



College and Training Organisation survey 2013: responding to feedback from last year's survey

We want to update you on how we have responded to your feedback following last year's survey. This is an ongoing process and we will continue to work closely with the FE sector and our stakeholders to improve the way we work you.

In July we will issue our fourth annual survey which will give colleges and training organisations a further opportunity to feedback on our role, the way we operate and the way we communicate with the FE sector.

Funding simplification

In last year's survey you told us we had made some improvements to reduce the bureaucratic burden on the sector by simplifying the funding system but that we still had some way to go.

Since then we have worked to reduce the number of funding rates from 20,000 to 40. We have also run a series of webinars for more than 4,200 providers to explain the funding simplification process and introduced a streamlined performance management process in the 2013 to 2014 funding year.

Funding allocations

You told us we needed to do more to make sure our allocations are issued in a more timely way and better communicated. For our 2014 to 2015 funding statements we have worked with representatives of colleges and training organisations to test our allocations system and how we calculate these so we can make improvements. The statements have also been loaded to the Hub so each of you can see your own offer. We will continue to develop the capability through our digital strategy.

Redistribution of funding

In your feedback you suggested we should look at making sure our redistribution of funding is more effectively managed. For the 2013 to 2014 funding year we introduced a streamlined performance-management process including a new online growth form that allows you to request an increase to your contract more frequently than the previous quarterly process. This enables us to fund all high-quality Apprenticeship and Traineeship opportunities.

Our communications

You told us our old website was: 'information rich, navigation poor' and we recognised more needed to be done so that you can find the information you need quickly. Earlier this year we successfully completed the transition of our website content to GOV.UK. We have completely overhauled our content so that it is clearer, simpler and faster for anyone to access information. We are also corporate members of Plain English Campaign, committed to delivering our communications in a simple and easy-to-understand way. Our strategic documents, for example, the Funding Rules 2014 to 2015 and the Performance Management Rules 2013 to 2014 carry the internationally recognised Crystal Mark standard for clarity.

Apprenticeships

In 2012 to 2013 we worked closely with 8,543 employers which led to the creation of just under 100,000 Apprenticeships. We have also developed a provider search tool for employers on the Apprenticeships website, registering over 150,000 hits. Furthermore, over 150 large employers have agreed to deliver Traineeships as a result of our engagement with them.

National Careers Service

In your feedback you suggested we should do more to engage young people and raise their awareness of career opportunities and to improve the quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG) on offer. We organised a 'careers awareness' tour aimed at years 11 to 13 in over 900 schools in addition to a social media campaign through Facebook. We also introduced a contract variation requiring all FE colleges, work-based training providers and sixth-form colleges in receipt of adult skills budget to achieve or hold the nationally-recognised matrix IAG quality assurance standard.

Looking ahead

We will continue to convert government policy into practice, so learners can access the right level and kind of skills employers need.

We will continue to develop a funding system that:

- delivers more high-quality Apprenticeships and Traineeships opportunities and
- raises standards across vocational training (with a focus on English and maths)

We will also review qualifications to drive up the standards of vocational courses.

We will also continue to use the funding rules to buy the best quality provision and intervene, where necessary, when provision doesn't meet our requirements.