

# GTA England news

Issue 13 September

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## Positive quality position but no room for complacency; GTA England benchmarks

Group Training Associations continue to out-perform most Providers in terms of success rates.



The overall success rates for GTA England members recorded in 2010 - 11 at 80.9% is some 4.5% above the national benchmark for all sectors (76.4%). This position has been increased in 2011 - 12 to 5% with collective performance being 78.8% as compared to the national benchmark of 73.8%.

In Engineering, the picture is replicated. The overall success rates for GTA England members recorded in 2010 - 11 at 79.3% is some 2% above the national benchmark (77.3%). This position has been maintained in 2011 - 12.

This positive quality position is further supported by an analysis of Inspection outcomes for the first year of the new common inspection framework (CIF).

The new CIF is characterised by 2 days notice inspections; a focus on teaching and learning and assessment such that an overall outstanding judgement must be supported by "outstanding" teaching learning and assessment; and, a re - classification of "satisfactory" grade 3 outcome to "requires improvement".

**An analysis of inspections to July 2013 of grades for Overall effectiveness shows that:**

- Against a national average of grade 2 of 51%; GTA's are at 69%
- Against a national average of grade 3 of 41%; GTA's are at 23%
- Against a national average of grade 4 of 7%; GTA's are similar at 8%

## Quality position cont..

However, there is clearly no room for complacency. Grade 4 and 3 have never been a desired level of provision for our customers and the message in Rigor and Responsiveness leaves us in no doubt of the business imperative of securing at least grade 2 and above outcomes. Additionally, in common with other Independent training providers, we currently do not have any outcomes at grade 1 for overall effectiveness.

GTA England has established both Practitioner and Quality networks during 2013. Some of this provision has benefitted from ground breaking workshops with OFSTED including the changes in the CIF and what it means for GTAs; and the more recent "using the observation of teaching, learning and assessment outcomes to drive improvements".

So if you have not got involved, please do.

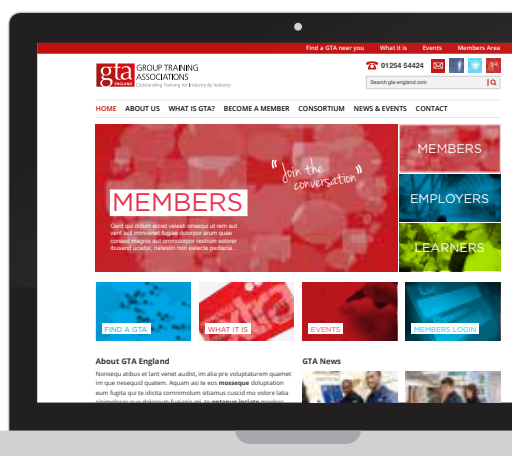
The GTA England Success Rates benchmarks are now available for members via the new GTA England website.

## New website NOW LIVE!!!

We are delighted to announce that the public area of our new website is now live!

Here you can:

- Access newsletters and news items easily
- Find GTAs and see what they do - All the benefits of membership and information for learners and employers.



## Coming Soon

The members area of the site is taking shape and we'll be in touch soon to issue your password.

Here you can:

Access framework documents, board and consortium details and, in time you'll be able to take part in our Forum debates.

## GTA England Annual Conference Book your place.



Arrangements are taking shape for the annual conference to be held on Thursday 24 October at the Heritage Motor Centre, Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warwickshire.

The theme of the conference is Responding to Employer Needs and maintaining them as centre stage customers, which has long been the GTA way. Speakers confirmed so far include Jaguar Land Rover, Aston Martin, OFSTED, NAS with a contribution expected from Minister Matthew Hancock.



# Trying to be all things to all people?

## Do GTAs suffer from 'heroic leadership'? What sort of leadership do organisations like ours in the FE and Skills Sector need to equip them for the new freedoms in the new FE world?

In its report 'Leading Learning Organisations', LSIS asks whether leadership in FE and Skills institutions is ready for the challenges facing a newly deregulated sector. Here are some tasters from the report, with a few questions, to tempt you to read more.

In developing its 'leadership exchange' LSIS attempted to deconstruct the elements of the leadership role fulfilled by leaders in the FE and Skills sector as follows:

- A leader of learning
- A leader of a business
- A leader of locality
- A leader of people
- A leader of innovation
- A leader of change

LSIS interviewed a number of current leaders in the sector to capture their views of where we are now, and what we need in terms of leadership for the future. Many of those interviewed highlighted 'heroic leadership' as the prevalent style among FE leaders, some citing examples of 'presidential style' where leaders of organisations had become such dominant figures that they had become indistinguishable from the institutions they led. Without exception, interviewees felt that such a model of leadership was outdated and not fit for the FE sector now. One interviewee said "heroic leadership models encourage people to come up with the right answer, and in the current climate there often is no 'right answer'".

Ancona (2007) was the first to suggest that 'it's time to end the myth of the complete leader: the flawless person at the top who's got it all figured out. In fact, the sooner leaders stop trying to be all things to all people, the better off their organisations will be'.

The concept of 'distributed leadership', mooted by Senge in 1996, is defined below:

*'distributed leadership is leadership exercised by multiple leaders throughout the organisation - some in formal positions of authority and some not - working collaboratively across organisational levels and boundaries' (Senge 1996).*

In how many of our GTAs can we honestly say we are confident we have all the above bases covered, with effective leadership at all levels in the organisation?

In how many GTAs can we say we have a 'joined up' approach to leadership, self assessment and development, and can we truly say we know where the organization is, and where it's going? And in how many are we still getting by, being heroic?

The final chapter of the LSIS report summarises some of the thoughts and recommendations from sector leaders.

Here, in brief, are some of the recommendations:

- The establishment of a sector leadership framework
- A focused programme of research to inform the debate on the future shape of the leadership
- The establishment of a 'Future Leaders' programme
- Exploration of the possibility of a sector-wide self-assessment and good practice-sharing programme
- A governance recruitment and support process

The report concludes with this stark choice:

'Leaders must individually and collectively decide whether to stay where they are and wait to see what comes along the road, or whether to identify a clear destination and route, and embark upon the long march to get there. The time for heroic leadership has passed; the time for collective courageous leadership has arrived'.

### Food for thought?

The report, entitled 'Leading Learning Organisation: an Analysis of Leadership in the Further Education and Skills Sector' can be found on the LSIS website.



You may also find inspiration and ideas from dipping into 'How Colleges Improve', Ofsted 2012, which provides detailed insights into how the best principals and CEOs have tackled improvement. We hope Ofsted will share some of these gems with us at our Ofsted Observation of Teaching and Learning event on 19 September. Meanwhile you can find this report on the Ofsted Excellence Gateway.

Craig Crowther, the author of the LSIS report, is a speaker at the GTA England annual conference on 24th October 2013.

## This provider is good because ....

The elusive words we all want to see at the top of our Ofsted reports. Particular in the light of recent government hints, statements and actions clearly indicating that nothing less than 'good' is good enough. Well, Ofsted's verdict was that NETA Training Trust was good in 2007, and it is still good in 2013.

This success story has a backdrop of hard work and continued commitment from everyone at NETA. In 2012, a GTA England team responded to an early request from NETA for a peer review. Managers thought their inspection was imminent, and wanted us to check out and validate their self-assessment judgments. They had all their staff on 'red alert', and had prepared them very thoroughly for inspection, and thought they had all their ducks in a row.

Quality assurance is central to NETA's strategy and management, and has received consistent investment. But two major things had changed in the GTA world. Unemployment was high in the north east, and particularly in the construction sector. NETA's bread and butter is engineering construction, for which it has long been the ECITB's preferred local supplier. The sector had been badly hit by the recession, and NETA faced the dilemma of how to deal with its redundant and laid-off learners. And the other factor in the equation was Ofsted's changes in emphasis, many of which were being felt last spring and summer, even though the new CIF had not yet come into force.

NETA had fallen into the trap of not reporting the employment situation adequately in its SAR. And equally, not highlighting the extensive work it had done to keep learners in employment and on programme during the recession. In addition, the peer review team picked up that, despite lots of quality interventions, not enough improvement was happening. We think it is fair to say that NETA found our feedback a little challenging, but it took it on the chin, dusted itself down and set about having another really good look at its provision. Paul Wicks, Head of Quality, told us

*"we found the peer review process to be extremely valuable, in that it provided a clear judgment on NETA's funded programmes. The final report highlighted strengths and areas for improvement and provided NETA with objectives. NETA acted upon the objectives set and achieved a grade 2"*



Managers focused particularly on our feedback that quality activity was actually not integral to NETA's processes; rather, it happened in parallel to the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment. Outputs from observations, audits and sampling needed to feed directly into robust, data driven performance management. The same information needed to feed directly into an inclusive self-assessment process, resulting in stringent improvement targets, closely monitored during the year.

See the results of another year or so of work, in NETA's Ofsted report on the Ofsted site. Feedback was particularly good on observation of teaching and learning, the quality of teaching, and the planning of learning to suit learner and employer needs. They even got good feedback on target-setting at reviews – a first, we believe, in the GTA network (we are sure you will correct us if we are wrong!). Add to this NETA's excellent linking of training to employer and industry needs, and you have a winning formula.

***Well done NETA! Now all you have to do is concentrate on the new Ofsted line – 'this provider is not yet excellent because ...'***