

2013/31

24 April 2013

Pocket Watch – The FE Guild moves ever nearer

Introduction

Conceived by John Hayes, blessed by Lord Lingfield and moulded into shape by a number of lead partners in the sector, the FE Guild moved a significant step nearer recently with the launch of an **Implementation Plan** covering the next few months. Things have moved pretty quickly since the idea first took hold last autumn and the schedule remains demanding. This latest Plan lists 18 tasks that need tackling between now and launch date in August and that's just for starters. Decisions covering anything from long-term funding and the case for a covenant to whether to include a learner rep at Board level and what to do with legacy work, all need resolving shortly. This is how things look at the moment

How will the Guild be organised?

The Implementation Plan allows for transitional arrangements to apply while the structure takes shape but essentially the aim is for a small central team, just over 30 in all and while an exact office location has yet to be determined, it's unlikely to include a regional structure. As far as possible, the Guild will operate through existing networks and buy in expertise where needed although it's keen not to become purely a commissioning agency. In terms of management structures, there will be an executive Board made up of about 12 directors from across the sector serving fixed terms, a Chief Executive and Chair and a number of Standing Committees and/or professional panels covering areas like finance, research and qualifications. Sector ownership and thereby sector involvement is seen as the determining feature at every level. The Guild will operate as a Company Limited by Guarantee and will register as a charity.

What will it do?

One thing it won't do is to take on responsibility for the qualification system for learners, nor will it attempt to duplicate the work of Ofqual or Ofsted. Make a difference rather than try and take on the world is the name of the game so the focus will be around three core areas: Professional Standards and Qualifications for teachers, trainers and tutors, including the supply of initial teacher training and accredited CPD; Teaching, Learning and Assessment, arguably the most critical part of its work, where a key aspect will be working with the recommendations of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning to develop practitioner expertise; Leadership, Management and Governance, developing among other things current and aspiring leadership capabilities. It will also have research and knowledge sharing roles, building on some of the work in the Excellence Gateway through a new, knowledge sharing platform

How will it be funded?

The Government has allocated some initial funding, £18m for August 2013-March 2014 with an indicative £18.8m for the year after. Like predecessor bodies the aim is for the Guild, or whatever name it eventually adopts, to become more financially self-reliant although this leaves a delicate balance between chasing the money and serving the sector. Current proposals see the Guild calling for top slicing of the overall Skills budget from the current LSIS allocation for 2015/16 and then looking to identify income generating opportunities from 2016/17 but inevitably funding is a high priority in the 18 tasks listed in the Implementation Plan



Steve Besley

Head of Policy (UK and International)

Pearson Think Tank

Pocket Watches are intended to provide quick, informal updates on national developments. Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.

FE Guild Plans April 2013