

National Skills Academy for Health

1. Report of the Workshop held on 1st December 2005

On December 1st 2005, Skills for Health hosted a workshop to consider the development of a National Skills Academy for Health. A report of the views expressed by the delegates to this workshop was then considered by the Skills for Health Board on 16th December 2005.

I have attached a copy of the report and would welcome your comments on the contents. Please feel free to circulate it to interested colleagues and invite them to comments as well.

2. Skills for Health Board Response

In the light of the views expressed at the workshop, the Skills for Health Board took the view that a National Skills Academy for Health should be developed from a series of Regional Academies in each of the 9 English Government regions. The Regional Academies should build on a network of existing centres of excellence in health training provision, including work-based learning providers and CoVEs. These would come together in a network with the support of local NHS, Independent and Voluntary sector employers to build on best practice, enhance local provision and share innovation, creativity and development of learning programmes.

At national level, the Regional Academies would form a network to share good practice, stimulate and coordinate innovation and encourage high quality, accessible training provision for priority groups of the health sector workforce.

The Board's view is that this approach would best meet the wishes expressed by health sector employers to build on the best of existing provision, sharing and stimulating the development of good practice and innovation, without duplicating effort or creating large national infrastructures. The emphasis would be on local delivery supported by local employers, with the regional and national elements of the Academies essentially being highly effective communication networks to identify, share and influence the development of best practice.

The Board acknowledged that an important element in the success of an Academy would be the need to focus initially on a limited number of key priorities. These are likely to include developing the new 14-19 Specialist Diplomas, NVQs 1-3 and Skills for Life. It was considered that an Academy could play a significant role in the implementation of the Sector Skills Agreement and should also be closely integrated with the development of brokerage services, both regionally and nationally.

3. Next Steps

The next steps in the process of developing a National Skills Academy for Health are to; Invite further comments on the report of the workshop and the outline vision developed by the Skills for Health Board. If you or any of your colleagues would like to comment of the views expressed at the workshop and the vision developed by the Board, please send these to Sara Hannon at Sara.Hannon@skillsforhealth.org.uk

Consider the DfES prospectus for the second Tranche of National Skills Academies, (estimated issue date March 2006)

Convene a second workshop in May 2006 to further develop the approach to a National Skills Academy for Health, including governance arrangements, taking account of the detailed prospectus. This workshop will be open to interested parties who may wish to be involved in the development of the National Skills Academy, including education and training providers, health sector commissioners and employers from the NHS, Independent and Voluntary Sectors. Details of the date and venue will be circulated shortly. If you would like information on this workshop to be sent to you please contact Sara Hannon by email at the address above or by telephone on 0121 767 1388.

4. Conclusion

A National Skills Academy for Health offers the opportunity to make Major improvements in the provision of education and training for the health sector. The key to its success is the engagement and support of employers across the sector in the design and development stages.

Please take this opportunity to shape the nature of a National Skills Academy by circulating this letter and report widely, commenting on the development of ideas to date and participating in the next workshop. With your help we can design a National Skills Academy that genuinely meets the needs of the whole health sector.