



NEWSLETTER

June 2009

innovative thinking
collaborative action

It has been a busy few months here at CFE and in the wider world of employment and skills. The recent merger of [BERR](#) and [DIUS](#) to form the new [Department for Business Innovation and Skills](#) has the potential to strengthen the relationship between skills policy, and wider economic and industrial policy.

Our newsletter this quarter includes a policy spotlight on the new buzz word of [activism](#) and we also feature two of our ongoing projects with the [London Development Agency](#) and [Slough Borough Council](#).

Finally, spend a few minutes reading our latest articles: local jobs for local people; a focus on [National Skills Academies in the recession](#); making [quality training](#) standard; and key messages for the HE sector on the [employer demand for higher level skills](#).

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

ACTIVISM

You may have heard the terms 'industrial activism' and 'skills activism' banded around government in recent months. The term 'industrial activism' was coined back in December 2008 by the now Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Lord Mandelson, with 'skills activism' following in April of this year from John Denham, the then DIUS Secretary.

The terms are starting to build momentum and bringing together BERR and DIUS to form the new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will only strengthen their resonance.

Lord Mandelson set out the principles of industrial activism in his speech last year which include "*being pragmatic about the ability of markets to enable companies and people to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy*" and that it is "*shaped not just by what we conventionally label industrial policy but by all government policies.*"

Industrial activism will also involve "*looking strategically at each sector in the economy, not in order to apply top-down political patronage to companies in these sectors but to assess how horizontal policy can secure maximum benefits across all sectors and reinforce our particular strengths.*"

CFE welcomes this. A closer relationship between economic, skills and employment policy is essential if government is to truly deliver the right people with the right skills in the right jobs helping us to recover from the recession and prosper thereafter.

CFE feels that in these challenging economic times, there is a need to move beyond Leitch's simplistic policy prescription that increased skill levels will – in isolation – lead to increased productivity and greater social inclusion. This new joined up approach, spearheaded by Lord Mandelson, will help to address this.

We look forward to the Government's white paper on activism later in the year.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

EMPLOYMENT AND RETENTION IN LONDON

CFE is working with the London Development Agency (LDA) to research employment retention and progression patterns throughout London.

The project maps the levels of retention and progression through the development of a bank of indicators, while a systematic national and international review of policy initiatives related to in-work support will ensure these findings translate in to practical and targeted interventions. Tracking will take place through an analysis of key national surveys including the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, as well as DWP administrative data.

CFE is working closely with the LDA and the Mayor of London to identify which groups would benefit most from targeted interventions that help individuals compete in London's highly competitive labour market. The project has the potential to impact the employment and skills system not just in London, but at a regional and national level. Findings will support the London Integrated Employment and Skills Trial and will ensure policy makers can support people through the challenging economic climate.

More information about the project can be found [here](#) and the final research report will be published in September 2009.

SUPPORT TO THE SLOUGH ADVANCEMENT PROTOTYPE

CFE is continuing to work with Slough Borough Council (SBC) to provide project management and specialist advice for the Slough Working Better project.

Slough Working Better is one of ten Advancement Network Prototypes across England linked to the development of the proposed Adult Advancement and Careers Service. CFE is supporting SBC in:

- Organising information, advice and support as a comprehensive service offer to help people return, remain and progress in work.
- Designing and building the infrastructure and delivery mechanisms to offer well organised multiple access points sourced from a range of community, learning, health, social, housing, careers and business advisory services.

The prototype's test-bed projects include: personalised work placements; development of training for work-health trainers operating from GP surgeries; job clubs and learning provision in community venues; and volunteer buddies supporting nextstep customers.

More information about CFE's work on Slough Working Better can be found on our website [here](#).

ARTICLES & COMMENT PIECES

Local jobs for local people

Outlining the issues that local areas face in returning people to work, Ian Neale presents a two-fold approach to addressing the current challenges around regional unemployment.

Firstly, targeted economic development is required. Local authorities will need to promote new opportunities and sign up to Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs). Jobcentre Plus needs to engage with a wider range of partnerships to better support a changing typology of job seekers. Secondly, the further integration of employment and skills at a local level will help to match people with employment opportunities. Employment and Skills Boards (ESBs) and increased partnership working can play a role in bringing together those services which help people to get a job, keep a job and progress in work. [Read the full article here.](#)

Skills initiatives in the recession: A focus on National Skills Academies

CFE argues that the recession provides the ideal time to focus on a holistic approach to skills and employment. Drawing on their extensive work with the National Skills Academies programme, the team explain how National Skills Academies provide the ideal link between government and employers in the provision of skills training. [Read the full article here.](#)

Making quality training, standard

ABOUT CFE

CFE is an independent, not for profit organisation dedicated to improving social and economic prosperity across the UK.

We provide policy development, research and project management expertise to a wide range of government departments, agencies and providers responsible for delivering the skills agenda. [> MORE](#)

NEW PROJECTS

CFE is currently working on a number of new [projects](#).

Delivery plan to increase the number of adults qualified to Level 2 and Level 3

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) [> MORE](#)

Employer consultations

Linking London Lifelong Learning Network [> MORE](#)

Enterprising People, Enterprising Places (EP2) Evaluation

Regeneration East Midlands (REM) and the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) [> MORE](#)

Evaluation of Action Based Task Groups

Skills for Sustainable Communities Lifelong Learning Network (SSCLLN) [> MORE](#)

Evaluation of the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS)

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) [> MORE](#)

Impact assessment of Train to Gain bureaucracy reduction measures

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) [> MORE](#)

Impact of Union involvement on the take up of Train to Gain

Unionlearn [> MORE](#)

Learning at work survey

Campaign for Learning and the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education [> MORE](#)

Partner College focus groups

University of Northampton [> MORE](#)

View of the UK employment and skills system

UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) [> MORE](#)

CFE NEWS

CFE launch report on volunteering in the cultural sector in the East Midlands

CFE's research mapping volunteering and exploring the wider benefits of volunteering in the cultural sector in the East Midlands has been launched. The research includes a full report, executive summary and ten case studies showing effective practice for cultural organisations when working with volunteers. [> MORE](#)

CFE and iCeGS launch paper on understanding advancement

CFE launched an occasional paper in partnership with the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS), entitled 'Understanding Advancement'. [> MORE](#)

CFE responds to DCSF child poverty consultation

CFE responded to the

Writing in the publication Broadcast the voice of Scotland's Colleges, Raj Patel outlines the potential barriers that training providers face when trying to ensure that their provision is responsive to the needs of employers. Drawing on CFE's work on the Training Quality Standard, a quality mark which is the pinnacle of achievement for responsive training providers, Raj promotes the need to invest in quality training during the recession.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Employer demand for higher level skills: Key messages for the HE sector

Lindsey Bowes and Tristram Hughes explore employer demand for higher level skills with particular reference to the HE sector in April's edition of Graduate Market Trends. Lindsey and Tristram argue that in order to increase its share of the market for higher level skills, the HE sector will need to understand employers, challenge perceptions, meet market norms and play to its strengths.

[Read the full article here.](#)

CFE WEBSITE

Our website is updated on a day-to-day basis so take a look at the [news and comment](#) area and sign up to the [RSS feed](#) to keep up to date with everything happening at CFE. The website also includes more information about our [work](#), our [people](#) and [case studies](#) from past projects.

Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSFs) child poverty consultation, drawing our recent research – 'Child poverty in the East Midlands: Identifying what works'.

[> MORE](#)

CFE present at Linking London Lifelong Learning Network (LLLN) Conference

CFE's James Kewin presented at the LLLN Conference 'The changing landscape of vocational education'. James's presentation formed part of an interactive workshop called 'What employers say they want'.

[> MORE](#)

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