



connect learning gazette

Issue seven | May 2009

*Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.
Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.*
Henry Ford

Welcome to the seventh issue of *Connect Learning Gazette* – learning and development resource dedicated to Union Learning Reps.

If you come across any interesting snippets of information that you would like to pass on to the others, please e-mail sasha@connectuk.org.

What's New?

New guidance to make the most of every taxpayer's pound spent

New guidance to help Government departments encourage contractors to provide skills training and apprenticeships in all publicly let contracts was launched today by Skills Secretary John Denham and Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Angela Eagle. Full article is here http://www.dius.gov.uk/news_and_speeches/press_releases/ogc_procurement_guide

Getting ready for Digital Britain

According to a recent report from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the average adult spends almost half of his or her waking hours using the products and services of the digital information and communications industries, whether at work, at home or on the move.

The report identifies three broad categories of skills needed for Britain to be at the forefront of the global digital economy.

- Digital Life Skills - needed by all
- Digital Work Skills - needed by most
- Digital Economy Skills - needed by some

View the interim report here: http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/broadcasting/5944.aspx

On the Couch with e-skills UK

e-skills UK – creating the skills for Digital Britain

Karen Price, e-skills UK's CEO, attended the Digital Britain summit in London on 17th April.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Culture Secretary Andy Burnham, Business Secretary Peter Mandelson, Sly Bailey (Chief Executive, Trinity Mirror) and John Fingleton (Chief Executive, Office of Fair Trading) addressed the 250 attendees. Four panel discussions were held throughout the day to debate the key challenges set out in the interim Digital Britain Report.

Karen was pleased that e-skills UK's strategic vision, 'that the UK is recognised as a global leader in delivering business value from technology', is in line with government thinking. This was evident in the Prime Minister's speech when he said: 'Only by embracing a digital Britain and taking a lead in the global digital economy can we maintain our competitiveness as one of the world's leading economic and industrial powers in years to come.'

As well as attending the summit, e-skills UK, jointly with Skillset, has provided input into "Digital Britain: the interim report" published in January.

The interim report contains more than 20 recommendations, including specific proposals on next generation networks, universal access to broadband, the creation of a second public service provider of scale, the modernisation of wireless radio spectrum holdings, a digital future for radio, a new deal for digital content rights, and enhancing the digital delivery of public services.

The response to the interim report from e-skills UK and Skillset covers:

- > an assessment of productivity and skills gaps
- > an assessment of the existing education and training infrastructure
- > the case for change in relation to skills for Digital Britain
- > recommendations for action, including details of specific proposals to implement these recommendations

To download a summary of the response, please go to www.e-skills.com/digitalbritain.



New National Occupational Standards and ITQ documentation now available

e-skills UK are delighted to announce that the new National Occupational Standards for IT Users have now been approved for use with effect from March 2009 and that the new ITQ (NVQ/SVQ for IT Users) should be widely available from August 2009 onwards.

National Occupational Standards set out measurable performance outcomes to which an individual is expected to work in a given occupation. Developed by employers across the UK, NOS set out the skills, knowledge and understanding required to perform competently in the workplace.

These new standards are one of the main outcomes of a comprehensive review project to ensure the NOS are brought up-to-date given both the rapidly changing IT user environment and developments across the UK to streamline the format and layout of standards in readiness for transition to qualifications based on national qualifications frameworks.

The review set out a number of key objectives for the new NOS to:

- build on the expertise and approach reflected in the previous version (providing full coverage of the previous version where it exists)
- underpin all IT user qualifications, reflecting the breadth and depth of current practice, giving clarity for employers, and allowing differentiation between the IT user skill sets appropriate for and gained by different users
- reflect the changing and increasing use of IT for creative and collaborative tasks
- have a greater focus on skills than on knowledge
- provide a simple framework for all IT User qualifications
- provide clear articulation with Functional Skills, Skills for Life, Essential Skills, Adult Basic Skills, Key and Core skills standards
- provide clear articulation with IT Professional standards
- expressed in simple and straightforward language, amplified with examples of both content and context
- easily navigated and uniquely referenced

The second part of the review project focused on updating the ITQ qualification structure and assessment strategy in the light of the new national qualification and credit frameworks.

The standards and ITQ documentation is available in pdf format at www.e-skills.com/nos/itusers.



Adult learners “lowest since '97”

The proportion of adult learners in the UK is at its lowest level since Labour came to power, a survey suggests.

Link to the full BBC article <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8038412.stm>

Latest research from e-skills UK

e-skills UK have released their latest e-skills Bulletin. This quarter's Bulletin indicates that in the ICT sector, the economy was not as bad at the end of last year as we may have originally thought.

Key findings for Q4.08 include:

- Continued growth in the number of ICT staff in employment, with the number now at its highest level for over seven years.
- Quarter on quarter, the unemployment rate for ICT staff has fallen.
- Demand for ICT staff continuing to fall during the final quarter of 2008, with the number of advertisements for permanent and contract staff falling by 24% and 27% respectively over the Q3-Q4.08 period (to 98,000 and 23,000 positions).
- A drop in business confidence during the final quarter of the year and an increase in the number of company liquidations, but some increases in sector turnover and trade performance when compared with the previous quarter.
- Increases in hardware and software spending which put IT investment at its highest level since the same period a year ago.
- While advertised salaries have fallen in each of the past five quarters, actual pay awards to those in work have shown an increase over the past two.
- Employers still reporting hard-to-fill vacancies in the areas of Systems Development, IT/Telecoms Management, Programming and Systems Design.
- A number of tech skills also proving 'credit crunch resistant' including WAP, COM, Active X, and Sage (all of which featured in an increasing number of ads for both permanent and contract staff over the Q3-Q4.08 period).
- The top ten skills demanded by employers identified as SQL, C, C#, .NET, SQL SVR, Java, Oracle, ASP, C++ and Unix).

For the full version of the Bulletin please click www.e-skills.com/bulletin



Spread the Word

Informal adult learning White Paper: The Learning Revolution

The White Paper, 'The Learning Revolution', was launched on 23 March 2009 and sets out the Government's strategy for informal learning

Government recognises the profound importance of informal adult learning to people's lives and our nation's well-being. Informal learning can help people gain personal satisfaction, development and fulfilment. For the low skilled and with poor experiences of formal education, informal learning can be an important stepping stone to further learning, qualifications and more rewarding work. It can help keep people mentally and physically active and independent into old age. It can also bring people and communities together.

This strategy reaffirms cross-government commitment to informal learning and sets out how the Government will act as an enabler, capacity builder and connector to maximise the potential benefits. For full information visit

http://www.dius.gov.uk/skills/engaging_learners/informal_adult_learning/white_paper

Money to Learn

Denham calls for a 'summer of learning' in keynote speech during Adult Learners' Week

Organisations can bid for a share of £20 million in Government cash from today to open up and promote informal learning for adults and young people across the country.

In a speech to NIACE's Annual Policy Conference, Skills Secretary John Denham kicked off the bidding process, publishing a prospectus designed to show how a wide range of groups and partnerships of all sizes can win funding. The deadline for bids is July 12 this year but an "early bird" funding pot of £1 million is available for ideas submitted by June 12. Mr Denham said the money will herald a "summer of learning" for young people and adults – whether for fun, or to get the skills and qualifications needed to get into or on at work.

The Transformation Fund delivers on a pledge made in the Government's Learning Revolution White Paper published in March which describes how Government and a multitude of partner organisations can work together to create a new movement for informal learning.

Its aims include:

- encouraging more and different people into learning, particularly people from disadvantaged groups
- opening up access to learning in new places, in new ways and at more flexible times
- supporting people to drive their own learning through self organised groups and learning clubs widening choice, by developing and sharing innovative content
- making better use of broadcasting and technology to stimulate and support learning
- supporting a new culture of learning, including driving sign ups to the Learning Revolution principles, its pledge and Open Space Movement

The Transformation Fund Prospectus 2009-10 can be found at

http://www.dius.gov.uk/~media/publications/L/learningrev_prospectus. For more information visit http://www.dius.gov.uk/news_and_speeches/press_releases/learning_revolution_transformation_fund.aspx

Beyond Learning

CIPD survey showing rise in job satisfaction suggests that worried workers' response to the recession is to grin and bear it

Job satisfaction has surprisingly increased since 2006* despite the impact of the recession, according to the new quarterly Employee Outlook survey of more than 3,000 employees by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

The survey finds that the net proportion of people satisfied with their job has increased to +46 from +26** in 2006 and the proportion of people who say their job makes them feel cheerful most or all of the time has also gone up.

However the survey suggests that fault lines are developing that will undermine employee wellbeing, morale and commitment if not addressed. Exactly three-quarters of respondents report their organisation has been affected by the recession with half (52%) citing increases in work-related stress as a consequence and nearly four in ten (38%) agreeing there has been a rise in office politics.

The proportion of people who say their jobs make them worried or tense has also increased since the CIPD's 2006 employee attitudes and engagement survey and nearly six in ten employees say they are worried by the future.

Any Other Business

Sasha's impending departure

This is a penultimate issue of the Gazette, produced by Sasha. As you may or may not know, on the 1st of July, Sasha's secondment will be coming to an end and she will be returning to her permanent place of work. June's issue of the Gazette will be co-produced with Kacie, who will take over the work on the Gazette from July.

Your feedback on the Gazette is now more important than ever – please let me know how we can improve it, what sort of information you would like to see more of, what is less important and can be dropped. Your views are greatly appreciated and will help Kacie to take the Gazette to the next level.

