



College and Training Organisation survey 2014: 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 further education (FE) sector and our stakeholders to improve the way we work you.

On 29 June, we will issue our fifth annual survey, which will give you a further opportunity to feedback on our role, the way we operate and the way we communicate with the FE sector.

You said	We did
Funding simplification	
In last year's survey, you acknowledged we had made some improvements by simplifying the funding system in the Funding Rules. Many agreed it was still too early to say with certainty it had reduced the bureaucracy or simplified the funding system. Some said the Funding Methodology was too complex if you have dual	Since then we have continued to listen to feedback from the sector and most of this year's changes clarify previous rules. In particular, we have changed the structure of the document to reflect the learner / provider journey, simplified language, made sentences and paragraphs shorter, removed repetition and superfluous information.

<p>Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Education Funding Agency (EFA) contracts.</p> <p>A few of you miss the support and lack of direct contact with relationship managers.</p>	<p>Where appropriate, we have also moved some information to the Funding Rates and Formula document or the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) Provider Support Manual.</p>
<p>Funding allocations</p>	
<p>Most of you agreed that you received funding allocations too late to put robust business operating plans in place. A sizeable number said they received the indicative funding statements in a timely manner but these are subject to change and you could not always rely on the figures. A similar number acknowledged that the allocations process had improved but we needed more to do work.</p>	<p>We have improved the access to your funding statement by uploading them to the Hub. Since we launched the Hub we have continue working on improving the capability through our digital strategy.</p>
<p>National Careers Service</p>	
<p>The majority of you said you have no or very little contact with the National Careers Service. Many of you also said there was little of no proactive engagement from National Careers Service to engage them.</p> <p>A few commented it was difficult to navigate the National Careers Service website and that some students were unaware of its existence.</p>	<p>In response to customer and stakeholder feedback, we redesigned the homepage to make it simpler, cleaner and easier for customers to find what they are looking for. All the main functions are now one click away and we have addressed the needs of the most popular user groups.</p> <p>We also introduced a new young people's section to the website; additionally we updated the engineering and nursing images across the site to ensure representation of males in female-dominated industries</p>

and the reverse.

The **National Careers Service** engages with college and training organisations (providers) through a variety of communication channels. Our provider marketing leads receive a **Communications Update** newsletter informing them of current marketing, messaging and campaigns. In addition, **Business Update** and our **Update** newsletters advise employers and providers of operational information.

Our prime contractors and area-based contractors engage with providers supporting them with enquiries about the service, collateral and local careers events and jobs fair.

The National Careers Service can also engage with providers through various events across the country, such as **AoC**, **National Careers Guidance Show** and **The Skills Show**.

We also communicate through Information, advice and guidance (IAG) booths, stands and speakers. Social media is another communication channel we use to communicate information to our various audiences and providers.

You can follow us on our National Careers Service **Facebook** and **Twitter** pages.

Our new website GOV.UK	
<p>In your feedback, the majority of comments suggested that you had issues navigating and finding the information required. Some said the navigation was fine if you knew what you were looking for. A number of you said it is easier to find what you were looking for using Google as a search tool. Others acknowledged that they needed more time to get used to the new website.</p>	<p>We launched our web presence on <u>GOV.UK</u> the beginning of 2014. The GOV.UK site was designed with enhanced search functionality at its core, and the lack of detailed navigation is a significant change from our previous SFA website. We therefore strongly encourage visitors to our site to continue to use the search tool to find information. We only publish current and relevant information on our site.</p> <p>We use information from Google Analytics to establish the content searched for and used. This, along with user feedback, allows us to make ongoing developments to our content to make information more readily available,</p> <p>We make changes to the site on a daily basis, and some specific examples of improvements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The links at the top right of our homepage change periodically to take account of the information that we recognise people want from our site • Content on pages has been re-arranged – such as with the Funding Rules area, which can now be accessed according to specific funding years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a new guidance page, “Working with us as a provider”, that provides key information about the SFA services, for existing SFA providers, and organisations that want to become providers.
<p>Roles and responsibilities of SFA staff</p>	
<p>The majority who commented were concerned about the impact of not having a relationship manager or staff at a local level due to the SFA restructure. Many of you said it was too early to say until staff had settled into the new structure.</p> <p>Some of you also said they were unclear who their SFA contact would be after the restructure and would like to have the name of an SFA contact.</p>	<p>Although we no longer have relationship managers, each college and training organisation has a CDS advisor they are able to contact.</p>
<p>Apprenticeships</p>	
<p>Many of you recognised the progress made by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) on apprenticeship delivery. Others thought that progress had been variable and they had seen little promotional activity. Small-to-medium employers who commented said if taking on an apprentice they would like more support.</p> <p>A few said the NAS website was difficult to navigate.</p>	<p>The SFA worked with the <u>Government Digital Service</u> to design the apprenticeships presence on GOV.UK through a process of user needs and content analysis. Since the launch of content on GOV.UK in December 2014, it should be even easier for providers, employers and potential candidates to find information, particularly through Google search.</p> <p>We have also launched Find An</p>

	<p>apprenticeship an online service to search, register and apply for an apprenticeship. It was one of the 25 government 'exemplar' services chosen for redesign and has been built around the needs of potential apprentices.</p>
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