

# Countdown

an email briefing distributed to  
AELP Members

Issue 530 25<sup>th</sup> July 2011

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## **'One voice' representing the members' views, protecting members' interests**

Working with government and employers to develop policies and deliver high quality, learner centred, employer focused, demand-led skills development, valued by all.

### **Skills providers urgently needed by Jobcentre Plus**

Following earlier information published via Countdown issue 525 last month, AELP received a letter from Jobcentre Plus Chief Executive, Darra Singh, reconfirming the new arrangements which encourage skill providers to liaise with their local Jobcentre Plus colleagues to provide focused skills training linked to work experience and a guaranteed job interview. Funding of this new programme will be found by providers from that part of their new single adult learner responsiveness budget which is not needed for Apprenticeship delivery and growth. Many providers will link this approach up with their access to Apprenticeship plans, and for some their replacement of the now outlawed PLA approach.

The letter, together with more detailed attachments, is available to AELP members on the Members Only part of the [AELP website](#).

AELP Chief Executive, Graham Hoyle commented, "This programme represents a really important opportunity for many AELP members to break out of their Apprenticeship straightjacket and expand their range of offerings – and access to increased Government funding – by moving vigorously into the unemployed market, using all their employer facing know-how to help get the unemployed into sustainable jobs. Many members will have attended the joint regional seminars held over recent months, together with AoC and Jobcentre Plus. I am already picking up feedback that there is a demand for some short workshops for providers to share early thoughts and experiences, and get further clarification regarding what Skills Funding Agency and Jobcentre Plus are both hoping to get delivered and will fund. Further information when ready will of course be published in Countdown."

### **AELP chief meets new UKCES supremo**

AELP's Graham Hoyle met this week for one of his regular catch ups with Michael Davis – his first since Michael was confirmed as the new Chief Executive of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. The conversation covered the progress of the NIPB-led piece of work seeking to define the minimum levels of information all providers should be displaying about their offerings. Chaired by Graham Hoyle, the group's report has been sent to the project funders – BIS – for where a response is now awaited. They also discussed the future funding of skills development, looking at the shared responsibilities of state, employers and individuals (via loans). Graham intends to take forward some of the views he expressed on behalf of members to an Education and Skills Growth Summit on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July, hosted by Secretary of State, Vince Cable.

## Institute of Employability Professionals bid gets green light from UKCES

AELP was delighted to learn last week of the success of the cross-sector bid driven by the PoWER Group to the UK Commission of Employment and Skills (UKCES) for funding towards the creation of an Institute of Employability Professionals to give momentum to the process of professionalisation of the welfare-to-work sector. AELP Director of Employment and Skills, Paul Warner, was a key part of the small team that put the bid together and will be deeply involved in the creation of the new Institute over the next year, working alongside Kirsty McHugh (CEO of ERSA), Janette Faherty OBE (Director of Avanta and Chair of the cross-sector PoWER Group) and Fran Parry (Director at Inclusion). This is an incredibly exciting project that enjoys the active support of primes and subcontractors alike within the DWP provider base, as well as an official endorsement from DWP Director of Delivery Alan Cave.

Initial planning meetings are now being set up and we will of course be giving regular updates on progress as the weeks and months proceed.

## W2W Forum discusses skills for the unemployed

AELP's Welfare to Work Forum met once again in London last week for a lively session involving a wide range of providers including DWP Primes, subcontractors, and indeed SFA providers for a lively and wide-ranging debate on a number of issues.

Director of Employment and Skills, Paul Warner, gave an update on the progress of a number of issues including Merlin, Service Academies, and the professionalisation agenda. The two main items however proved to be discussions on the place of the Skills Funding Agency's new Outcome Incentive Payments system with regard to welfare-to-work provision - where on a related point AELP will be keen to hear quickly of the responsiveness of Jobcentre Plus to the new skills conditionality regime - and very early front-line experiences of the Work Programme.

On this point, it was generally agreed that referral rates to prime providers were proving to be much higher than originally anticipated, though the reasons for this are not entirely clear yet. Despite one prime describing themselves as "deluged", no-one is as yet certain whether this is the result of an underestimation of numbers, or of "stockpiling" of referrals whilst the Work Programme was awaiting its launch. It is vital that these points are understood quickly as they are already putting serious pressure on both human and premises resource within delivery organisations - it was also noted that it was a similar problem that contributed to the process logjam within the old Pathways to Work programme that eventually led to its demise as it compromised the ability to produce job outputs. With significant financial stakes at risk based on the ability to produce outputs and thus viable returns, this could have serious implications. This matter will be taken up by senior AELP officials including CEO Graham Hoyle, in meetings with DWP due over the next week or so.

This was another well-attended and very constructive meeting amply demonstrating the importance for providers to be able to clearly understand both the skills and employability sectors. Minutes will be available on the AELP website shortly.



**AELP Member Events** are internal meetings organised by AELP and restricted to **members only**. To attend, please register your interest by clicking on the meeting link below.

*If any Member experiences difficulty registering online to attend a SIG/ SIM, please contact [Marilyn Harper](mailto:marilyn.harper@aelp.org.uk) via email, or for difficulties registering on our other events [the events team](#).*

The following AELP Special Interest Groups (SIG) & Sector Strategic Issues Meetings (SIM) are now open for registration  
[Employer Responsive SIG](#) 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011, London 14.30-16.30 (Tea/Coffee on arrival)  
[Health, Social Care & Childcare Sector Forum](#) 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2011, Sheffield 9.30(Coffee) meeting 10.00-15.00 (light lunch provided)

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