

An East Midlands Train to Gain Toolkit for Providers Delivering Train to Gain Provision in the East Midlands

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Of interest to partners, providers and employers, and all those interested in learning and skills in the East Midlands

An East Midlands Train to Gain Toolkit for Providers Delivering Train to Gain provision in the East Midlands

A Final Toolkit prepared for LSC East Midlands

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1.0 Introduction – About this Train to Gain Toolkit

In October 2008, ECOTEC Research and Consulting Limited was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands to undertake research into the key determinants of high performing Train to Gain providers in the East Midlands. The purpose of this research was to identify the key criteria that characterise high performing providers and to produce a route map that will enable the East Midlands Train to Gain team support existing and future Train to Gain providers improve and increase the range and quality of their Train to Gain provision. This toolkit represents the outcome of the research.

1.1 What is the purpose of this Toolkit?

This toolkit forms an important part of the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands commitment to support their providers in the delivery of their Train to Gain provision.

It is intended as a good practice guide and a practical resource for all provider teams who deliver Train to Gain provision including those who deliver on either a single contractual or consortium basis. It has been designed to suit all provider types (i.e. small, medium and large) and is applicable across all sectors.

It is designed to outline practical approaches that support the delivery of Train to Gain based on evidence from the delivery models of high performing providers including route maps outlining examples of their delivery models and employer processes.

1.2 What is included in the Toolkit?

The rest of this document has been structured under four key areas focusing on the following:

- **Delivery Model** – this section highlights the different team structures used by high performing providers to support their Train to Gain delivery and the core roles and responsibilities of the team within the structure.
- **Employer process** – outlines the employer processes used by high performing providers from the initial point of contact through to delivery
- **Skills for Life within Train to Gain** – sets out successful strategies adopted by high performing providers who deliver in this area
- **Employer Strategies and Systems** – sets out the core strategies and systems adopted by the high performing providers
- **Success Factors** – highlights the key success factors of high performing providers

Each section of the guide also highlights the success factors for each area that have contributed to the performance of the providers who were involved in the study.

1.3 How to use the Toolkit

As outlined above, the toolkit includes sections which broadly follow the different approaches to the Train to Gain journey. The sections have been designed as a stand alone or can be read as a whole. Within each section are route maps and individual case studies chosen specifically to highlight good practice as well as demonstrate a series of steps that can be adopted by providers who deliver employer responsive provision. (Please note that for the case studies the practice of individual providers is sometimes drawn upon more than once but, if so, it is in relation to a different aspect of provision).

2.0 Delivery Model

This section outlines the characteristics and models adopted by high performing providers to support their delivery of Train to Gain. It outlines the basic infrastructure that supports their Train to Gain delivery including the core roles and responsibilities of the staff within the team supported by case studies where possible.

2.1 Characteristics of High Performing providers

The high performing providers were selected by the Learning and Skills Council East Midlands according to their performance against their Level 2 and Skills for Life targets based on data from 2007/2008. The sample was also designed to take into account a cross section of providers with different delivery volumes: large providers with 1000 plus learners, medium sized providers with 500-1000 learners and small providers with less than 500 learners; and also type of provider and geographical location.

2.2 Models used for delivering Train to Gain

The different models used by high performing providers in the East Midlands region include:

- single providers exclusively delivering their own contract with some sub-contracting their Skills for Life provision;
- consortium models with lead partners managing the overall contract and also delivering a proportion of the contract themselves ; and
- a network model whose role involves exclusively managing a consortium without undertaking any delivery itself.

2.3 Developing an Employer Responsive team

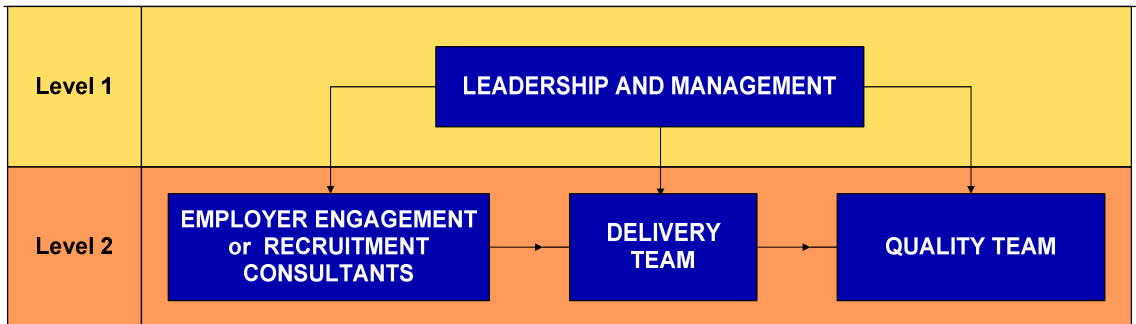
The Train to Gain teams of high performing providers usually involve four core functions as outlined in Fig 2.1 below with clearly defined responsibilities as follows:

- **A Leadership and Management function** responsible for how the provider engages with the employers, the funding targets set by the LSC and the employer engagement strategy.
- **An Employer Engagement function** responsible for bringing in the business and managing employer relationships.
- **A Delivery function** which carries out all functions linked to delivering on the ground including carrying out initial assessments and establishing learner needs.

- **A Quality team** involved in associated support around administration such as enrolling learners, quality and funding eligibility.

The delivery structures of high performing providers range in terms of their team sizes depending on the volume of Train to Gain provision being delivered. Those with larger delivery volumes are likely to have larger supporting function structures within the four core functions.

Figure 2.1 Delivery structure of High Performing Train to Gain teams



The roles and responsibilities within each core function differ depending on the volume of delivery. The delivery volumes refer to number of learners that providers are contracted to work with i.e. large providers are those with 1000 plus learners, medium sized providers are those with 500-1000 learners and small providers are those with less than 500 learners.

Drawing on evidence from the research with high performing providers, we provide in the following few sections (2.3.1 – 2.3.3) some examples of team structures which can be found within providers with different volumes of delivery. These provide an indication of the key roles within teams and numbers of staff and are for illustrative purposes only. They are based on real individual examples but are not intended to be representative; in particular, of average team sizes. Each provider will have a team structure and size that will vary depending on its own organisational context.

2.3.1 Team structure of a provider with large volumes of delivery

For a provider delivering large volumes of Train to Gain, the following roles and responsibilities can be found within each core function:

- **A Leadership and Management team** will involve either a Director of Employer Engagement or Head/Director of Train to Gain.
- **An Employer Engagement Responsiveness team** will include an Employer Responsiveness manager, 3 Key Account Managers, 6 Sales staff and 2 tele- sales staff.
- **A Delivery team** will have a bank of 150-200 assessors.
- **A Quality team** will include a Quality assurance manager and 2 administrators.

Figure 2.2 Case study of a team structure with large delivery volumes

Case Study: FE College, Lead Partner in a Consortium

Background

The College is a lead provider in a consortium and was involved in the Employer Training Pilot and has been delivering Train to Gain provision since it first started. Outside the partners, the College also delivers Train to Gain through their curriculum areas within their 7 internal departments. They spend very little on marketing as most of their leads come through networking such as breakfast meetings, business meetings and organising employer forums.

Team Structure

Their Train to Gain consortium consists of 45 private training providers. The lead contractor has a partnership manager who manages the external partners and as a lead partner is also in charge of securing and processing the funding, carrying out contract compliance, quality assurance processes, tracking delivery and processing of payments to partners.

Most of their partners either find their own employer leads or get their leads from the College. The Delivery of Train to Gain is split on a 50/50 basis between the College and the partners

Sectors and Qualifications

The consortium strategy is not based on delivering Train to Gain on a sector basis but on business needs. They target national employers with large volumes of learners and contracts. Sectors that they deliver in include Engineering, Customer services, Health and Social Care, Passenger/Transport, Health, Business Administration, Hospitality and Construction. 25 of their 45 partners deliver construction.

Outline of Delivery Model

Leadership and Management Team

The Leadership and management team consists of a Director of Employer Engagement who is responsible for the consortium's targets and the College's employer strategy.

Employer Engagement Team

Their Employer Engagement team consists of an employer responsiveness manager who manages the sales team and works with the College's 7 internal department to look at areas around how to increase internal delivery.

The Employer Engagement team also consists of Sales/Engagement Professionals who source out employer leads, visits the employers and carry out Organisational Needs Analysis to examine the best training option route to support the employer needs (that is whether to offer a Train to Gain route or a WBL route).

Delivery Team

The delivery team assesses the most appropriate delivery style for the employer to cater for those who may work shift patterns. They then work with either their external partners (45 partners) or internal partners to

explore the best way to deliver to the employer.

Quality Team

The Delivery team passes the information over to the Compliance team who enrolls the learners. Their partners also undergo quarterly process reviews.

2.3.2 Team structure of a provider with medium volumes of delivery

The team structure of a provider with medium volume of delivery varies slightly with respect to size however as above the core functions remain the same and may include the following.

- **A Leadership and Management team** will consist of a Train to Gain co-ordinator or a Head of Train to Gain responsible for recruitment, setting of targets and achievement.
- **An Employer Engagement team** will consist of 8 Recruitment consultants who engage with employers.
- **A Delivery team** will include 35 trainers and assessors.
- **A Quality team** will consist of 1 contract co-ordinator and 3 administrators

Figure 2.3 Case study of a team structure with medium delivery volumes

Case Study: FE College, Single Provider

Background

This College was involved in the Employer Training Pilot and has been delivering Train to Gain since it first started. The Train to Gain team is a separate unit within the College but reports directly to the Vice Principal and Senior Management Team. Although it is a separate unit, it does not operate in a 'silo' environment.

Team Structure

The Train to Gain team consists of a Train to Gain Co-ordinator, 8 Recruitment Consultants, 1 Contract Co-ordinator and 3 Administrators/Members which consists of the Quality team. There are 35 trainers and assessors.

Sectors and Qualifications

The college predominately offers Level 2 qualifications through Train to Gain. It delivers mainly in the Construction and Care Sectors because the college has good FE provision in these sectors and links with

employers in these areas. It has a CoVE for Construction. Since starting to deliver Train to Gain, the College has added more qualifications to its portfolio and increased staffing levels. The mode of delivery however has essentially remained the same.

Outline of Delivery Model

Leadership and Management Team

The Train to Gain Co-ordinator oversees the recruitment, setting targets, audit requirements and financial aspects of Train to Gain

Recruitment Consultants

The Recruitment Consultants are responsible for employer leads, working on the lead and making the initial contact with the employer. They visit the employer and complete an 'employer checklist'. This includes completing the paperwork with the employer, carrying out a basic skills analysis which will last between 30mins -1 hour, checking that the learners will be able to gather enough evidence for their NVQ in that environment.

Quality Team

The Admin/Quality team is responsible for putting the data into PICS and for case noting the learners by section heads and then assigning them to an assessor. The Admin/Quality team then contacts the assessors and informs them of the learners, course and dates and checks all the registrations have been completed. The Admin/Quality team also makes sure the learner is seen every 6-8 weeks formally by the assessor so learning outcomes and progress can be monitored and recorded. It is also responsible for ensuring completion by the learners and claiming certification with the awarding body and the LSC.

Delivery Team

The assessors deliver training and see the learner every 6-8 weeks to monitor and record learning outcomes and progress

2.3.3 Team structure of a provider with small volumes of delivery

For those delivering small volumes of Train to Gain provision, the structure follows as the norm but with a smaller team as follows:

- **A Leadership and Management team** consisting of a Director of Train to Gain
- **An Employer Engagement team** which will include an Employer Responsive manager and 6 members of staff responsible for employer leads
- **A Delivery team** consisting of 3 members of staff and 20 assessors and 3 internal verifiers
- **A Quality team** with a Quality manager

Figure 2.4 Case study of a team structure with small delivery volumes

Case Study: Private Training Provider, Single Provider (sub contracting part of its Skills for Life provision)

Background

This provider chosen for this case study first started delivering its own Train to Gain contract from August 2007 (Year 2). From January 2008, the organisation started to build up specific dedicated teams to perform certain roles within the organisation and in relation to Train to Gain.

Team Structure

At a managerial level, the organisation has one of its Directors and its WBL Manager involved in Train to Gain, there is an Employer Responsive Manager and an Employer Engagement Team (with 6 members of staff) an IAG team (with 3 members of staff) and a delivery team of around 20 assessors and 3 internal verifiers. The Quality Assurance Manager across the WBL division also has a role regarding Train to Gain.

Sectors and Qualifications

The provider predominately offers Level 2 qualifications through Train to Gain with some Skills for Life (and Level 3). It delivers mainly in the Health and Social Care Sector but is developing its offer in the Warehousing sector. It currently offers around 12 different qualifications and has worked towards the development of one qualification achieving accreditation for a Health and Social Care: Children and Young People NVQ in response to the needs of a particular employer. There are now 5 employers with staff engaged on this NVQ.

Outline of Delivery Model

Leadership and Management Team

The Company Director oversees the management team, supporting it in achieving its goals, targets and objectives and takes a strategic lead on employer engagement. The WBL Manager has been brought in due to previous experience around IAG to embed IAG within the Train to Gain contract and to provide research and intelligence around the Train to Gain contract in general e.g. audit requirements etc.

Employer Engagement Team

The organisation created the role of an Employer Responsive Manager within its Employer Engagement Team specifically because of the Train to Gain contract. The role is responsible for ensuring that the organisation maintains good relationships with its existing clients and engages with potential clients e.g. direct calls to employers, attending events and conferences to engage with employers. The team engages with the employers and is tasked with bringing in the business and with liaising with the employer around the service offer.

Delivery Team

The IAG team which is part of the delivery team focuses on the learner. The IAG Team is responsible for undertaking the initial assessments with the learner, establishing learner need, funding eligibility etc. The organisation has done a lot of work around embedding stronger IAG within Train to Gain so that now around 2 hours are spent on average per learner to ensure that their needs are met. Across its different awards, the organisation has a team of around 20 assessors and 3 internal verifiers who are responsible for delivery the programme of learning.

2.4 Managing a Consortium (selecting partners for delivery)

The high performing providers who manage a consortium have clear guidelines on how their consortium partners are chosen and a strong commitment to partnership working which focus on openness, transparency and open communication as an approach to fostering strong partnership working.

They highlight the importance of having in place structured quality assurance processes in relation to bringing in new partners and thereafter working with partners on an ongoing basis. The diagram below illustrates one consortium lead's approach to selecting partners. The case study that follows outlines the detailed processes involved with managing the consortium.

Figure 2.5 Approach to the selecting partners



Case Study: Private Training Provider, Lead Partner of a Consortium

Background

The Private Training Provider is a global organisation and currently delivers in all of the nine LSC regions. It was involved in the Employer Training Pilot and has been delivering Train to Gain since it first started. There are currently 35 sub contractors in the whole consortium with approx 20 providers delivering in the East Midlands. The organisation also has a separate delivery arm which delivers a proportion of the consortium's targets. The consortium, as a whole, covers every sector; perhaps with the exception of Agriculture which it covers to a lesser extent. The organisation's own delivery arm covers: Retail, Business Administration, Health and Care, Public Services, Team Leading and Management, Hospitality, Childcare, ICT and Skills for Life. The delivery arm delivers both Apprenticeships and Train to Gain. Currently, work is being done at a senior level to improve links with other contracts that the organisation delivers as, in effect; the organisation can support a learner through an Apprenticeship, help them into work and once in work provide support through Train to Gain.

Outline of Delivery Model (with an emphasis on how the consortium is managed)

In terms of managing the consortium, the provider has a strong quality approval process in place.

- 1) If a provider is interested in joining the consortium, it has to complete a Register of Interest outlining who they are, what they can do and in which regions they would like to work in.
- 2) The lead partner then assesses whether it needs the provider within the consortium and, if so, where it needs the provider in relation to the contract space that it has. If the lead partner decides to progress with the application, the provider is invited to present to the lead partner about its company, its ethos, what it is that it does and its success rates, so the lead partner can find out about the provider as a company.
- 3) If the lead partner is interested in taking the provider to the next stage, the provider will go through a very comprehensive full quality approval process where a member of the lead partner's quality team will visit the provider and bench mark them against some essential and desirable criteria. This will involve looking at all areas of the provider's delivery including quality systems and procedures, success rates and the capacity that the provider has in its organisation including its leadership and management roles. The lead partner may support a smaller organisation which may not have everything in place, as long as it has the desire to put everything in place before delivery starts.
- 4) Once providers in the consortium are in place and have been quality approved, they are referred to the lead partner's Train to Gain Project Manager who carries out an initial monitoring visit e.g. to examine whether the provider has set up the right systems in place in line with Train to Gain guidance.
- 5) To foster the partnership, the lead partner carries out quarterly partnership events which are used to update partners on progress as well as disseminating any new guidance.

2.5 Key Characteristics of High Performing Providers Delivery Model

There are six common characteristics likely to be found across high performing providers in relation to how their delivery models are set up.

- **Partnership** – those delivering Train to Gain via a consortium have a strong emphasis on partnership working and making their consortia as partnership based as possible (i.e. more than just a lead contractor and sub contractor relationship). There is a strong commitment to working in partnership as well as in fostering and building relationships based on openness, transparency and communication. Partnership events are held on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly and used to update partners on progress, disseminate new information and host workshops etc).
- **Quality Assurance** – high performers tend to have stringent quality assurance processes in relation to either bringing on new partners to the consortium and, thereafter, in working with partners on an ongoing basis or with regards to processing the paper work.
- **Staff roles** - high performing providers have clear roles and responsibilities for their Train to Gain staff. For example, those involved in liaising directly with employers within their Employer Engagement/Sales Teams have professional experience in sales or some commercial experience and those involved in delivery such as assessors have industry backgrounds.
- **Train to Gain coverage** – high performing providers, particularly those delivering on a consortia basis are able to cover most sector areas. Single contractors are likely to focus on delivering in specific areas where they have strengths.
- **Linkages with other programmes** – high performing providers tend to develop better linkages between their Train to Gain contracts and other programmes that they deliver e.g. linking in Train to Gain with Apprenticeships or Employability Contracts.
- **Continuous improvement** - high performing providers are likely to have introduced changes to their area of work e.g. in relation to tightening quality processes such as improving quality of training and introducing quarterly reviews with subcontractors.

3.0 Employer Journey

The high performing providers visited as part of the study demonstrated clear processes in relation to how they source their intelligence from employers through to the initial point of contact and the employer delivery process. This section highlights a number of case studies in this area.

3.1 Employer processes of high performing providers

High performing providers tend to share common characteristics within 7 key areas in relation to their employer processes as follows:

- **Multiple methods for sourcing employer leads** – high performing providers are likely to use multiple methods to source employer leads including: liaising with local councils and Chambers of Commerce; marketing work, breakfast/business meetings with employers, leads being brought in by curriculum areas within FE colleges, experimental engagement of targeting particular sectors, tele-sales, networking in the business world, working with employers in mutually beneficial arrangements, asking existing clients for leads, looking at job adverts to see which companies are recruiting; initiatives such as hosting events themselves and self referrals from employers.
- **Size of employer** - high performers work with a wide range of employers in terms of size and the majority delivered Train to Gain to large employers.
- **Managing employer relationships** –high performing providers tend to establish long term relationships with their employers and acknowledge the importance of managing these relationships on an ongoing basis. Historical relationships are important to them most of which generate repeat businesses as a result.
- **Flexible delivery and meeting the needs of the business** - high performing providers are flexible in relation to their delivery and emphasise the importance of being responsive to employers' needs.
- **Developing Bespoke provision** - innovation emerges as a cross-cutting theme with regards to the provision of high performing providers. These include developing bespoke packages for employers such as new qualifications and piloting specific areas of activity in relation to their delivery of Train to Gain. Piloting of different approaches could include approaches to delivering Skills for Life with an employer, the introduction of E Portfolios, the piloting of delivery in a different sector and the piloting of an approach to working with a particular employer.

- **Monitoring employer satisfaction** – high performing providers constantly monitor feedback from employers through a variety of ways, including evaluation forms at the end of the learning programme and also through employer surveys linked to the self assessment process.
- **Business like mentality** –high performing providers have a business like attitude/commercial approach to the way the manage relationships with employers. Their professionalism is also evident in the members of staff interviewed as part of the study.

Figure 3.1 Example of an employer journey for two high performing providers delivering on a single contract basis

Case Study: PTP, Single Provider (sub contracting Skills for Life)	Case Study: FE College, Single Provider
<p>Background</p> <p>This provider was involved in the ETP pilot and has been delivering Train to Gain ever since. The provider specialises in delivering ITQ.</p> <p>Outline of Process of Working with Employers</p> <p><u>Initial contact with the employer</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) This starts with the telesales team who source their own leads using the EDS website, Applegate etc (the team used to buy databases but have found this approach as effective). 2) After contacting an employer and gaining their interest, the telesales team will book an appointment with them for an advisor to visit. 3) Advisors visit the employer and sell the initial concept to the employer at an inception meeting. <p><u>Beginning the Training</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Following the inception meeting, the advisors inform the telesales team what actions need to be taken e.g. creating a letterhead including the employer’s and the provider’s logo so information can be sent out to employees. 5) The telesales team will then arrange for the employer and learners to have an enrolment 	<p>Background</p> <p>The college is a large provider. It is an autonomous unit which delivers employer responsive provision i.e. it has its own delivery staff. The organisation rarely talks about Train to Gain rather employer responsive provision as a whole. It has traditionally always worked with national employers.</p> <p>The college acquires leads through various means: networking in the business world which it has found to be most effective, linking up with other businesses in mutually beneficial arrangements, asking clients to nominate 5 leads etc. Train to Gain has extended the organisation’s competition so it categorises clients now into four groups as part of risk management e.g. those who are loyal and will stay with the college etc</p> <p>Outline of Process of Working with Employers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Leads are brought in by the Sales Team and the Key Account Managers from the Employer Responsiveness Team. The insistence is that they are warm and qualified to start with e.g. if the team attends a networking event, the first thing it does is to bring the leads back, earmark who it wants to follow up with and act immediately that day by calling the employer back. 2) The Employer Responsiveness Team will liaise with the employer to find out what the needs are,

<p>meeting with an Advisor.</p> <p>6) The enrolment meeting is carried out with the Advisor. 1 hour is dedicated to induction/training needs analysis and 2 hours are dedicated to underpinning knowledge/discovering what level learners are at/ developing a programme for learners.</p> <p>7) The advisors create individual training plans and give them to the learners with distance learning resources to be completed before training begins.</p> <p>8) The administration team then assigns a group of learners to a trainer so the programme can begin.</p>	<p>putting together the ONA and doing a Return on Investment matrix.</p> <p>3) The Employer Responsiveness Team returns to college and matches the needs to delivery; the Employer Responsiveness team liaises with the delivery team to make sure the package that is put together meets the client's needs.</p> <p>4) Delivery will deliver the product and the Employer Responsiveness Team check to ensure that everything is as it should be.</p>
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Figure 3.2 Diagram of an employer journey for a private training provider on a single contract

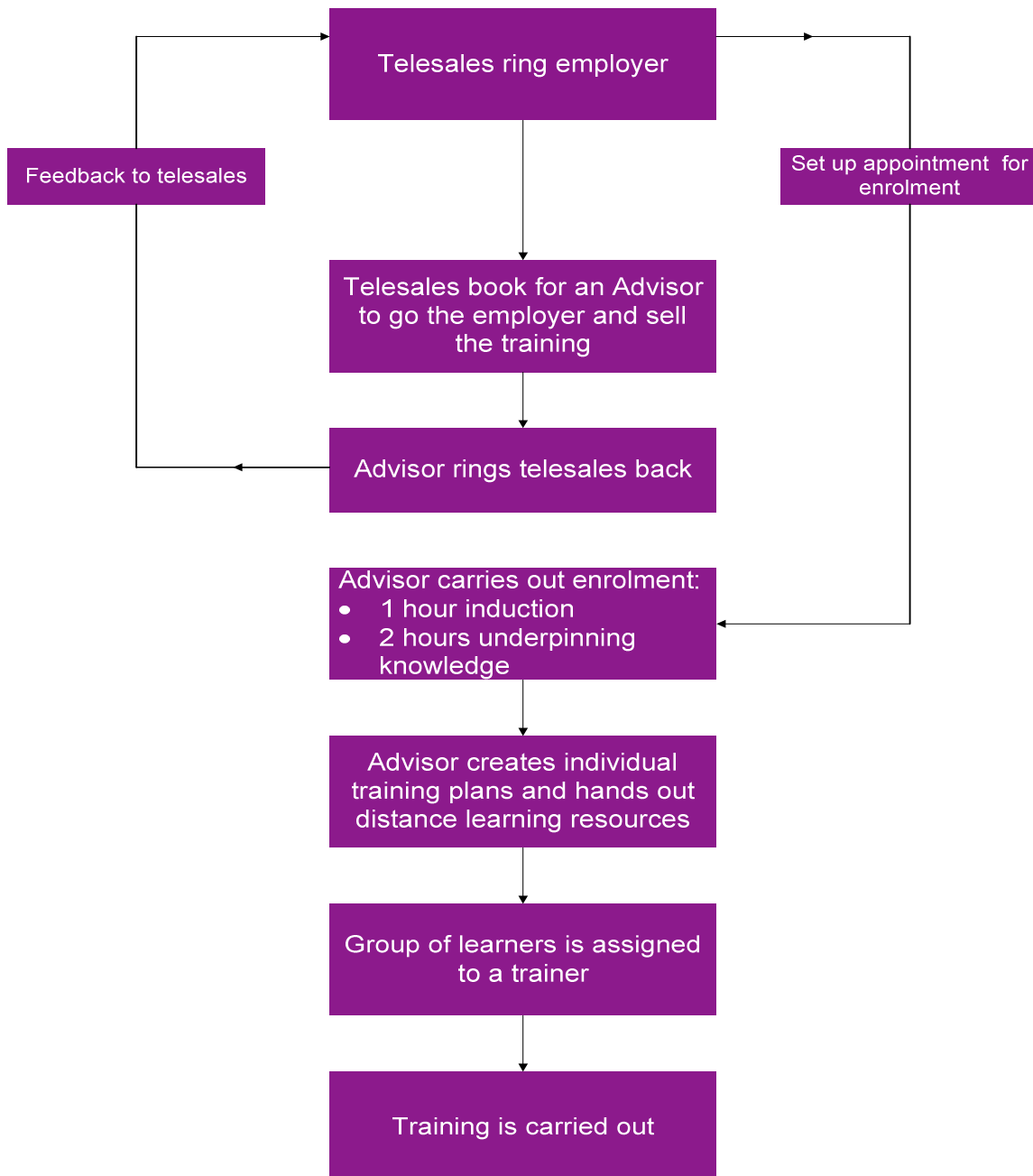


Figure 3.3 Diagram of an employer journey for a College delivering on a single contract

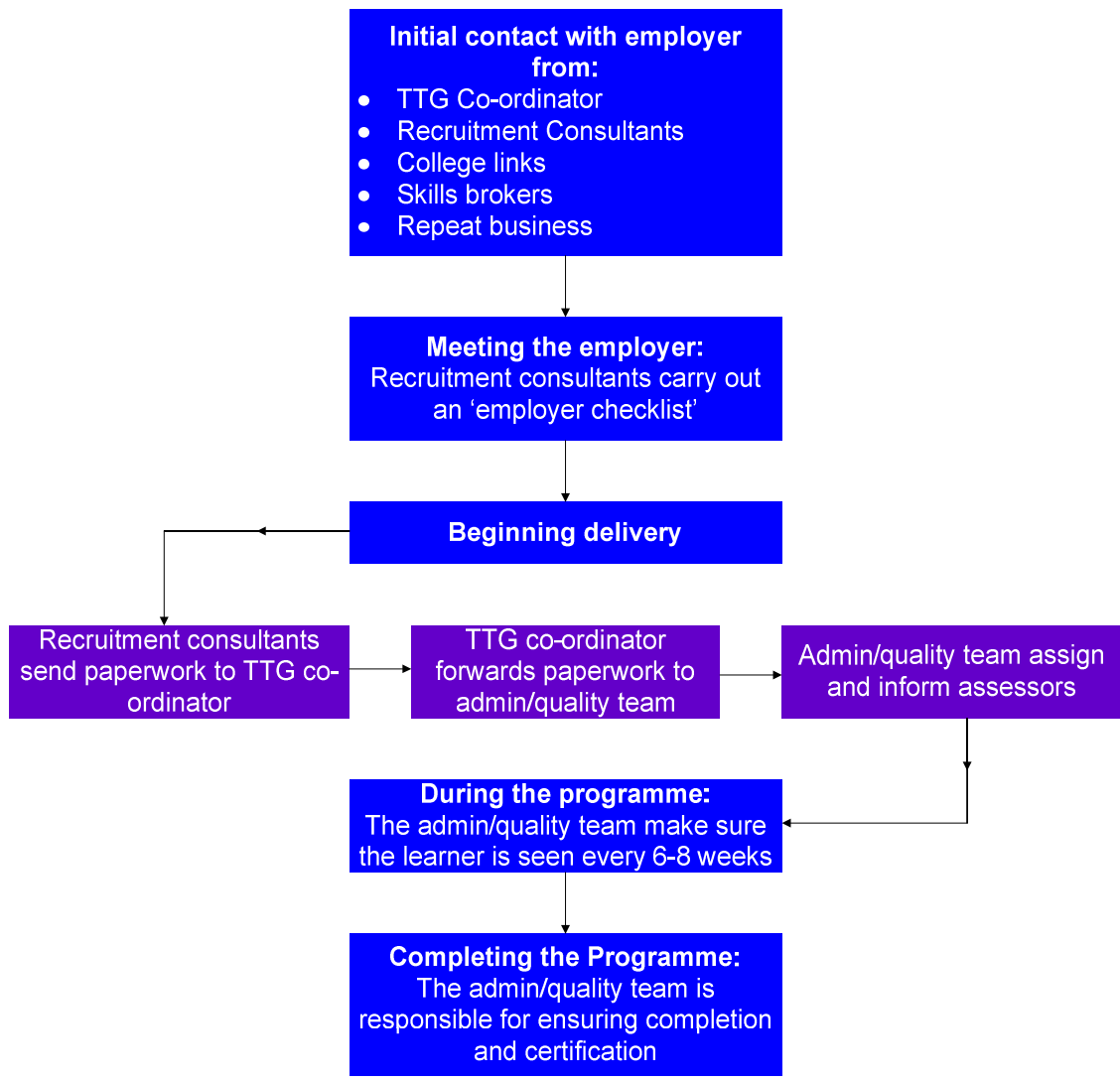


Figure 3.4 Example of the employer journey of a high provider delivering on a consortium basis

Case Study: FE College, Lead Partner of a Consortium

Background

This provider is a large organisation and a national provider. It is the lead partner in a consortium with 45 private training providers and has been involved this area of work since the ETP.

Outline of Process of Working with Employers

The core strategy of the lead partner is to establish how best to address employer needs and assess the best way to deliver to them i.e. whether to do so via the full cost recovery, WBL or Train to Gain route. The provider will visit an employer with an offer and look at the different options that could support their needs i.e. whether it is appropriate to offer support via the WBL route, full cost recovery route or Train to Gain route. The Train to Gain provision is offered as part of the 'overall offer'. The college focuses on developing 'long term relationships with employers'. The full process is outlined as follows:

1. An initial contact is made with the employer after a lead has been established which may come via various routes such as breakfast meetings/networks, employer forums etc
2. Once the initial contact is made, the sales team will visit the employer and ascertain the employer's needs. The sales team approach this from a 'business point of view' i.e. from the businesses perspective and what it is trying to achieve.
3. Once this has been established, the sales team examines the best training option routes which can be used to support the employer's needs i.e. whether to go via the Train to Gain route or WBL route.
4. Following on from this, specialist support is assigned to the employer i.e. the actual delivery team either using an assessor or trainer that will deliver to an employer.
5. The most appropriate delivery style is then ascertained - for example, some workers may be working on a shift pattern basis hence in some cases timescales need to be explored and the best option for that employer.
6. Once that has been established, they work with either the external team (partners) or internal team to explore the best way to deliver (i.e. the best partner to deliver to the employer).
7. They [sales team] maintain a 'pastoral role' throughout to ensure that employer's needs are met and ascertain the effectiveness of the training.
8. Once training has been completed they will go back to the employer to look at what effect the training has had on the business – i.e. assess the benefits of the training.

4.0 Skills for Life within Train to Gain

The delivery of Skills for Life targets has been a particular challenge for the East Midlands. This section presents case studies of how successful high performing providers deliver Skills for Life within Train to Gain.

4.1 Embedding Skills for Life within Train to Gain

The approach to delivering Skills for Life varies across high performing providers. Several sub contract their Skills for Life delivery to specialist organisations in this area. Others have specialists within their organisations that deliver Skills for Life.

In some cases, Skills for Life is also delivered in parallel with an NVQ, embedded within an NVQ or delivered separately. High performing providers however do agree that it is difficult to 'sell' Skills for Life to employers but suggest approaches that have worked in relation to their delivery such as contextualising it within the specific job roles of the employee, promoting it as part of the package rather than a separate entity and as part of the whole Train to Gain service.

Example of how three high performing providers who have exceeded 100% of their Skills for Life targets deliver Skills for Life is outlined below. These case studies highlight different reasons for their success in this area.

Figure 4.1 Delivering Skills for Life within Train to Gain

Case Study: PTP, Lead Partner of a Consortium	Case Study: Network, Lead Partner of a Consortium	Case Study: FE College, Lead Partner of a Consortium
<p>This provider has been successful because it has managed to sell Skills for Life to its employers with employees who mostly have literacy and numeracy needs, particularly a large private employer and its clients.</p> <p>The provider believes it has good Skills for Life numbers because it has managed to get some of the larger employers and their clients on board. Despite its success, this provider still believes it can improve its Skills for Life delivery by embedding it fully into the NVQs.</p>	<p>Initially this consortium struggled in delivering its Skills for Life targets. The Lead Partner analysed the capacity of providers in the consortium to deliver Skills for Life and realised that within the consortium it did not have as many deliverers of Skills for Life as it would have liked.</p> <p>In the second year of its Train to Gain contract, therefore, the Lead Partner put out a tender for an organisation to deliver Skills for Life. A training provider was appointed, as a result, as a Skills for Life Champion to deliver Skills for Life and work alongside other providers in the consortium. This approach has been successful. As a result of the work that the Skills for Life champion has done alongside other providers in the consortium, 5 providers within the consortium have now gone on to appoint Skills for Life assessors and deliver themselves.</p>	<p>This provider and the consortium it leads works predominantly with public sector employers. It's Skills for Life provision is mainly generated via their links with its provision supported by Trade Union education through its Trade Union Academy. The Unions and their learner representatives are therefore key in relation to spreading the message to their employers about the importance of Literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>The provider sells the benefits of Skills for life by explaining to the employer how it can be embedded into their employee's area of work.</p> <p>During the needs analysis process of an employer, if appropriate and if available, Union Learner representatives will be brought in to the discussions with the employer. The college has found that liaising with the Union Learner representatives and involving them in the process of establishing needs, has been key to its delivery of its Skills for Life targets as they are able to put the case to employers effectively.</p>

5.0 Employer Strategies and Systems

The high performing providers involved in the case studies had developed a number of strategies and systems to support their Train to Gain delivery. This section highlights the key findings in relation to these strategies and systems using case studies as an illustration where possible.

5.1 Strategies and systems used to inform Train to Gain delivery

Most high performing providers would have developed Employer Engagement and Marketing Strategy documents to support their Train to Gain delivery. Others would have additional but related strategies such as a strategy focusing on key sectors, a basic skills strategy, for those delivering in a consortium a consortium plan and working with external stakeholders such as the SSCs and RDAs.

Whilst the majority of high performing providers have MI and CRM systems in place; many are looking to improve the systems they currently use. Some lead partners of consortia are planning on moving to a web based system so they can share information more easily with their partners.

The case studies below illustrate examples of strategic documents developed by three providers

Figure 5.1 Examples of Providers' Strategies

Case Study: PTP, Single Provider	Case Study: FE College, Lead Partner of a Consortium	Case Study: PTP, Lead Partner of a Consortium
<p>This provider delivers Train to Gain as a single provider and was involved in the ETP Pilot.</p> <p>The provider has an Employer Engagement and Marketing Strategy. It has a Communications Strategy and a Basic Skills Strategy. In addition to the above, it has developed a document called 'Leading the Growth in Skills' which is separate to their business plan but focuses on the growth of the organisation and how it is going to grow its business around the skills that it delivers.</p> <p>This training provider which has</p>	<p>The provider used for this case study is an FE College and the lead partner of a consortium of 21 partners. It delivers in most sectors.</p> <p>The college's Principal has produced a strategy for the college based on a number of key themes. One of these themes is Market Success which has 20 objectives.</p> <p>The first four of these objectives relate to the School of Business Development which is responsible for Train to Gain and relate to the targets set for the Head of School. These are monitored</p>	<p>This provider is a private sector organisation which manages a consortium of 20 providers within the East Midlands. The consortium covers most of the sectors in relation to their Train to Gain delivery.</p> <p>It was involved in the ETP pilots and has been involved in Train to Gain since then.</p> <p>The provider has its own employer engagement, marketing plan and business strategy which all feed into a consortium plan that it has also developed.</p> <p>Its sub-contractors all feed into its</p>

<p>developed E-Portfolios also has a related system called 'Learner Vision' which is a management tool. This is a transparent system allowing anyone with access to look at each individual learner's progress. The provider's staff can access the system to see the current status of the learner, the learner and employer can also access the system. An employer can look at 'Learner Vision' through their E-Portfolio system, they can log in with their own individual passwords through the website and access information about learners' progress which is presented in charts and graphs; the learner can do the same.</p>	<p>quarterly through meetings with the Senior Management Team (SMT).</p> <p>This College is currently hoping to move to a web based CRM system which will enable all involved to share the system (including the partners)</p>	<p>self assessment report and quality improvement plan. The subcontractors feed in their SARS and QIPS which inform the overall plan for the consortium.</p> <p>The provider has designed its own internal Train to Gain system.</p>
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6.0 Success Factors in delivering Train to Gain

The study also explored the key factors that have contributed to high performing providers' success in Train to Gain. It also explored key lessons learnt as a result of delivering their Train to Gain provision and areas that they would like to improve in the near future.

6.1 Key Factors that have contributed to high performing providers success

Key success factors in relation high performing providers can be structured under three core themes as follows.

- **Staff/team** - high performing providers tend to have a strong team, proactive **team** and dedicated team delivering a professional service.
- **Flexibility and responsiveness** – high performers are often **flexible and responsive** to employers need and have an ability to adapt to change.
- **Partnership working** – for those delivering on a consortia basis the importance of **building strong partnership relationships** is core to their approach to delivery. Partnership working is based on an **open and honest approach**. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of **'managing those partnerships and relationships effectively'**.

Other areas mentioned were around experience, enthusiasm, having a clear strategic direction, having robust quality assurance/audit processes.

6.2 Key Lessons for Successful Delivery

In relation to key lessons for success delivery, most of the high performing providers emphasise the need to **be realistic** and not overpromising in terms of what can be delivered and learning lessons around changing the culture of the organisations and ensuring that good quality systems are in place for delivery.

6.3 Advice for Other Providers

The study also explored with the high performing providers what advice they would give to others delivering Train to Gain provision. The emerging themes were linked to the themes outlined under the key lessons section such as:

- Being realistic and having a **realistic** strategy and targets
- Developing a **'business attitude'** to the delivery of Train to Gain

- **Flexibility** around what is being delivered
- Developing competency and capability in an area; to do 'pockets' initially than try as opposed to delivering in every sector
- **Building long term relationships** with employers
- To try and make it a dedicated provision and not a hybrid (for FE colleges whose curriculum areas deliver)
- **Financial competence** - developing strong the financial projections and have a business plan
- Quality assurance processes such as developing **strong contract management** processes for a consortium with regular reviews, regular contact and regular performance management and having a good quality approval procedure for bringing subcontractors on board

