



## College and Training Organisation Survey 2013

### A summary of the results and feedback

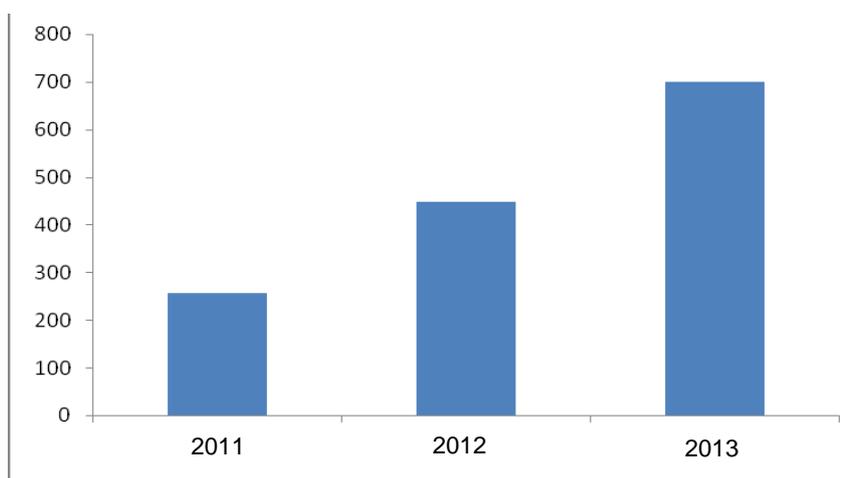
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| <b>Date</b>     | January 2014  |
| <b>Audience</b> | Colleges, training organisations, employers, stakeholders and the FE sector |

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We ran our annual college and training organisation survey from Monday, 1 July until Friday, 19 July (inclusive).

This year we received **700 responses** to the survey, which compares favourably with 448 for 2012 and 256 for 2011. That represents a year-on-year increase of 75 per cent (between 2011 and 2012), 56 per cent (between 2012 and 2013) and a rise of 273 per cent for the period between 2011 and 2013.

**Total number of respondents for each survey.**



Nearly **82 per cent** of respondents said they currently held a contract with the Agency and of all respondents, **40 per cent** identified themselves as a private training organisation (not GTA/ATA), **27 per cent** as a GFE college and nearly **nine per cent** as being a local authority. The remainder was made up of a number of provider types.

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A partner organisation of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

## A summary of the results

The last 12 months have seen considerable change for colleges and training organisations. During that time we have worked with the FE sector to reduce the bureaucratic burden placed on providers by simplifying the funding system. This involved an overhaul of the Funding Rules, incorporating a series of updates based on sector feedback.

We have also been developing a new streamlined funding system that sets out the new single demand-led funding system for adult skills. More recently we have seen the introduction of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans and the Government's Traineeships programme. All of these serve as a backdrop to the 12-month period covered by the 2013 survey.

This year's overall results, in terms of our approval ratings,<sup>\*</sup> can be characterised as '**work in progress**' and '**consolidation**'. In 11 out of 15 survey categories our approval rating has changed by fewer than three percentage points from last year's results.

In terms of our central role, being effective as funding and promoting body, our overall approval rating remains high at **80.8 per cent**. Our progress in reducing the bureaucratic burden on the sector saw **an increase of 1.9 per cent** from last year's survey, taking our approval rating this year to **52.1 per cent**. We also recorded a **small increase of 0.7 per cent** from last year to **70.4 per cent** in our approval rating for the Funding Rules and evidence requirements (helping to reduce bureaucracy).

The approval rating for our procurement process to secure the right provision for the sector **increased by 8.6 per cent to 70.2 per cent** whilst the information and data we provide colleges and training organisations, enabling them to make business decisions, **increased by 7.7 per cent to 66.2 per cent** over the same period. Also, 'Update' our business-critical weekly communication to the sector saw its approval rating **increase by 3.5 per cent** from last year to reach an approval rating of **93.3 per cent**.

We introduced two **new survey categories** this year to reflect the importance and increased focus on Apprenticeships and providing information, advice and guidance to those seeking progression into employment through the National Careers Service. Your feedback will enable us to benchmark performance in these two areas through future surveys.

We acknowledge we have work to do in terms of improving the process for the earlier indication of funding allocations in a timely and effective way. We saw a fall of **15.6 per cent** in our approval rating from last year to **63.6 per cent** and we're taking steps to address this.

On the following page we show the results of the survey. We also publish **seven key areas** where we are taking action to address areas for improving how we operate with the sector and the service we deliver. We'll work closely with the sector to achieve this and demonstrate our commitment to delivering a robust skills system that meets the needs of colleges, training organisations, employers and learners alike.

<sup>\*</sup> **Note:** the term 'approval rating' refers to the combined percentage scores of colleges and training organisations who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with each survey statement.

## Results from the 2013 survey

The percentage scores for each survey category are shown below. The term 'agree' denotes the combined percentage totals of respondents who either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with each statement.

| Survey Statement   | 'Agree' (%) |
|--|-------------|
| The Agency is effective in its role as a funding and promoting body for the sector   | 80.8        |
| The Agency has made good progress in reducing the bureaucratic burden on the sector  | 52.1        |
| The Funding Rules and evidence requirements publication will help to remove bureaucracy and provide greater simplification of the funding system for colleges and training organisations | 70.4        |
| The single budget for the funding of adult training enables colleges and training organisations to respond more effectively to labour market needs                                       | 78.8        |
| The process for the earlier indication of funding allocations has been effective and timely, allowing colleges and training organisations sufficient time to plan                        | 63.6        |
| The freedoms and flexibilities which have been introduced have enabled colleges and training organisations to manage the available funding more effectively                              | 69.5        |
| The Agency's approach to Provider Performance Management and the redistribution of funding have been fairly and efficiently operated   | 68.1        |
| The Agency has provided the information and data required by colleges and training organisations to enable them to make business decisions   | 66.2        |
| The roles and responsibilities of the Agency staff with whom colleges and training organisations interact, are transparent and clearly understood  | 74.1        |

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| Queries and requests for clarification are dealt with promptly and comprehensively  | 67.0 |
| Update, the Agency's weekly round-up of business-critical information and news for the sector is an effective way of communicating key information        | 93.3 |
| Communications from the Agency are written in plain English and free from unnecessary jargon  | 78.6 |
| The Agency's website contains the right kind of information and is easy to navigate   | 60.5 |
| The procurement process the Agency operates is successful in securing the right provision for the sector  | 70.2 |
| The National Apprenticeship Service has made good progress in promoting the delivery of high-quality Apprenticeships                                      | 60.9 |
| The National Careers Service is effective in providing information, advice and guidance to help learners make informed choices about their learning       | 41.4 |
| Taking everything into account, over the last 12 months the Agency has improved the way it operates and engages with colleges and training organisations. | 69.6 |

## **Our key actions we are taking forward based on feedback from the survey**

1. To further simplify the funding system and reduce the bureaucratic burden on the sector.
2. To review and improve our funding allocations process to ensure our notifications to providers are timelier and clearly communicated.
3. To further improve our provider performance management process to ensure the redistribution of funding is more efficiently managed.
4. To continue improving the quality of our communications so that they are effective, written in plain English and free from unnecessary jargon.
5. To drive up the quality and take-up of Apprenticeships from individuals and employers and improve communication and greater engagement.
6. To improve the effectiveness of the National Careers Service by improving the quality of careers information, advice and guidance working closely with partners to ensure a wider engagement with education institutions and employers.
7. To consolidate our role as an Agency in terms of funding and promoting.