

Further Education workforce reforms – impacts and issues in further education colleges

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Skills for Learning Professionals

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Introduction

Lifelong Learning UK

Lifelong Learning UK is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) responsible for the professional development of the lifelong learning workforce. This workforce trains much of the rest of the UK workforce, and covers a sector of more than one million employees across the UK. This sector comprises:

- community learning and development;
- higher education;
- further education;
- libraries, archives and information services;
- work-based learning; and
- careers guidance.

Overview

Lifelong Learning UK commissioned independent research agency InfoGroup / ORC International to assist in obtaining feedback from HR Managers and teaching practitioners in FE Colleges on the awareness, understanding and implementation of the further education workforce reforms, and to identify good practice and any barriers to implementation and compliance.

Desk based research was also completed by experts from the Policy Consortium into recent literature and research reports, including academic, policy and grey literature, on the implementation of FE workforce reforms to identify implementation issues and barriers for FE college managers and teaching practitioners.

The following report includes information gathered within a previous study that was commissioned by Lifelong Learning UK which included interviews with teaching practitioners and HR staff in FE colleges, Work Based Learning (WBL) and Adult and Community Learning (ACL) providers. Phase 1 of the survey was completed in November 2007 and comprised interviews with 36 teaching practitioners and 39 HR staff in FE colleges. Phase 2 (June 2008) included interviews with 31 teaching practitioners and 38 HR staff in FE colleges.

In 2010, the scope of the research was designed to meet the objectives and delivering outputs that are applicable to FE college managers, FE college employees and partners in the FE Colleges in England. Depth telephone interviews were completed with 30 HR professionals and 70 teaching practitioners.

Background to FE workforce reforms

The workforce reforms were introduced to address the concerns that Ofsted highlighted in a November 2003 report ¹ which evaluated the quality and standards of initial teacher training (ITT) in further education. The weaknesses highlighted related to management and quality assurance, quality of training, progress and standards achieved by trainees..

The main elements of the FE workforce reforms are:

- the introduction of new Initial Teacher Training (ITT) pathways and qualifications leading to the award of Qualified Teacher Learning & Skills (QTLS) including specialist Skills for Life routes and Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS);
- a requirement for all teaching practitioners, tutors, trainers and lecturers to fulfill at least 30 hours continuing professional development (CPD) each year, with reduced amounts for part timers;
- a requirement for all teaching practitioners, trainers, tutors and lecturers to be registered with the Institute for Learning (IfL) their professional body; and
- a new leadership qualification (Principals' Qualifying Programme, or PQP) for all new college principals.

The reform of initial teacher, tutor and trainer education in England (ITTTE) is being led by Lifelong Learning UK whose role is to:

- develop standards for initial teacher training in dialogue with TDA and the HE Academy, so that providers could prepare courses for September 2007;
- verify that awarding body and HEI qualifications meet the new standards;
- monitor and plan the volume of initial teacher training (ITT), on behalf of the range of employers in the sector, in dialogue with the LSC and HEFCE as the funding bodies;
- discuss with the funding bodies the action that should be taken in the light of Ofsted reports on the quality of provision;
- set a framework for the professional development of teacher trainers across the whole sector, including skills, qualifications and experience, by end of 2006; and
- set the criteria for Centres of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs), and awarding this status to appropriate bodies or partnerships.

¹ The initial training of further education teachers, Ofsted Nov 2003

Methodology

The research comprised three elements:

Stage 1: Project set up and literature review.

Stage 2: Qualitative interviews with HR Managers and teaching practitioners in FE Colleges.

Stage 3: Analysis and reporting.

Stage 1: Project set up and literature review

Project set up

A set up meeting was held at the outset during which agreement was reached on: the overall approach to be adopted, the criteria and requirements of the literature review and the requirements of the qualitative telephone survey. Reporting needs, sampling, the project timetable and project contact details were also agreed.

Literature review

Desk based research was completed into recent literature and research reports, including academic, policy and grey literature, on the implementation of FE workforce reforms, to identify implementation issues and barriers for FE college managers and teaching practitioners.

Assigned experts from with the Policy Consortium reviewed several reports that were provided by Lifelong Learning UK, alongside materials selected through the use of rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria and an agreed research focus.

A full written report has been provided on the literature reviewed on FE Workforce Reform implementation issues and barriers faced by ACL and WBL providers.

Stage 2: Qualitative telephone interviews with HR managers and teaching practitioners in FE Colleges

The workforce reforms impact on:

- principals and chief executives;
- human resource managers and those responsible for staff development;
- providers of Initial Teacher Training / Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs);
- teacher trainers and educators; and
- teaching practitioners, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors.

In depth interviews were conducted with HR professionals and teaching practitioners in FE Colleges to explore issues relating to the implementation of the FE workforce reforms. In total, 100 qualitative interviews were conducted with 70 teaching practitioners and 30 HR professionals.

Research into the implementation of the workforce reforms was also conducted with LSC funded work based and adult and community learning providers in England. Therefore, adult and community learning, and work based learning providers and teaching practitioners were not included in this phase of the research.

Questionnaire design

Distinct questionnaires were designed for teaching practitioners and HR professionals, both offered a qualitative approach, but took no longer than 25 minutes to complete to avoid respondent fatigue. The questionnaires contained a mix of open and closed questions. The questionnaires were approved by Lifelong Learning UK prior to finalisation.

Broad topics included:

- profile information;
- awareness;
- implementation barriers and issues; and
- current activities undertaken to comply with the workforce reforms.

Sample

Lifelong Learning UK provided a sample frame with contact details for 400 FE Colleges, which included 270 FE colleges (including Tertiary), 98 sixth form colleges, 30 special colleges and one higher education organisation,

Fieldwork

Interviews were conducted by experienced interviewers. Each member of the research team received a full briefing from the Project Manager on the purpose of the survey and how to conduct the interviews.

Fieldwork took place between 1st and 15th February 2010 during which time 30 interviews were completed with HR professionals and 70 with FE teaching practitioners.

Stage 3: Analysis and reporting

Checkpoint reports

Regular updates were sent to Lifelong Learning UK providing information on: project progress, forthcoming actions and highlighting any risks to achieving agreed outcomes within the specified timetable.

Analysis

Open comments were analysed by coding appropriate questions and reviewing comments in order to identify themes and patterns in content and any interrelationships.

Quotes have been provided in this report to offer examples, illuminate analysis and enrich, explain and / or clarify points. This project was conducted in compliance with ISO 20252.

Participant Profile

HR survey

The majority of participants were HR or Training Managers who held responsibility for staff development.

Job role	
HR Manager – with organisation-wide responsibility for training and development	12
HR Manager – <u>without</u> organisation-wide responsibility for training and development	7
Staff Training/Development Manager	6
Senior HR Officer – with responsibility for training and development	2
Other staff member with responsibility for HR issues	2
Senior HR Officer – <u>without</u> responsibility for training and development	1

Participants were responsible for the development of a diverse range of staff members.²

Responsible for	
HR staff / Training Managers / those responsible for staff development	30
Principal / Chief Executives / Head of Organisation	30
Curriculum leaders/managers	30
Subject teachers, tutors, lecturers and/or instructors	30
Managers (without teaching and learning duties)	29
Work-based learning trainers	26
Skills for Life specialist tutors/teachers	26
Assessors who teach	24
Verifiers	24
Voluntary staff	16
Other	2

Interviews were held with HR professionals based in each of the nine regions. The majority of participants fell within the South East or London regions.

Teaching practitioners survey

The majority of participants were teaching practitioners, tutors, trainers or instructors.

Job role	
Teacher/tutor/trainer/instructor	60
Teacher/tutor/trainer/instructor in a vocational/industrial area	7
Assessors who teach	2
Skills for Life specialist tutor/teacher	1

Teaching practitioners based within each of the nine regions were interviewed. The majority of participants fell within the West Midlands or South East regions.

² Participants were allowed to select more than one response, and therefore totals will not equal 30.

Qualifications

All teachers in the FE sector are expected to have achieved or be working towards teaching qualifications by no later than 2009/10. All new teachers who have joined the FE sector since September 2007 are expected to achieve, or be working towards the new teaching qualifications. Existing teachers have to complete a process of professional formation to achieve the required Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status. This is defined in the 2007 regulations as:

“the post-qualification process by which a teacher demonstrates through professional practice:

- 1. the ability to use effectively the skills and knowledge acquired whilst training to be a teacher; and*
- 2. the capacity to meet the occupational standards required of a teacher.”³*

All teachers that have had their first teaching position within the sector since 1st September 2007 are required to undertake and complete professional formation within five years of their first appointment.

Teachers who were employed in the sector before September 2007 do not have to gain further teaching qualifications. However, they must comply with CPD regulations, and are encouraged to gain licensed practitioner status (i.e. QTLS or ATLS), as a demonstration of the currency of their teaching practice.

The regulations recognise that those who come to work in further education and skills holding Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) meet the qualification requirements, but will benefit from early continuing professional development (CPD) to familiarise themselves with the lifelong learning sector.

Those coming to work in further education and skills with QTS have to complete Professional Formation and gain QTLS status within two years of taking up a teaching position (post-September 2007).

- The large majority of the teaching practitioners interviewed had started working in the FE sector before September 1st 2001.
- A small minority had started between 1st September 2001 and 31st August 2007.
- Few had started since 1st September 2007.

Of those who had started since September 1st 2007, almost all held one of the new teaching qualifications and just one was planning to work towards the qualification within the next three months.

Colleges were supporting teaching practitioners and trainers to have their existing qualifications recognised through: training, staff development, and encouraging teaching practitioners to go on training courses.

³ FE Teachers Qualifications Regulations

Licence to practise

- Over half of the teaching practitioners ⁴had been awarded their licence to practise.
- A very small minority said that they were exempt.
- One was unaware of the requirement and three were not sure whether they had received a licence.
- In the region of one quarter had not received the licence. Of these, the vast majority were not working to achieve their licence, two were and one was unsure.

⁴ Teacher practitioners interviewed for this project

Awareness

Key findings:

HR professionals

All HR professionals felt that they had at least a fair understanding of the workforce reforms; however a small minority of HR professionals said that the workforce reforms were not very clear and or coherent.

Most HR professionals saw the workforce reforms as at least quite effective and almost all understood the requirements.

Teaching practitioners

Awareness of the workforce reforms was much lower amongst teaching practitioners. Less than half of the teaching practitioners said that they had a fair understanding of the workforce reforms. Only a similar number felt that the workforce reforms were effective. In addition:

Just over half of the teaching practitioners understood the actions they needed to undertake to comply with the workforce reforms.

In 2008, the large majority of teaching practitioners said that they knew at least a good deal about the workforce reforms; however this fell to less than half in 2010. This is perhaps due to the fact that in 2008 there was much more publicity about the workforce reforms. As the awareness campaigns have diminished, so have levels of knowledge.

HR professionals were asked a series of five questions to help assess their awareness of the workforce reforms. Two of these questions were also posed to teaching practitioners.

Knowledge

Both HR professionals and teaching practitioners were asked how much they knew about the workforce reforms. All HR professionals felt that they had at least a fair understanding of the workforce reforms, however less than half of the teaching practitioners said that they had the same level of understanding.

The level of knowledge HR professionals had about the workforce reforms notably raised between 2008 and 2010.

The same cannot be said for teaching practitioners for whom levels of knowledge fell. In 2008, the large majority said that they knew at least a good deal about the workforce reforms, and this fell to less than half in 2010. However, in 2008 there was much more publicity directed towards the workforce reforms, and this will have led to a more acute awareness amongst teaching practitioners. Without the campaigns, teaching practitioners are focusing on other demands. This demonstrates the effectiveness of these campaigns, and suggests that without such publicity awareness falls.

Clarity and coherence

A few HR professionals said that the workforce reforms were not very clear, and lacked coherence.

Effectiveness

Operating at a strategic level, HR professionals were more able to see the value of the workforce reforms, and when interviewed said that in their opinion the workforce reforms were effective.

Again, this view was not shared by teaching practitioners, and in the region of one quarter said that the workforce reforms were not effective.

Understanding the requirements

Almost all of the HR professionals felt that they understood what was required of them under the workforce reforms. Just a single participant said that they did not understand the requirements of the workforce reforms.

However, this level of understanding was not found amongst teaching practitioners. One third did not understand the actions they needed to undertake to comply with the workforce reforms.

Teaching practitioners who said that they understood the actions they needed to undertake to comply with the workforce reforms were asked to say what these tasks were. Half spontaneously mentioned completing and recording at least 30 hours of CPD, however few mentioned submitting records of CPD activity to the Institute for Learning (IfL). Other noted tasks included keeping up to date with what was happening in the FE sector and keeping evidence of training and gathering portfolio evidence.

Whilst the vast majority was registered with IfL, only a very small minority mentioned registering or completing IfL documentation (either via paper or online).

Barriers and Issues

Key findings:

HR professionals

The main barrier to both understanding and implementing the workforce reforms for HR professionals related to clarity on qualifications.

Cost implications were seen by HR professionals to relate to training, the cost of allowing teaching practitioners to attend training and the cost of providing cover whilst they were away.

Teaching practitioners

The main barriers to compliance for teaching practitioners related to: time, a lack of clear information and recording activities.

Barriers to compliance (teaching practitioners)

Teaching practitioners were asked how much they knew about the workforce reforms. Respondents who said that they knew something of the workforce reforms were then asked what had been the biggest problem they had faced when *complying* with the reforms.

Just under a third of these teaching practitioners said that they had not experienced any problems. Of those who had, the most frequently mentioned issues related to: time, a lack of clear information and the logistics of recording activities.

The main issues are exemplified in the following quotes:

"It is just a matter of time, and with a full teaching week, reflecting on everything we have done - there is just not the time there to do that."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Understanding how you fit in if you are exempt...If you have been teaching for 20 years like I have, how that fits in and what we have to do."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Uploading everything onto the IfL website...It was the biggest problem that we had. It was not an easy website to navigate."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Just learning to use the software and getting it on the computer."

General FE College including Tertiary

Barriers to understanding (HR survey)

When asked to note the issues that they had experienced in *understanding* the workforce reforms, over one third of HR professionals said that they had not had any problems in terms of understanding.

Where an issue was provided, it was studied and allocated to a particular theme. A wide range of comments was given. The theme that received the most mentions was that there was a lack of clarity on which qualifications were valid, and how they matched the new qualifications:

"The main issue is how qualifications match across to the new qualifications."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Checking whether new staff have a valid teaching qualification to work in the sector. Telephone guidance has been vague and could be taken in several ways."

General FE College including Tertiary

A small minority of participants made comments that related to understanding the regulations, and the relationship between employers and IfL:

"IfL should be more clear in what they wish their members to achieve, and how we as a college can reinforce their rules."

General FE College including Tertiary

"I think it is understanding where teaching staff fit in what category in terms of getting a teaching qualification. Clarification of which regulation applies to whom. Also, trying to find out what regulation has been applied, has been difficult."

General FE College including Tertiary

"There is not a great deal of coherency about the relationship between the employers role and the Institute for Learning. I think at the moment that is the area that causes a black hole of data and responsibility."

General FE College including Tertiary

Barriers to implementation (HR survey)

A lack of clarity was again identified when HR professionals were asked what they perceived to be the main issues associated with introducing the new qualification requirements under the workforce reforms. The next most frequently noted issue related to part time and seasonal staff:

"For current teachers some uncertainties as to their qualification requirements."

General FE College including Tertiary

"It has been easy to implement for full time staff, more difficult with part time and casual staff who are paid on an hourly rate."

General FE College including Tertiary

Main barriers to support (HR survey)

HR professionals saw time as the main barrier to establishing a supporting infrastructure:

"The barriers are time, costs and funding available for teacher training."

Special college - Agriculture and horticulture

"The cost to organisations of funding teaching qualifications."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Staff have many competing demands on their time. Sometimes it is difficult for them to prioritise in relation to CPD and teaching qualifications."

General FE College including Tertiary

Cost implications (HR survey)

Cost implications were seen by HR professionals to relate to training, the cost of allowing teaching practitioners to attend training and the cost of providing cover whilst they were away.

"Remission hours. Having to pay for part time cover. Payment for mentors."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Fees for the qualification tuition. Fees for IfL membership. Increased resource needed for tracking and monitoring staff."

General FE College including Tertiary

"The main cost implication is...the hours staff spend doing the qualification when they could be teaching."

General FE College including Tertiary

Training activities

Key findings:

HR professionals

A small minority of the 30 HR professionals we spoke to worked in an organisation that had **not** taken steps to ensure that their Principal was aware of the PQP.

One third worked in an organisation that had **not** taken steps to ensure that their Principal was registered to undertake PQP.

Almost all HR professionals believed that teaching practitioners had engaged with the CPD requirements under the workforce reforms.

FE colleges identified the training needs of teaching staff through a formal appraisal process.

FE college managers were adopting a wide range of steps to encourage teaching practitioners to join the IfL. The most popular types of help were: to offer support and advice, and communicate with staff, monitor membership and inform teaching practitioners of their need to register. Many FE college managers were using quite stringent measures to ensure that teaching practitioners registered.

Training sessions and support and advice sessions were tools favoured by FE college managers to encourage existing teaching practitioners to become qualified, or have their existing qualifications recognised.

Usage of the REfLECT Database was widely reported.

Teaching practitioners

The majority of teaching practitioners surveyed were registered with the IfL; however a small minority had **not** registered.

FE teaching practitioners were aware of the requirement to complete 30 hours of CPD, and were recording their activities. Just two of those interviewed did not know of their obligation.

Human resource strategy

FE Colleges have demonstrated a commitment to implementing the workforce reforms, and, the vast majority of the HR professionals interviewed worked within an organisation with a human resource strategy. However these strategies were only mentioned by a small minority of HR professionals when they were asked how the training needs of teaching practitioners were identified. There is limited evidence, therefore, that these strategies are being utilised.

Identifying needs (HR survey)

When asked for more detail on the approach that they used to identify and meet the training needs of each member of their teaching staff, the large majority of HR professionals referred to the appraisal scheme and a smaller number mentioned training records.

“We have a teacher training policy. The induction process and the appraisal process all ensure that our teachers are appropriately qualified. Employment contracts also state that our teacher’s qualifications must meet the 2001 and 2007 regulations.”

General FE College including Tertiary

“Training needs analysis which is conducted as part of a competency based appraisal system.”

General FE College including Tertiary

“We have an HR strategy and a professional development strategy. We take information from staff appraisals and the self assessment system which plans the CPD needs of our staff.”

General FE College including Tertiary

Some organizations were employing a very comprehensive range of techniques:

“We have appraisals, lesson observation feedback, analysis from staff surveys on qualifications, monitoring and support for staff to achieve QTLS or ATLS. There are also ad-hoc requests for professional ‘updating’, and a CPD plan of organizational needs for financial purposes. We also have a fund for curriculum development activities and use analysis from a staff survey to identify teacher training for staff within the different categories of the workforce reforms.”

General FE College including Tertiary

“When we recruit staff we make it contractual that they meet their teacher training qualification and QTLS within a specified period of time. Staff complete a document stating what stage they are at in gaining their qualification. All of our teaching staff are members of the IfL. CPD planning is directly linked with strategic and individual objectives, and monitored through appraisals. We expect staff to achieve a minimum of 30 hours CPD. We also have a comprehensive staff development and training programme.”

General FE College including Tertiary

Membership of the Institute for Learning

HR and staff development professionals are expected to support teaching practitioners to become professionally registered with the Institute for Learning (IfL). The IfL is the professional body for teaching practitioners, trainers and assessors across the FE skills sector.

IfL represents the interests of more than 205,000 members including a diverse range of teaching practitioners. IfL is governed by its Council, and the majority of Council members are elected from the membership.

As a key partner in delivering workforce reform, IfL’s role is to manage the registration process and confer licensed practitioner status. FE professionals must register with the IfL before they can achieve qualified status.

- The majority of teaching practitioners surveyed were registered with the IfL, and a very small minority was not.

According to the Success for All agenda, HR professionals must also ensure that teaching practitioners maintain their membership of the IfL in accordance with membership conditions.

One HR professional said that their organisation was not employing any methods to encourage teaching practitioners to join the IfL, however, amongst the remaining FE college managers a wide range of steps was being used. According to HR professionals the most popular types of help were: to offer support and advice, and communicate with staff, monitor membership and inform teaching practitioners of their need to register.

“We publicised their requirements widely through employee bulletins and on notice boards around the college. We have helped people on a one to one basis when they needed help accessing the IfL website.”

General FE College including Tertiary

“We actively encourage them to join. We have run workshops to assist them in completing REFLECT on the IfL website. We also monitor that they have joined.”

General FE College including Tertiary

"We have offered support workshops and advice and contacted those who are not members to advise them."

General FE College including Tertiary

Some FE college managers were applying relatively stringent regulations, and placing greater responsibility on teaching practitioners:

"It is mandatory that they join. Any person applying for a job at the college has to have an IfL number otherwise we will advise them that they need to do that to take up the position."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Included in the contract of employment is a requirement to join the IfL within six months... [Existing] academic staff have been informed and chased for membership accordingly."

General FE College including Tertiary

One HR professional commented that: *"The continuing ambiguity of recent communications with government departments means we have not been able to give an absolute directive to existing staff relating to IfL, although they are being strongly encouraged to join IfL".⁵*

This mandatory requirement was also mentioned by half of the teaching practitioners we spoke with:

"They told us that we have to. We are chased up if we are not. It is a condition of employment and is mandatory."

Teaching Practitioner, General FE College including Tertiary

"We all have to do it; it is not a voluntary thing. We have had lots of training on how to use the IfL website...The HR department sends e-mails saying that we had to be registered by a particular time."

Teaching Practitioner, Special College - Agriculture and horticulture

Teaching practitioners also noted 'softer' approaches that included the support and training that they had received:

"It is not mandatory but it is encouraged by the college. They just offer support and extra training."

General FE College including Tertiary

"We had training sessions. We were given lots of information...We were also given handouts...We had detailed training."

General FE College including Tertiary

One teacher raised concern on the lack of clear direction:

"They have supported us but we need to choose the IfL or the GTC...Our conditions of service and contract mirrors the school sector, where we are technically part of the further education sector, we clearly don't come under IfL or GTC, so that's where the dilemma arises."

Sixth form College

⁵ Sixth form college

Becoming qualified (HR survey)

Staff members responsible for HR and staff development must have systems in place to check whether the qualifications of existing and newly hired teaching staff meet current regulations, and for those that do not, take the appropriate steps to assist. Just one HR professional said that they had not taken any steps to assist. Others were offering a range of assistance which tended to focus on support and advice sessions, and the appraisal process:

"Communication road shows with staff about QTLS and ATLS. Our Learning and Teaching Champions are going through the process and guiding other staff involved in this journey."

General FE College including Tertiary

"We have a teaching and learner mentor programme. We run the teacher training qualification here so staff can do them onsite."

General FE College including Tertiary

"We have workshops for QTLS. We have a dedicated member of staff to provide information and guidance."

General FE College including Tertiary

"As part of the appraisal. We have identified training needs and trained them as part of their CPD."

General FE College including Tertiary

Continuing professional development

Within the workforce reforms, teaching practitioners need to complete at least 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) each year. A wide range of formal and informal activities count as meaningful professional development. Teaching practitioners must consider that they have:

- Undertaken professional development activities.
- Reflected on the learning they have gained from these activities.
- Changed the way they teach and train due to the activities and reflection.
- Shown evidence of the impact changes have made to learners, colleagues or their organisation.

Examples of CPD activities include:

- Reading relevant journal articles or reviewing books.
- Training courses or formal development or study.
- Peer review, mentoring or shadowing.
- Online learning including engagement in discussion forums and blogs.
- Viewing and reviewing television programmes, documentaries and the internet.

Members of the IfL also commit to recording their CPD activities by 31st August every year. Almost all teaching practitioners and trainers in FE colleges were aware of the requirement to complete 30 hours of CPD, and were recording their activities. Just two did not know of their obligation.

Almost all HR professionals were of the opinion that teaching practitioners had engaged with the CPD requirements under the workforce reforms. Usage of the REfLECT tool was also widely reported with the majority of HR professionals saying that their teaching practitioners were using the database to record CPD activities. This is quite encouraging as REfLECT is just one of a number of resources available to practitioners.

HR and staff development professionals must have systems in place to support and provide CPD for all teaching staff. Steps were being taken by all HR professionals to encourage teaching practitioners to keep a record of their CPD activities. HR professionals mentioned using both the CPD folder and online system:

"The college already had a CPD recording system so staff were used to submitting an annual report of their CPD. Since the workforce reforms were introduced, the college has encouraged teaching staff to use REfLECT instead of the college system."

General FE College including Tertiary

"All academic staff are required to input their CPD on the HR self-service database. Reports are run regularly to check on CPD. All academic staff are required to bring a copy of their CPD for that academic year to their annual appraisal in June or July."

General FE College including Tertiary

Almost half of the teaching practitioners noted that their college helped them to maintain their records, and over one quarter mentioned training:

"They tell us to write down what we have done and put it on the website. I keep a paper list and then put it onto the website."

General FE College including Tertiary

"On the IfL website - REfLECT. A copy is kept centrally by the college, just in case we have forgotten any of the CPD that we had."

General FE College including Tertiary

"Last year we had lots of training and we had lots of time to do it. This year we will probably have to log it on as we go on. The process is clearer. It is done personally and we keep our own records and then log it on to the system."

General FE College including Tertiary

Principal's Qualifying Programme (HR survey)

The Principals Qualifying Programme (PQP) is an executive leadership development programme sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and it is one of the key outcomes of the 2007 Further Education and Training Bill.

- The large majority of HR respondents had taken steps to ensure that their Principal was aware of the PQP.
- Half had ensured that their Principal was registered to undertake the PQP.

Support

Key findings:

HR professionals

HR professionals were relying on the IfL and colleagues for external support. There was no consensus on what additional external support HR professionals would like to have.

Teaching practitioners

Over one third of the teaching practitioners we interviewed said that they were not receiving any external support to help them meet the requirements of the workforce reforms. Just under half of the teaching practitioners were not looking for any additional internal support, and two thirds did not want any additional external support.

Teaching practitioners receiving support were relying on their managers and HR professionals, staff development procedures and training for internal support. For external support they were relying on training courses.

External support

When looking for external support to implement the reforms, HR professionals were using a range of tools offered by the IfL including: the website and training events, seminars and conferences run by IfL. They were also speaking to other colleges via networks to find out what they were doing.

"The IfL website. Seminars and briefings regularly held by the IfL. Sharing best practice with other colleges."

General FE College including Tertiary

"I have attended two national conferences run by IfL...I belong to a network support group of Quality /HR managers."

General FE College including Tertiary

"I have used Lifelong Learning UK briefing meetings, the Lifelong Learning UK helpline. IfL training workshops."

General FE College including Tertiary

Teaching practitioners were less likely to use external training than HR professionals, and indeed over one third of teaching practitioners said that they did **not** access any external support. Of those who did, training courses were the most widely used external support tool. Teaching practitioners also mentioned their Local Authority, the LSC or exam board.

Internal support

Teaching practitioners were asked what internal support they used to meet the requirements. Similar numbers used: their HR department, staff development training, or other types of training.

Further support

There was no consensus on what additional external support HR professionals would like to have. The most frequently noted theme related to funding, and receiving free support. However this was only mentioned by a very small minority of HR professionals.

"More money, more time. There are always new initiatives coming through to improve the sector which require our resources which are limited."

General FE College including Tertiary

Considering the fact that less than half of teaching practitioners knew only a fair amount about the workforce reforms, it does come as somewhat of a surprise that there was a strong consensus amongst teaching practitioners that they did not require any additional support, either internally or externally. Just under half were not looking for any additional internal support, and two thirds did not want any additional external support.

Regarding internal support, a small number of teaching practitioners mentioned that they needed more time to prepare lessons, or to spend with students, or that that they needed more information on the workforce reforms and CPD requirements.

A small number of teaching practitioners were looking outside of the college for additional training.

Conclusions

The following section of the report highlights the main conclusions drawn from the research.

Patterns of awareness and understanding

HR professionals

Almost all HR professionals were aware of, and understood the workforce reforms. All of the HR respondents considered themselves to be quite knowledgeable on the subject, and on the requirements that the workforce reforms placed upon them. This level of understanding has helped HR professionals to perceive the effectiveness of the workforce reforms.

A noteworthy number of HR professionals said that the workforce reforms lacked clarity and cohesion, this confusion mainly related to how existing qualifications fit within the workforce reforms.

Teaching Practitioners

Whilst almost all HR professionals appeared to be completely engaged with the workforce reforms, the same could not be said for teaching practitioners who demonstrated lower levels of understanding of the workforce reforms, and of the requirements placed upon them by the workforce reforms.

Of particular note was the discovery that since 2008, the numbers of teaching practitioners who said that they did not know very much about the workforce reforms, knew nothing at all, or had never even heard of the workforce reforms have all increased. This is, in part, caused by the fact that in 2008 there were more campaigns aimed towards raising awareness of the workforce reforms than in 2010. As the number of campaigns has diminished, so have levels of awareness, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness and value of such campaigns.

It is perhaps true that teaching practitioners are not as well placed as HR professionals to see how the workforce reforms are helping to professionalise the FE workforce, their main function after all is to teach. Also many of the publicity drives are now complete that would have been drawing to the workforce reforms to the attention of teaching practitioners. These factors, combined with a lower level of understanding of the workforce reforms and their requirements, led to teaching practitioners being less likely to see the overall effectiveness of the workforce reforms.

These differences can be partly explained because the workforce reforms demand less of HR professionals than they do of teaching practitioners.

- The main roles for HR professionals are to disseminate information on the workforce reforms to teaching practitioners, and to help support teaching practitioners to comply with the requirements.
- The main roles for teaching practitioners are to register with IfL, undertake and record CPD activities, and (where appropriate) work towards a new qualification. These demands were viewed by some teaching practitioners as time consuming and outside of their normal activities.

Barriers

The main barriers for both HR professionals and teaching practitioners related to the cost and time taken to comply with the workforce reforms. These issues are shared by ACL and WBL providers, and are indeed frequently cited as barriers and reasons for non-engagement in new initiatives and reforms.⁶ Cost as a barrier is particularly relevant during this time of government funding cuts.

The cost of training does not stop at the cost of the training itself, but also includes the cost of cover.

HR professionals

As stated previously, a small number of HR professionals said that they did not find the workforce reforms to be very clear or coherent and much of the confusion focused on how existing qualifications fit within the new framework. There was uncertainty about the full teaching role and who needs what in terms of QTLS and ATLS status, especially in relation to part time staff, and who was responsible for the financial cost of compliance. Part time staff may work for more than one organisation, creating complications in terms of who should be providing, training, paying for and recording CPD.

Overall the guidance for HR professionals was not an issue, however, the finding that fewer teaching practitioners than HR professionals were aware of and engaged in the reforms, suggests that HR professionals were not always disseminating information, or mobilising others in their organisation to prioritise and share it. This can be explained by the fact that HR professionals rarely have direct influence over the tasks of teaching practitioners, as a line manager or member of the senior leadership team would. It may be the case that guidance does not filter through to teaching practitioners and is not prioritised for action by senior leadership teams working with teaching practitioners.

Teaching practitioners

It was not only HR professionals who were uncertain about how existing qualifications fit within the new requirements, teaching practitioners were also finding this to be a barrier to compliance.

In addition to not finding it easy to map existing qualifications to the new requirements, teaching practitioners were also likely to mention a general lack of clear information as a barrier to meeting the terms of the workforce reforms.

Time was also an issue for teaching practitioners. The time involved in *learning* about the workforce reforms and the time taken to *comply* with the workforce reforms (this includes recording CPD activities). Time is a perennial problem for teaching practitioners.

Support

HR professionals

Small minorities of HR professionals were networking with other colleagues and contacting the IfL for support.

There was no strong consensus on what additional external support was required, however a very small minority did mention help with funding or free support

⁶ LLUK–WBL–final report-March 2010, LLUK-ACL-final-report-March 2010

Teaching practitioners

A lack of understanding of the workforce reforms was demonstrated by teaching practitioners, and yet half was not interested in receiving any additional internal support, and two thirds did not want any more help from outside.

We may be able to partly understand this if we look at the barriers that were mentioned by teaching practitioners, and at the sources of help that some teaching practitioners did say they were turning to. Teaching practitioners noted time and clarity as two of the main barriers, and said that they were looking for internal support from management and HR staff. It may be that they were looking to their managers to help free the time that they will need to comply with the workforce reforms, and to HR staff to help clarify the requirements of the workforce reforms. Beyond this no additional support is required.

IfL, CPD and PQP

HR professionals understand the importance of the workforce reforms, and some were using very strict measures to ensure that teaching practitioners conform to requirements. Despite this a very small minority of teaching practitioners had not registered with the IfL, and a small minority were not working towards achieving their licence to practise.

A study reported by Fiddy (2008) on CPD found that most staff at all levels across all sectors were aware of the new CPD requirements. There was a reported greater awareness of the requirements and participation in CPD opportunities by staff in the FE College sector than in the ACL or WBL sectors (Hardman 2008).

Teaching practitioners in FE Colleges were found within this survey to be acutely aware of the requirement to complete 30 hours of CPD, and HR professionals felt that teaching practitioners were engaged with CPD. However some teaching practitioners mentioned their frustration when experiencing technical difficulties completing CPD online.

Teaching practitioners were using REfLECT to record their CPD activities; however a small minority found the process difficult.

It is worth noting that one third of the 30 HR professionals worked in establishments that had *not* taken steps to ensure that their principal was registered to undertake the programme, and a small minority worked in organisations that had *not* made sure that the principal was aware of the requirements.

Issues to be addressed

Recommended actions for Lifelong Learning UK

Action 1

Overall, awareness, understanding and commitment to the workforce reforms in FE Colleges were greater than other parts of the learning and skills sector and this is positive conclusion for FE Colleges. Whilst the understanding and activities of a notable minority of FE College teaching practitioners could be improved, the recommendation is for Lifelong Learning UK to prioritise resources towards where they are needed most – ACL and WBL, especially in the context of the recession and subsequent public service cuts.

Action 2

Lifelong Learning UK's 'Changes' campaign run in 2009 aimed to raise awareness and signpost relevant resources and sources of support. Lifelong Learning UK should build further on this campaign in 2010 by more pro-actively supporting HR professionals and teaching practitioners to undertake all parts of the workforce reforms. Lifelong Learning UK's focus should be on supporting organisational infrastructure and make workforce reforms integral to organisational planning.

Support could be delivered in a range of ways, and Lifelong Learning UK may be able to tap into the experiences of LSIS support programmes for effective designs, delivery methods and tools.

Initial research into the impact of the Changes campaign has shown that learning providers valued events as a means of learning about sector changes and developments. Learning providers also had a tendency to share information with their peer groups, and to access internal and external provider networks. Lifelong Learning UK should consider making learning providers aware of the available support through inter-departmental or peer-to-peer networks such as the Association of Colleges online network.

Whichever the mode of delivery of support, researchers would recommend the following:

1. Directly target line managers, senior leadership teams and heads of department in the approximately 410 FE Colleges in England – a 'top down' approach
2. Provide teaching practitioners and HR professionals with the tools, questions and materials that they can raise or share with senior leadership teams and other line managers – mobilising support for the reforms from 'below'.

The expected outcome of line manager and senior leadership team engagement should be clear; integrating workforce reform into strategic planning and practices for the whole organisation.

Action 3

There is no evidence arising from this survey that Lifelong Learning UK needs to revise the workforce reforms guidance for content and readability reasons. However, if organisations are receiving, but not consistently acting on these documents, the information will not filter down to teaching practitioners. FE Colleges could benefit from receiving encouragement and examples of how to adapt the guidance to their particular organisation. Lifelong Learning UK could provide examples (for example, case studies) of how other FE Colleges have

overcome barriers, successfully drawn on the general national guidance and created their own documents for staff.

This probably means organisations shortening the guidance to increase the readability and relevance and contextualising it to their organisation by, for example, listing only those qualifications relevant to that organisation. Materials from LLUK must continue to be user friendly and contain specific information and guidance.

Action 4

Lifelong Learning UK should send reasonably regular reminders or appropriate offers of support and information to HR professionals in FE Colleges whose principals may be eligible for but who have not registered for the PQP.

Learning providers tend to respond well to email communication; however messages need to be concise and easy to digest, and preferably sent from a recognised and respected source to ensure that they do not simply become one message amongst many.

Action 5

To improve the levels of understanding within the sector about the workforce reforms, Lifelong Learning UK may wish to offer more specific and detailed information on gaining recognition for existing qualifications, and how to map them across to the new qualifications. This is an issue that is also caused for confusion within ACL and WBL. However, a sector wide solution may not be applicable as FE colleges, ACL and WBL providers are looking for information that is directly relevant to their unique situations.

Recommended actions for FE Colleges

Action 1

FE Colleges have to balance the pressure to act as a business against the anticipations of policy makers in relation to professionalised workforce development. To meet these expectations, management should work to embed workforce reforms in strategic planning and practices at the organisational level. Staff inductions and regular formal appraisals would be suitable times to reinforce awareness of CPD requirements and sources of internal and external support. They should encourage registration with the IfL and may even want to set internal targets to ensure progress towards this goal. Teaching practitioners need their principal, senior colleagues and HR team to tell them why they should act, so that there is greater commitment to the value of qualifications and understanding of the requirements placed on them by the workforce reforms.

Action 2

FE Colleges may wish to raise the status of the workforce reforms through communications. The workforce reforms need to be perceived as urgent and important enough to have time dedicated to them. Time is a perennial problem for college staff and so asking them to prioritise the activities required under the workforce reforms is a serious challenge.

One way in which the FE college could help would be not only informing teaching practitioners of the impact that the workforce reforms will have on the FE sector as a whole, but also helping each individual to understand what they personally have to do to comply with the regulations. Taking the generic information and making it specific to the individual will increase levels of understanding and help teaching practitioners to meet the requirements of the workforce reforms.

Action 3

Where possible, FE Colleges should support in-service training through offering teaching practitioners remission. Managers will need to be encouraged to release teaching practitioners whose timetables are full.

Helping teaching practitioners to register with the IfL, and navigate the IfL website may also help ease the burden of time.

Recommended action for teaching practitioners

Teaching practitioners are typically very busy professionals and so find duties outside of their day-to-day role difficult to prioritise. Practitioners therefore need to make time available, especially for record keeping. They have a responsibility to raise their need for time to complete relevant activities with their line managers.

Recommended action for IfL

Usage of the REfLECT tool was high; however some participants noted difficulties in recording CPD information. IfL should consider holding workshops on how to enter CPD data onto REfLECT, inviting both HR professionals and teaching practitioners to attend. An interactive online tutorial would also be appropriate for those more skilled in using technology.