

GTA England news

Issue 14 February

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GTA England welcome new chair

The GTA England Board are delighted to announce the appointment of Prof. Lorna Unwin as Chair. Lorna replaces David Sherlock and we are looking forward to benefiting from her leadership.

Lorna Unwin is Professor Emerita (Vocational Education) at the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London, having retired from her post as Chair in Vocational Education at the end of October 2013.

Lorna was born in Manchester and comes from a family with a strong tradition of engineering apprenticeships. After working as a journalist and then as a lecturer in further and adult education, Lorna held academic posts at the Open University and University of Sheffield.

From 2003-2006, she was Director of the Centre for Labour Market



Studies at the University of Leicester. At the IOE, she was instrumental in securing a major grant from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to establish LLAKES, a Research Centre focused on the role of lifelong learning in mediating between economic competitiveness and social cohesion. She is an adviser to the OECD, Cedefop, and the European Training Foundation and was formerly a member of UKCES's research panel and the Skills Commission.

She has directed many research projects studying the workplace as a learning environment for skill formation and continuous development, apprenticeship, and vocational teaching and learning.

In 1994/95, she co-directed the national evaluation of the first year of the Modern Apprenticeship and has continued to see apprenticeship as a major vehicle for improving skill levels, individual life chances, and economic performance in the UK.

STOP PRESS: DATE FOR THE DIARY

Members Day: 9th April, Location: Midlands

Time: 10.00am - 3.00pm

Agenda items to include:

Evaluation of the capital round, lessons learned and next steps for GTA's

Neil Bates and Lee Weatherly contribute to 'Progress with Inspection'

Formula 1 in schools - engagement advice

Progress in Trailblazer groups



GTA England has been invited to participate and contribute to the development of the employer standard in both the Aerospace and Automotive groups. Although national employers are leading the arrangement there is a keen and genuine desire to develop a standard that encompasses the needs of SMEs hence our involvement.

We have been heavily involved in the Aerospace Trailblazer for the Aerospace Manufacturing Fitter job role. This group includes BAE Systems, Airbus, Rolls-Royce, GKN, Marshall and Magellan in addition to the Professional Institutions and the sector skills council. More recently we attended our first Automotive meeting. The following articulates progress in the Aerospace group however, both groups have been in close liaison and I'm delighted to report a good degree of synergy.

Progress to date has seen the establishment of the employer standard that embraces the Richard's requirements for employers determining the standard that meets the requirement of the Institutions Eng. Tech criteria; independent assessment; and grading (a binary grading for vocational competence and a consistent approach to pass, merit and distinction for academic knowledge).

An inclusive process has been endeavoured to be followed. Awarding Organisations have been commissioned to respond to consider approaches that include one award for both the vocational and academic Foundation stage. GTA England has held a focus group with SMEs to provide feedback on the proposed arrangements.

It is hoped that the current proposal, which has to be submitted to BIS and the Minister by 14th February, demonstrates stretch and added value as compared to existing arrangements yet still secures the participation of SME's.

Richard Hamer, BAE systems and chair of the Aerospace Trailblazer group says, "this is an important development in the history of Apprenticeships and one that we are keen to support to enhance the current quality and rigour.

We are very mindful of the role that SMEs play in the economy and have a strong desire to ensure that emerging arrangements are consistent with their needs. We are therefore delighted to be working with GTA England in this regard....."



GTA England's new chair cont.

With her research colleague, Professor Alison Fuller, Lorna is currently preparing a revised version of their Guide to Creating and Managing Expansive Apprenticeships for the National Apprenticeship Service. They have also recently completed a study of apprenticeship and the concept of occupation for the Gatsby Foundation.

From 2003 to 2008, she co-directed a multi-sector study of training in the UK funded by the ESRC, the results of which were published as a book (Improving Working for Learning) in 2009 by Routledge. Lorna has published many books and articles and is currently working on a history of further and technical education in England. She chaired the Commission of Inquiry into the Role of Group Training Associations in 2011/12 and acted as the academic adviser to the government's Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) in 2012/13.

Lorna was awarded a Fellowship of City & Guilds in 2005 in honour of her contribution to vocational education. Lorna is a born and bred supporter of Manchester United, enjoys walking and gardening in the Derbyshire Peak District where she lives, and is very keen on live music.

On being appointed Chair of GTA England, Lorna said:

"I am very honoured to have been considered as an applicant for the post of Chair of GTA England and very much look forward to meeting and working with all the members. We need to build on the existing strengths of the GTA network and exploit the considerable potential of GTAs to develop new approaches to vocational education and training that can meet the needs of rapidly changing workplaces and industries. I would also like to pay tribute to the important work that David Sherlock did as the first Chair of GTA England."

Coming soon... training officer development programme...

When is a training officer not a Training Officer – at least in the original sense of the word?



The role of Training Officer was pivotal within the relationship between a GTA and its employers. The person in this role was the lynchpin of the apprenticeship training process. She or he began by finding out what support the employer needed, and discussing how the various aspects of the need might be met. Business needs might span more than training, and include other advice and support. But the Training Officer was seen by the employer as their first port of call, signposting if necessary to other sources of help, and supplying many training solutions first-hand. The GTA itself was seen by the employer as the 'training arm' of their company, supplying or co-ordinating all their skills support needs.

Sometimes for very good reasons, GTAs have gradually moved away from recruiting Training Officers, and have allocated parts of the role elsewhere, often to recruitment or sales and marketing functions. You may well have made some of these decisions. Now, based on the findings of GTA England peer reviews over the last two years, we would invite you to review your decisions. Here are some of the features of the best-performing GTAs:

- Good responses to employer needs and good evidence of 'tailored' programmes
- GTAs are successful in attracting high quality employers and applicants year on year
- GTAs work well in partnership with employers to recruit and place learners
- Initial assessment is thorough and used effectively to plan learning
- Learning and assessment are planned well from the outset, integrating all aspects of the programme, including workplace training and assessment
- Feedback from both learners and employers is consistently good or better
- Highly effective management of learner progress at all levels
- Pastoral care arrangements are good and clearly accessible to learners
- Learner health, safety and welfare are paramount
- Good range of assessment methods and standard of work for learners in the workplace
- Good short and medium term target-setting at reviews in the workplace; good employer input into the review process
- E&D, safeguarding and H&S well-embedded into the review process

Within GTAs judged to require improvement, peer review teams frequently found weaknesses in the set-up and planning phase of the training, which, when combined with a less than robust approach to target-setting at reviews, allowed problems to develop with learner progress and timely achievement.

Much of the evidence from GTA England peer reviews is echoed in an Ofsted report compiled in 2010 entitled 'Learning from the Best', which observed that excellent links between on- and off-the-job training, and effective planning with the employer from the outset, were the key factors in making the learning relevant to the apprentice's work, thus ensuring the sustainability of the apprentice programme, and the best learning outcomes.

The best practice observed during peer reviews, was found in GTAs which had retained the traditional role of 'Training Officer', where the tutor/assessor was a well-established link between the employer, the learner and the GTA, effectively co-ordinating the training process.

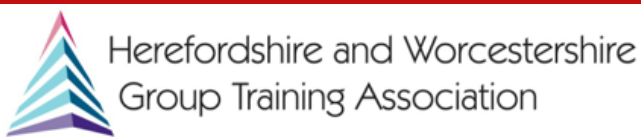
Training Officer Development Programme cont.

As we know, this role stemmed from EITB days, when it was underpinned by clear expectations and formal documentation. During the last two decades, the role has become somewhat 'diluted' within many GTAs, with separate staff responsible for different aspects of the process.

This can lead to a fragmented approach. Many GTAs have expressed a desire to return to an employer relationship in which the Training Officer is once again the employer's first port of call, and main contact with the GTA, facilitating all parts of the training process, from recruitment to completion and progression.

With support from Lee Weatherly at MGTS in Coventry, we have developed a training programme in response to your wish. We are running a pilot programme in April at MGTS, and plan to roll out the programme towards the year end, to fit in with GTAs' development time.

We would like volunteers from GTAs to take part in a desktop evaluation of the proposed programme. If you would like to know more about how you can get involved in this, please get in touch. We can offer a small number of places on the pilot course for GTAs who take part in the evaluation.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In preparation for a retirement in 2014 the Association is seeking to recruit a Chief Executive. Reporting to the Board of Directors the Chief Executive will be responsible for developing the organisations strategy and through the management team delivering the training provision.

**For more details visit GTA-England.co.uk
News & Events**

Advertising Feature

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Gen2 GTA England welcomes new member Gen2

Gen2 was established in 2000 as a Joint Venture by 5 major international companies including; AMEC, Sellafield Ltd, Tata, Iggesund Paperboard and Innovia Films, to provide a shared engineering and technology training capability to support employers in the region. Based in Cumbria, Gen2 is the largest training provider to the nation's civil nuclear industry.

The company works closely with the needs of industry and specialise in nuclear, engineering and high end manufacturing skills. It is an approved provider for two national skills academies (in nuclear and process industries) and has developed many higher level programmes to meet the specific needs of industry including a suite of nuclear related technology foundation degrees. The quality of teaching and learning is a key company driver, and led to Gen2 being awarded an overall Ofsted 'Outstanding' Grade 1 in 2011.

Since it was established, Gen2 has grown over the last 14 years from an initial intake of 45 Apprentices in 2000, to having over 1,000 Apprentices today. It delivers training and education from 6 state of the art skills centres located across Cumbria, and has over 300 students following higher education programmes.

Although not a typical GTA, Gen2 has a high affinity with the aims and objectives of GTA England. The needs of both learners and employers are central to Gen2's modus operandi, and as such the Company has worked hard to develop bespoke apprenticeships and degree level programmes which have been nationally accredited to meet employer needs

Gen2 Chief Executive Officer, Mike Smith, said "We are absolutely delighted to have been accepted as a member of GTA England. We value the work of GTA England in championing the work and merits of the GTA model, which we believe very much aligns with our own company ethos, and drivers to support the skills needs of our learners and employers, particularly in engineering and manufacturing. As such I'm really looking forward to working together other GTA colleagues in the future."working together other GTA colleagues in the future."

Members News

Alliance Learning, promoting career success from within.



Alliance Learning one of the region's most successful training providers has appointed Julie Robinson as their new Chief Executive to guide the organisation to outstanding Ofsted status at their next Ofsted Inspection.

Wigan born Julie, joined Alliance Learning in 1994 as a Sales and Marketing Officer and soon graduated through the Management structure at Alliance Learning culminating in being appointed as the Deputy Chief Executive in 2006.

Julie comments "I am delighted to be appointed as the new Chief Executive at Alliance Learning. Throughout my 20 years at Alliance Learning I have gained extensive knowledge of the organisation and its business during this time. The staff at Alliance Learning are truly outstanding in terms of commitment to their learners and to our organisation and this has recently reflected in our Outstanding success rates of over 90% and being graded as a good provider in all areas of curriculum by the education regulator Ofsted in July 2013. Alliance Learning have already devised the blueprint which will ensure outstanding inspection results at the next inspection."

There's no doubt from her colleagues, or anyone else who knows Julie in a work or social capacity that she will make an excellent CEO of Alliance Learning.

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