

Sustainability Workshop Notes: 4 October Forum

1. TEC Requirements:
 - a. Application – outline how sustainability will be approached
 - b. Reporting - outline what is going to be done
2. What can we realistically expect from a 40-hour LN programme? What sorts of things are you looking at? Having conversations about? When do you start these conversations?

Employer Intentions

- The Upskilling Partnership Programme Evaluation found 12 of 15 companies were continuing either with training programmes or further work, all of whom had received additional government funding to do this, (Department of Labour, 2010).¹
- Research on the workplace literacy fund found five of the seven practice sites in the study intended to carry on work in some way, including upskilling a training co-ordinator, establishing peer mentoring networks and linking in to ITOs, (Alkema, 2105).²
- Analysis of 35 final reports submitted to the TEC by employers (2013-2015) shows the majority of employers were intending to continue the literacy and numeracy work by upskilling in-house trainers, pathwaying workers onto qualifications, reviewing and revising company documentation. The analysis also showed that sustainability depended on:
 - whether the programme is messaged as workforce development or as fixing a problem
 - the extent to which providers are able and prepared to drive a sustainable approach
 - the extent to which employers are prepared, and have the capability and capacity to do further work without government funding, (Alkema, 2016).³
- These employers' intentions fall into the following levels:
 - Macro - where WPL programmes support broader company-wide initiatives, for example, the introduction of a lean manufacturing process
 - Meso - dovetailing into existing training structures and career development
 - Micro – reviewing and rewriting individual policies, procedures and practices.

¹ Department of Labour. (2010). *Upskilling partnership programme: Evaluation report*. Wellington: Department of Labour.

² Alkema, A. (2015). *Maximising the benefits of the workplace literacy fund*. Wellington: Industry Training Federation.

³ Alkema, A. (2016). *Workplace literacy fund: Employer-led outcomes report 2013-2015*. Wellington: Industry Training Federation.

While the employers intend to carry on, research from the UK⁴ suggests there are issues with sustainability, namely that:

- it is difficult to sustain provision where there is lack of management continuity and lack of organisational support at top management and line management level
- it is difficult to sustain programmes during economic downturns
- sustainable programmes require flexibility on the part of the employer and the provider and also require a champion or 'change agent' to drive them forward.

Following up: Impact evaluation

Part of the Skills Highway work is to conduct an impact evaluation where we will follow-up with companies nine and 18 months after the completion of a programme. The conversations will explore work and changes in relation to processes and learning and economic and social outcomes. The figure below outlines aspects that will be taken into consideration.

Figure One: Impact Framework



⁴ Evans, K., Waite, E. & Kersh, N. (2012). The challenge of establishing sustainable workplace 'Skills for Life' provision in the UK: organizational 'strategies' and individual 'tactics'. *Journal of Education and Work*. DOI:10.1080/13639080.2012.742180; Finlay, I., Hodgson, A., and Steer, R. (2007). Flowers in the desert: The impact of policy on basic skills provision in the workplace. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. 59(2): 231–248.

Workshop attendees

- confirmed that an impact evaluation was beneficial and there was general agreement to the framework and the possibility of following up 2-3 years after programme completion
- would like consideration given to:
 - looking at how employers enable transfer / opportunities to practise we skills
 - acknowledging the time it takes to build programmes
 - the need for company champions
 - the role of supervisors
 - the development of communication skills, financial literacy skills
 - how valued individuals feel.