

APPRENTICESHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: FINAL CASE STUDY

Championing Sustainability Through Apprenticeships

Northern Skills Network

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Championing Sustainability Through Apprenticeships

Project Overview

A community of practice was developed across the Northern Skills Networks, to highlight, showcase and further explore how apprentice's curriculum in all vocations and standards can be more sustainably and environmentally focused.

Through establishing the green community of practice for the North, it has provided increased knowledge and support for tutors and practitioners as well as leaders and managers in developing greener, more sustainably aware curriculums and responses.

The community of practice has also engaged with the combined authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships across the North and the Local Skills Improvement Plan leads to provide the link to apprenticeship curriculum and local skills curriculum aligned to regional green needs. The project has also mapped sustainable development to Ofsted, to Education for Sustainable Development and UNESCO 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Project Aims

Project partners included seven of the regional provider networks across the North of England and NCFE (Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network, Greater Merseyside Learning Providers Federation, North East Learning Providers, Yorkshire Learning Providers, Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum, Cheshire and Warrington Network, South Yorkshire Provider Network and NCFE).



Project outcomes

- Improved support resources, pastoral alignment, and curriculum development of Green and Sustainable Development – an ERR type resource for GSD

- Appropriate CPD for tutors and practitioners of apprentices, delivered by the partners and stakeholders within the community of practice.
- Development of a GSD Padlet, which helps provide appropriate support and guidance on lessons, practice, successes which will continue to be updated monthly.
- Development of a GSD champions network to support training organisations in their region to implement the approaches identified through the project and be a person of contact for anyone struggling to contextualise or implement.
- GSD Charter for those involved in the project which will continue once the project concludes through the champions' network.

Positive Impact and Expected Outcomes

The project held 5 community of practices (CoP) workshops with over 120 attendees from a wide range of apprenticeship training organisations including colleges, ITPs, universities, and awarding organisations. The CoP's have provided opportunities for providers to come together and share ideas, topics of discussions and collaborate on what they feel is needed to enhance and improve sustainable knowledge, skills, and behaviours across apprenticeship curriculum. The CoP's have already identified some great approaches to promoting sustainability and embedding into pastoral and enrichment activities, as well as highlighting the three critical factors to successful rollout across all apprenticeships.

Critical success factors include:

- Sector focus – how to utilise industry approaches to teaching practices.
- Strategic focus - Whole organisational approach and buy-in
- Sustainable Development goals focus – utilising UNESCO 17 SDGs to help contextualise.

Through the CoPs it has also enabled discussions and idea generation on practical projects and activities to complete with different apprentices and how they can be aligned to KSBs within the standards – such as completing waste audits in Leadership and Management standards, or supply chain analysis in HR or accountancy standards, or reduce, reuse, recycle practices for hair and beauty standards. Through the CoPs the group have had the opportunity to understand how to map apprenticeship KSBs to the UNESCO 17 sustainable development goals, as well as understanding how to map to internal quality arrangements, SAR, QIP and improved quality of education. This is aiding the development of enhanced curriculum for apprentices, improved workplace alignment projects to meet off the job and on the job development and improved confidence from FE sector staff – this is evident in the feedback received from the CoP delegates and the project champions in developing their resources.

The project has developed a provider health check that has been aligned to the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development, acting as a self-assessment tool for organisations to review and actions to improve their sustainable practices. This health check focuses on 4 main success factors and ESD challenges including –

- Operational response
- Teaching and Learning response

- People
- Partnerships

We have also designed a bespoke champions programme, endorsed by NCFE, which is being piloted by 8 of the northern champions (one from each region). The programme is titled 'Championing Sustainability through Apprenticeships'. It is a 6-week course with 2 workshops and a mini research project for each region to take away and work on. The findings will then be shared and cascaded to all Northern Skills Network members and stakeholders. The programme will then be rolled out so multiple champions can be developed across the North and the wider FE and Skills sector. 6 champions have completed the course during the project timeline and have identified gaps in apprenticeship knowledge and the learners' journey finding positive solutions to support teaching, learning and achievement.

Project Outputs

A resource bank has been developed with a variety of resources to aid apprenticeship providers across all levels and across all aspects of the learning journey – the resource bank includes.

- Provider support Padlet
- Employer support Padlet
- Champions mini projects
- Glossary of terms
- Provider health check
- How to Guide
- Meeting local green skills needs
- Green Skills Charter
- Feedback from project partners and delegates

Future Activity

The champions and northern regional networks have all agreed to continue the pan-northern community of practice sessions to continue the peer learning opportunities and to continue to support our training organisation members. The feedback from delegates has been so positive, but also highlighted this is just the start of the journey for many, that it felt appropriate that the support and further extension of the project to continue,

If we had more time we would have liked to do more testing with apprentices and hold the apprentice roundtable and further sessions with employers to gain feedback and insights on additional workplace projects.

We hope the champions course will provide opportunity for further regional champions and develop a train to trainer model moving forward so there is a network of sustainability through supporting each other in sharing, showcasing, and developing sustainable practices.

Recommendations for effective collaborative partnership working to address quality improvement in apprenticeship delivery.

We operated an open, collaborative culture across the community of practices and champions that encouraged discussion, debate and sharing of practice, this led to relationships and collaborations outside of the project commence and flourish. We set partner expectations from the outset and encouraged participation from a wide range of guests. We asked delegates for their areas of challenge or gap and identified guests or solutions to support.

The end of project showcase was a great opportunity to celebrate what providers and the project had achieved which the delegates and sector valued.

There have been common themes from the project to share and 3 core recommendations. The common themes for future activity to address include:

- Reluctance to engage in green skills for non-traditional green sector providers.
- Where development is taking place, this is more at a few operational and practitioner level staff and not being led by senior leadership.
- Basic level knowledge of 'The Why' it is important is needed for practitioner level, with more strategic and policy development support for senior staff.
- There is a breadth of opportunity to embed sustainable development into all types of vocational standards, with many KSB's and duties aligning well to the sustainable development goals.
- Community and partnership development is weak across apprenticeship providers in supporting this theme and should be an area focused on through the personal development curriculum under the Ofsted framework.
- The demand of training organisations to support businesses in meeting their net zero goals is growing, but the support for providers is limited.
- A network of champions is critical to the success of quality education and positive change.

Meeting local skills needs areas of focus in meeting local skills and provider gaps include:

- Green careers
- Sustainable Development
- Institutional change
- Curriculum development
- Use of VR and AI in subject development

The recommendations include:

1. Providers to complete a self-assessment / Health Check on their internal, operational, Teaching and Learning and community / social response now and into the future – use this as an opportunity to complete a Glassdoor effect on the business to see how 'green' or sustainably aware the organisation comes across to employers, learners, staff, and partners.
2. Schedule dedicated time to Curriculum planning, utilising a range of colleagues in the

development of green content. Identify SDG alignment to support the development of teaching activities including vocational, peer learning, individual research opportunities and workplace literacy and numeracy development.

3. Green Matters on Agenda's - commit to supporting a whole organisation approach to sustainable development. Include a green matters agenda item on all internal and apprenticeship progress review meetings. This will lead to improved knowledge and understanding by staff and learners leading to a culture that supports professional curiosity and enhancement.

Where can colleagues find more information?

The Charter, Padlet and all supporting information will be available on the northern skills network website, through the northern regional networks or directly with the project lead, details below:

Project Lead – Alex Miles, alex.miles@wylp.org.uk

Northern Skills Network – www.northernskillsnetwork.co.uk

Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network

Greater Merseyside Learning Providers Federation

North East Learning Providers

Yorkshire Learning Providers

Lancashire Work Based Learning Forum

Cheshire and Warrington Network

South Yorkshire Provider Network

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