September 2001 in an attempt to engage the interest of young people and make it more widely available.

5.27   However, some providers feel that the CS should be able to offer more advice to young people. This supports the views of some TECs who feel that the CS could play a more strategic role when offering advice to young people by considering the needs of the local labour market. Although much of the work done by TECs and CS has been based around the distribution of booklets and leaflets, there have been attempts by the TEC/CS to address these criticisms and to be more proactive in their approach. For instance through the theatre productions previously mentioned or by involving the young people already participating in work-based training. One area actually takes information directly to the young people and reports that this approach appears to encourage greater interest in work-based training.

The TEC and EBP, with support from the CS, operate a project that works with students at risk of disaffection. Mentors work in schools and encourage young people to become more interested in education of work-based training. The project has been quite successful and highlights the fact that good working relationships can facilitate the development of "one off" projects that may benefit from the input of a number of organisations.

5.28 As previously noted, both TECs and CSs believe that the proposed changes to the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 will provide a useful springboard from which to increase their contact with pupils in schools at an early age. This will be an important part of the CSs (in particular) efforts to promote the benefits of work-based training alongside the academic route.

6. SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON WORK-BASED TRAINING

6.1   TECs and CSs also work together in order to support young people on work-based training. This includes work undertaken in connection with the Guarantee, endorsement, early leaving and monitoring. As with other areas of joint work, there is quite considerable variation between case study areas in the nature and extent of collaboration. The majority of TECs and CSs work together with regard to the Guarantee, whilst there are rather fewer examples of partnership work in relation to endorsement and initial assessment. The main aims of joint working have been to ensure that young people receive appropriate training that is of a good standard, and to aid the identification of any problems which may result in the young person not completing their training. From interviews with young people it appears that on the whole TECs and CSs have been quite successful in offering appropriate support.

The Guarantee

6.2   In most case study areas the Guarantee is a key focus of co-operation; both TECs and CSs feel it is an area where they have joint responsibility. They are also committed to ensuring that all young people find a suitable placement. Some TECs and CSs do have a perception that there is an administrative burden associated with monitoring the Guarantee. Others however offset this cost against the benefits they derive as a result of the conditions imposed by the Guarantee; in these cases the Guarantee is used as a strategic tool to encourage people to identify problems with the system particularly with regard to provision.

6.3   Fulfilling the Guarantee primarily involves monthly meetings between TEC and CS staff. In some cases formal meetings are supplemented through informal contact; reportedly this allows for greater flexibility which supports meeting the Guarantee. If, for example, there is the possibility of a placement not being found, the staff at both the TEC and CS can ensure that everyone is aware of the situation and both organisations will attempt to find suitable placements.

6.4   There are some concerns that pressures to fulfil the Guarantee could potentially lead to young people being placed in 'unsuitable' placements. In some areas if placements are not found, this is used as an opportunity to review the case and the TEC and CS will work together to identify any factors preventing the young person from finding training. For example, it may be that a young person has special education needs, in which case the Learning Gateway and then Life Skills will be utilised. Although at present the TEC feels that it is too early to say whether this is a more suitable route for young people with special needs, it is felt that this approach will provide the young person with the additional support and skills required to begin a training placement at a later date.

6.5   The study has found that good communication and working relationships between the TEC/CS and providers facilitates fulfilment of the Guarantee; in particular TECs/CSs benefit from provider's knowledge and contact with employers. The CS in one example was helping a new training provider in the area by carrying out interviews with new clients in order to ensure they find suitable placements for them and meet the Guarantee. This is something that the provider initiated in order to facilitate the development of a good working relationship with the CS. However, on the whole it has been found that the Guarantee is an issue with which other organisations are not involved and have little knowledge of.

Initial Assessment and Endorsement

6.6   There are concerns over the quality of initial assessment and endorsement processes. Some providers argue that CS initial assessments are not comprehensive enough and providers sometimes have to supplement (or even repeat) these with their own. There is also concern that CS endorsements are not always sufficiently accurate; if trainees cannot perform to expectations noted in the endorsement providers have problems with funding. This issue is further exacerbated by over subscription on some training programmes, reducing income and the potential for added value.

6.7   Although some TECs and CSs work together to agree processes for endorsement, it continues to be an area of concern. There is agreement that there is scope to further refine and develop the endorsement process and that a partnership approach is the most appropriate method of doing this. Whilst Partnership Agreements do cover endorsement, there is potential for further collaboration. For example, providers feel they should play a role in endorsement, however the role of the providers needs to be clearly determined.

> A joint working group has been established following growing concern from the CS about the endorsement process and providers struggling with the initial assessment. This has been found to be a very positive activity as it allows open discussion and potential problems and issues of concern.

Tackling Early Leaving

6.8   Although early leaving has been identified by most regions as being a concern, it is not always something which attracts a joint approach. In some case studies tackling early leaving is more an area of joint working between the TECs and providers; this reflects the responsibility placed on TECs to monitor providers. Although some TECs feel that Life Skills could help to address the problem of early leaving, there is concern that the programme could be expensive to operate. Many TECs and CSs consider that there will be a need for better assessments (both depth and quality) and an increase in the key skills content of the programme. It is also suggested that as a young person's experience during the first 12 weeks of training are crucial to their retention, that more resources should be directed towards these earlier stages to help young people adjust to new ways of working.

6.9   In some case study areas TECs have adjusted their funding arrangements so that providers receive funding for milestones and outcomes. It is hoped that this will provide an incentive to providers to ensure correct assessment, monitoring and increase the amount of work done with employers to provide appropriate placements.

6.10 It is also important that adequate support and contact is maintained with young people whilst they are in work-based training. Although this is primarily the responsibility of the provider, in some cases young people are given contact details of staff in the TEC and CS who they can contact if they encounter any difficulties. This appears to be a good way of ensuring that young people feel they have access to support systems.

6.11 Finally, although providers are generally found to be closest to TECs, some have service level agreements with the CS. This allows the provider to contact the CS if a young people drops out and facilitates tracking; this is an aid to tackling early leaving. However, in the majority of the case study areas monitoring is generally carried out between the TEC and providers. For example monthly meetings are sometimes held between the TEC and training provider networks to review the number of starts, outcomes etc.

THE CASE STUDY TECs AND CSs

The study was based on research undertaken in 11 TEC and 12 CS areas, as follows:

Region	TEC Area	Relevant CS(s)
North West	1) Bolton and Bury 2) Rochdale 3) Oldham 4) Manchester	• Lifetime Careers (for Bolton & Bury and Rochdale) • Oldham • Careers Partnership Manchester
North East	1) Northumberland 2) County Durham 3) Tees Valley	• Northumberland • County Durham (also covers the Darlington area of Tees Valley TEC) • Future Steps (Tees Valley)
West Midlands	1) Staffordshire 2) Birmingham	• Staffordshire • Central England • Birmingham
South East	1) Sussex 2) Kent	• East Sussex • West Sussex • Kent

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FIELDWORK

Findings from Discussions with TECs and CSs

- In a number of cases the TEC is a stakeholder within the CS; this both drives and provides a framework for partnership working.

- In many of these (and other) cases, there are **long histories of joint working** between individual officers, often pre-dating the current organisational arrangements. In such cases there is great onus upon communication, collaboration and interpersonal relations.

- **Partnership Agreements** also provide an important basis for joint working.

- Recognition that **communication** needs to take place **at all levels** between the different partners. Issues should be discussed and agreement reached at the appropriate (and lowest possible) level. Clear definition of roles and responsibilities supports this.

- The **flow of information** is critical to effective provision.

- **New drivers** for partnership in relation to work-based training have arisen through new arrangements – Learning Gateway, Life Skills and Connexions. Meanwhile, local LPs have extended the focus of joint working beyond work-based training.

- Concern that the increase in staying on rates in school has **enhanced disparity** between this and work-based routes. Associated with this, concern that the link with schools is the 'weak link' (for the CS there are funding issues). Awareness that new arrangements in Key Stage 3 should help redress the imbalance.

- The **breadth of provision** (and possibilities of TECs having vested interests) makes for a complex picture in some areas.

- **Meeting the Guarantee** – whilst this is the focus of much attention and collaboration, there is continuing concern over early leaving, and recognition of the role that proper assessment, monitoring and tracking can play in addressing this.

- **Employer commitment** to training, and (lack of) awareness of the work-based route.

Findings from Interviews with Providers

- In some areas **Partnership/Service Agreements** exists between TECs/CSs and providers. In the case of TECs these focus on funding evaluation and monitoring, whereas with CSs these are about tracking (in relation to non-attendance and early leaving). Flexibility within the overall scope of these is seen as important.

- **Areas of interest** - some providers perceive an 'over' emphasis on auditing detracted from their ability to focus on learning. But difficulties faced by TECs in reconciling national agendas against their local remit is acknowledged in a number of instances.

- Providers appear to have **stronger relationships with their TEC than CS**, despite recent improvements in liaison and information sharing.

- The **endorsements/assessments** undertaken by CS emerges as an issue; in some cases providers repeat assessments.

- The **benefits of joint working** between the TEC and CS is identified as being quicker responses to cases, placements being filled more quickly, better quality provision and improved staff training. Joint working should mean co-ordination between supply and demand, so that the right provision is available to each client.

- Where TECs have trading arms, there is concern that this creates **unfair competition**.

- Providers stand to gain from good **interpersonal relationships** with their TEC.

Findings from Employer Discussions

Employers involved in the research have varying degrees of involvement in work-based training, which ranged from placements of one or two people doing NVQs to multiple MA placements.

- Employers with low levels of involvement in work-based training reported little direct contact with either their TEC or CS, rather **providers brokered the relationship**. Recruitment too is often direct through the provider.

- Some employers have **long standing agreements/contracts** with the TEC; these tend to be in traditional (manufacturing) locations. They see TECs as administrators/managers of the programme and the CS as referral agency for young people.

- In other areas, the **role and distinctiveness** of the TEC and CS has become **blurred**.

- The **degree of contact** with the TEC and/or CS **varies**. In some cases there is greater contact with the TEC, although this is a reflection of bureaucracy. Other employers feel they have more contact with the CS, in relation to identifying and monitoring placements.

- Positive results of joint working are identified as being **promotional events** and **marketing materials**.

- Some employers use a **third party**, with a **sectoral** interest, such as the National Training Organisation (NTO) rather than the TEC for matters relating to training. NTOs can facilitate interaction and provide a platform from which to discuss training matters. There is an apparent demand for sectoral support. In other cases employers go to providers direct. In such instances there is a feeling of disenchantment with the TEC.

Findings from Discussions with Key Agencies

The Employment Service

The main findings are that:

- Different **roles are ascribed to different partners**.

    - The ES perceives its role to be linking young people with opportunities, a 'signposting' role.
    - The TEC is seen as fulfilling a managing agent role, which co-ordinates provision and is network focused.
    - The CS on the other hand is seen to be client focused; it co-ordinates and influences providers.

- The ES, TEC and CS can have a **three-way relationship**, both strategically and operationally. Issues of retention/early leaving and tracking can all be helped through collaboration.

- An emerging **support for locally based and owned partnerships** to 'get things done', embedded in some form of formal arrangement.

Local Learning Partnerships

- **LPs vary**: some are more formal than others. The TEC is a useful partner to 'bring on board' because it brings financial resources to the table.

- **Partnership Agreements** may exist between **LLPs, TECs, CS, ES and LA**, but there is concern that these may **stifle flexibility** to respond to local/ emerging needs.

- **Concern over provision**, including mismatches with the local labour market, availability of quality training, involvement of employers. In addition the recurring concern with the 'value' attached to work-based training as a viable option.

- The 'lower status' of the CS compared with the TEC is of concern in some areas. There is a view that it was the **TEC which enforced change**, but that it should take account of the interests of others.

- For the future, concern over the degree of **flexibilty that LSCs** will have, and how the new arrangements will impact on CS.

Education Business Partnerships (EBPs)

- **EBPs have clear roles and responsibilities** vis a vis both TECs and CSs, and relationships have improved year on year. The value of different perspectives on common problems is appreciated.

- One criticism levelled at the CS is that it lacks in operational activity, rather it focuses on strategic thinking.

- EBPs have made **varying inputs in relation to work-based training**. They can encourage providers to work in schools, or be involved through work tasters and teacher placements. They are involved in strategy groups for work in schools.

- There is concern over who would **plan work-based training** at a local level from April 2001.

- The low **value attached to work-based training** as an option is a concern.

Findings from Interviews with Young People

- The **availability (or lack) of courses** has on occasion dictated the 'choices' made by young people; this includes movement between NTs and MAs. There are indications of lack of awareness of the requirements of MAs.

- Despite this, young people are **satisfied with their training**, supported by the trust which built up between them, their provider/tutor and career service.

- Indications are that **referral and progression processes** are in place, including the incentive offered within the Learning Gateway to progress into mainstream. The CS has provided information to young people and then referred them to provision.

- Some young people have only come to the work-based route having started (and dropped out of) the academic route. They find the work-based route suited them more.

- There are signs that young people wish to **continue with learning** following their courses.

- The **combination of vocation and training**, which also helps establish young people in a career is a positive feature of work-based training.

RSD PUBLICATIONS

QPID Study Report Series

Study No.	Title	Published	Prolog Product Code
69	Funding Sources for Projects for Disaffected Young People	February 1998	QPID69
70	Work Based Assessment : National Vocational Qualifications and Youth Programmes	December 1998	QPID70
71	Modern Apprenticeships and Gender Stereotyping	March 1999	QPID71
72	Leaving TFW - Trainees who do not Achieve a Payable Positive Outcome	March 1999	QPID72
73	Training for Jobs - Job Outcomes from TFW	March 1999	QPID73
74	Modern Apprenticeships in Licensed Premises	April 1999	QPID74
76	Tackling Early Leaving from Youth Programmes	September 1999	QPID76
77	Entry to Work Based Training for Adults	September 1999	QPID77
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