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Enabling access to effective mentor support: ITT mentoring support available across a range of work-based learning providers.

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This is the Final Report to the Westminster Centre of Excellence in Teaching Training in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

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Enabling Access to Effective Mentor Support FINAL REPORT

ITT mentoring support available across a range of work-based learning providers

Key words

Mentoring, work-based learning, supporting mentors, ITT, initial teacher training, professionalisation

Summary

The research explores the nature of six small work-based learning providers in London and contrasts them to further education colleges. It identifies the complexities of the sector and the issues facing providers in supporting their own staff who need mentoring as part of their initial teacher training.

Context

From September 2007, it became mandatory that all teachers new to teaching in the LLS had to obtain a passport or licence to teach followed by a certificate or diploma in teaching dependent on their role (HMG, 2007). As many work-based learning providers deliver, support or assess provision funded by the LSC, they are regarded as being part of the LLS and hence their staff need be qualified too as specified by Lifelong Learning UK, the sector skills council for education in the post-compulsory sector: 'By 2010, every teacher will be qualified or working towards an SVUK endorsed qualification – including those working within work-based learning and funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This means that from now all staff employed as teachers in the FE sector must be professionally registered and all new staff must also be licensed to practise by the Institute for Learning (IfL). To be licensed, all teachers must be trained to a standard that allows them to achieve either Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status or Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS) status, depending on their role.' (LLUK, 2007). SVUK is the Standards Verification unit of LLUK which is responsible for setting the minimum standards required of teachers in the LLS.

'For the purposes of the new requirements, 'Teachers means anyone who is responsible for planning and carrying out teaching or learning activities with a learner or learners – irrespective of the amount of hours they do.

Learning delivery or teaching means:

- Training or instructing
- Tutoring (with learners in the work place or off the job)
- Coaching in the workplace
- Teaching key skills or functional skills
- Planning and running inductions
- Delivering underpinning knowledge

The reforms also affect any sub-contractors or franchisees who deliver learning on [their] behalf. They may also apply to employers who receive funding for delivering learning (such as those Train to Gain employers who receive LSC funding for training hours).' (LLUK, 2007)

LLUK continues to advise work-based learning providers that 'If [they] are in receipt of LSC funding [they] need to:

1. Ensure new teachers gain an SVUK endorsed qualification or check with the LLUK Information and Advice Service (IAS) to see if they hold an equivalent, and are licensed to practice
2. Encourage existing teachers to qualify or have their existing qualifications and/or their experience confirmed or recognised
3. Support teachers to join the IfL
4. Ensure all teachers keep a record and reflective account of their CPD activities and make this available to the IfL on request

For existing staff [providers] need to:

Determine [their] overall staff development strategy by:

- Carrying out a benchmarking activity across other parts of the sector if appropriate
- Mapping staff qualifications and experience
- Support them to achieve the appropriate qualifications or to have existing qualifications recognised as appropriate
- Support them to gain licensed practitioner status if required
- Encourage them to register with the IfL
- Encourage and support them to keep a reflective account of their CPD activities'.

One of the main differences between FE colleges and WBL environments is that in WBL the role of the teacher is often split between the person giving instruction and the person assessing. LLUK has recognized this and states 'The role of the assessor varies: if all they do is assess, then the reforms and regulations don't apply to them. However, if [...] assessors carry out any teaching then the reforms apply. Assessors who teach should therefore be considered 'teachers' and the reforms apply to them in the same way as either new teachers, who started teaching after September 2007 or existing teachers, who started before September 2007.'

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in its 2004 white paper entitled

Equipping our teachers for the future: Reforming initial teacher training for the Learning and Skills Sector, which underpins the LLUK document, went into some detail on how the reforms would be enacted. New teachers would have a mix of training which would include the 'Mentoring of teachers in the workplace.' This would fulfill 'an essential aim of the training [as] teachers should have the skills of teaching in their own specialist or curriculum area. The taught elements of teacher training courses are likely to be generic, because of the range of teachers taking part. Subject specific skills must be acquired in the teachers' workplace and from vocational or academic experience. Mentoring, either by line managers, subject experts or experienced teachers in related curriculum areas, is essential; There will be a minimum of eight observations during a full training course. Some must be conducted by mentors or managers in the teacher's workplace, and others by those delivering the taught elements of the course.'

To fund the reforms, Government (DCSF, 2004) stated: 'As well as funding quality provision, we will ask the LSC to ensure that employers of teachers

implement our new initial teacher training offer and support their staff who are training. An important mechanism is the LSC's three-year development planning process, which drives staff development at the provider level. College three-year plans already include a target for increasing the proportion of their teachers qualified to teach. In future, local LSCs will ask learning and skills providers to set out what teaching staff they need to deliver their aims, and what initial training and CPD they will put in place. Annual performance reviews of providers will ensure that delivery is on track.'

The same document notes that: 'Good teaching flourishes where teachers' employers provide systematic and comprehensive support for initial training, followed by ongoing professional development. We want to invest in developing and extending good practice on the part of employers in the sector.'

Aims and objectives

The research set out to identify and compare initial teacher training (ITT) mentoring support available to staff working across a range of work-based learning (WBL) providers. Specifically, it was to identify the range of support available, differences across institutions and barriers to be overcome in order to meet the requirements of the 2007 legislation affecting the Lifelong Learning Sector (LLS) and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded provision.

Methodology/Strategies

Six WBL providers interested in initial teacher training and supporting their teaching and assessing staff were invited to participate in the research and be interviewed. They were selected from a group of providers which meets regularly in London to explore ways to support their staff meet the new requirements. The six providers cover a range of subjects for example, motor vehicle, health, transport, business and IT as well as general provision such as Train to gain, Key Skills, Literacy and Numeracy. The providers are of different sizes and are spread across London and Kent. This diversity of provider ensures as broad an overview as possible of the sector, whilst acknowledging that this is still not a complete picture as large providers and companies with their own in-house training facilities are not included.

Structured interviews were used to ensure similar information was obtained from each provider. This would allow for comparisons to be drawn and enable a wider understanding of the sector. Of the six providers, three were interviewed jointly due to the interrelatedness of their staff. The other three providers were interviewed separately. Each interview was written into a case study and has been checked by the provider for accuracy. The interview brief and resulting four case studies can be found in the Appendices.

Where appropriate and available, existing literature and information has been drawn upon to add to the discussion and findings.

Outcomes and Impact & Learning points

Work-based learning providers are aware of the benefits of having qualified staff and in principle have no objections to the regulations having been

introduced. The issue is how to support staff, deliver quality service and remain financially solvent.

This section looks at the WBL environment and how this differs to the rest of the FE sector, WBL providers' attitude and response to the new regulations and how, in particular, they are fulfilling the mentoring requirement.

The WBL Environment

Each of the six providers interviewed was structured and functioned differently. Each company differs in size ranging from a core staff of less than fifteen through to just over a hundred and most employ a range of part-time staff for specific functions such as assessing and delivery, Company 2 estimating that it had approximately fifty assessors on its books compared to a core staff of thirty-five. The use of contractors for specific work enables the company to keep its overheads down as staff are brought in on a 'needs must' basis.

The companies differ in their delivery locations too. Company 3 does no training on its premises at all, whilst the others have a mix of on-site provision for catch-up, or specialist training. Company 2 has fully furnished learning spaces on its premises although it also uses satellite spaces depending on the contractual requirements and location. All the companies, whilst based in London and Kent have commitments outside of London stretching as far north as Bristol and East of England and one of them on Gibraltar. This accords with a report by Peninsular Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) (2008) which noted that most WBL providers in their area worked across more than one county.

Although companies had a main focus or specialist subject area, they had all extended their portfolio into related areas, for example Companies 2 and 3 respectively had courses on Business and Health and Social Care and Railway Maintenance and Health Care. All companies also delivered Train to gain and Key Skills, Literacy and Numeracy as part of their provision. Apart from Key Skills, Literacy and Numeracy being a requirement for professional recognition for some courses, it also attracts additional funding.

Some obvious differences between WBL and FE colleges became apparent during discussions. Although colleges have funding concerns, the majority of their funding comes through a fixed number of sources at given times. For WBL providers however, they appear reliant on having to source funding to the extent that there is a designated person responsible for writing and preparing bids. This includes sourcing funding from LSC which is one of the main funders of FE. Another major source of funding for companies is the European Social Fund (ESF), often linked to LSC funding or projects. Some funding might come through FE colleges which have subcontracted work when they have not been able to meet their obligations.

Another important difference between the two sectors is that in a college, the tutor is central to the learner's development and progress, whereas in WBL it is more often the assessor who has the overall view of where the learner or candidate is. This is due to the fact that in WBL, the assessment schedule

drives the agenda rather than the input, which is learnt 'on the job' or as a last resort, in the classroom.

It was also interesting to note that some companies are reluctant to employ staff who have worked in an FE college as experience has shown that such staff are generally limited in their flexibility and adaptability. This is an interesting observation as college staff are expected to be flexible, often teaching in areas outside their original expertise and to deal with a myriad of situations. However, having said this, there are often clear procedural guidelines which college staff need to follow in given situations which might not be the case in WBL. WBL staff who have attended CETT seminars with FE college staff on issues such as observations have commented afterwards that they did not realise FE was so controlling in terms of bureaucracy and reporting.

Staff development and Initial Teacher Training

There is generally one member of staff and a director in each company who is responsible for ensuring that staff are appropriately trained. Often this person also tends to be the person sourcing the additional funding and responsible for quality assurance. For most of the companies, having qualified teachers or trainers is not the immediate priority, rather it is the need for someone with the requisite subject knowledge and skills. Having said this, the companies stressed the importance of having trained or skilled trainers to ensure quality delivery and acknowledged that the qualification would help.

All companies provide opportunities for continuing professional development or CPD and where appropriate or necessary will ensure staff have a mentor. Company 2 has two development events per year where all staff, including contractors, are invited to participate in training and planning. Company 3 has employed a dyslexic specialist to support staff in managing their own needs and also those of their learners. The companies address needs as they arise.

WBL staff undertaking their initial teacher training will invariably do so at an FE college or a higher education institution (HEI), although there are some private providers who offer the qualifications too. Switch CETT (2008) supports this finding, noting that WBL providers who actually offer ITT have reduced considerably due to the changes in funding. They found that WBL providers will reluctantly send their staff to colleges for training and are even more hesitant sending them to an HEI as the two institutions do not have a good understanding of how WBL operates. Their preference is to train their staff themselves so that they know they are able to cope with their reality. One company interviewed in the course of previous research commented that he prefers sending his staff to a college for training as they then realise how good WBL is and so are less likely to leave for a college (Samson, 2008a). Ofsted (2007) also noted the lack of college support for WBL trainee teachers. This lack of sector understanding was further reinforced by Company 3 which had a staff member withdraw from a DTLLS course as the assessment evidence and briefs were too FE focused and could not easily be applied to her environment. Eliahoo (2008) gives evidence of a WBL student having to change her studies to meet the college's assignment and course requirements.

As a result, companies are not forcing their staff to undergo ITT. However, where staff do, the companies are as supportive as they can be within logistical and financial constraints. Company 1 has its staff complete their ITT through an FE college of their choice allowing proximity either to home or the workplace, although staff are encouraged to do the course in their own time. Company 2 expects contractors to obtain their ITT qualification in their own time and at their own cost if they want the qualification as the company does not insist on their being ITT qualified at present. Company 3 has supported staff undertaking their DTLLS where it is clear that the staff member wants and needs the qualification. Other staff are waiting for clarification on what is required and funding available before undertaking their training. This suits the company as there are currently at least eight staff who potentially need to do an aspect of the qualification and the financial repercussions on the company could be huge – not just in fees, but also if cover needs to be arranged. Companies 4, 5 and 6, have taken a different approach and have arranged that 15 members of staff complete the licence to practice or Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) through one of the companies which is registered with an awarding body for ITT. For these three companies, having their staff qualified is crucial for credibility and also because their assessors do some training.

There is a need for greater clarification around teaching and assessing. Companies 4, 5, and 6 see the two roles as integrated. For these three companies, an assessor does some teaching when they correct someone's practice or demonstrate a different method to a learner. Their assessors are also required to do plans or schemes of work to ensure candidates succeed. At the other three companies, the roles are seen as quite separate although it is acknowledged that on occasion an assessor will show a learner how to do something correctly. This is not seen as training but as part of the assessment role. Some assessors will also teach, either one to one or small groups and are identified as teachers according to the Regulations, despite only being designated by the company as a teacher when they are doing input rather than assessing. The blurred boundary has not been eased by the Institute for Learning (IFL) position which is to quote the regulations and to leave the final decision to professional judgement, although the fact that professional judgement is being recognised is very welcome. A further complicating factor is that assessors were initially accommodated in the new regulations but for various reasons have been removed for the present. Some companies are not fully aware of this and are still working to the initial specifications.

There is also need for greater clarity between the Associate and Full teacher role. The range of function is the same for both, however, the extent to which they are met differs. Where this boundary is, is yet to be defined although some organizations have produced a questionnaire to help distinguish between the two roles. At present, few institutions are offering the certificate as a separate qualification. This is not eased by the funding bodies not being fully *au fait* with the qualification and refusing to fund it (Switch CETT, 2008).

An additional knock-on effect is the 'widespread concern that the new requirements might exacerbate existing difficulties of teacher recruitment and reduce the diversity of the workforce' (Wooding, 2008). Before the new regulations, skilled people would move from the 'shop floor' to teach as they

approached retirement. However, the need for these staff to now undergo training, although welcomed for professional reasons, is seen as not being worth it for the number of hours a week they would teach and for the drop in salary they invariably face. This is a major concern for Adult and Community Colleges too (Hullin et al, 2008).

Funding is a major concern and not just for the companies involved in this study. Despite what government said about additional funding, as seen in the excerpts under context above, East Midlands CETT research in 2008 noted the lack of LSC funding for stand-alone PTLLS, Local Authorities not being aware of the certificate course leading to funding refusals and that it was not viable for WBL providers to access HEFCE funding to deliver ITT courses in-house. It was also found that the LSC position differed across regions which added confusion.

This was substantiated by the researcher who contacted LSC to ascertain their position on funding for ITT. As far as the regional LSC is concerned, funding is available for WBL providers for ITT. This is made through the London Work-Based Learning Alliance (WBLA) and London Skills Unit (LSU). However, the funding through WBLA and LSU are for specific projects as the amounts are limited. WBLA has been supporting LSC in training assessors and LSU has funding to assist companies with a staff development needs analysis. Some of the companies involved in this research project have made use of the LSU offer. One of the difficulties accessing LSC funds through WBLA is that not all WBL providers in London are members of the WBLA. Disconcertingly LSC was also unaware of the contractual implications of teaching staff not being compliant.

The difficulty with HEFCE funding is that WBL providers cannot access the funding directly. Learners have to apply for the funding as though they were funding a degree. Funding is only given for academic years on a full- or part-time basis which causes difficulties for learners who suspend studies during a year, or who need to repeat modules consecutively as their workload permitted. Further complications have arisen as identified by Samson (2009) where practical skill or craft specialists might not have certificated evidence of their skills at Level 3 which is the minimum requirement for the certificate or diploma programmes. Invariably, these staff will need to obtain their Level 3 qualification which requires additional funding which might or might not be available depending on the local LSC funding priorities and which then again impacts on HEFCE funding due to the break between PTLLS and the remainder of the course.

A further complication is access to training at times suitable to the company and staff member. Companies found that college delivery times for ITT were incompatible with business needs. Companies prefer their staff to undertake their training outside of 'normal work hours', as do an increasing number of college managers, for the simple reason that if a member of staff is not working, they are not bringing money into the company and may well be costing the company or college money as cover needs to be paid for. The problem is though, that most colleges do not provide ITT over weekends or in the evening and contrary to meeting business needs, colleges are moving towards meeting learner needs by introducing whole day delivery in order to

provide greater academic support to students who have been out of formal academia for many years.

PTLLS is the one exception. As the passport or licence to teach is only six credits and requires a minimum of thirty hours of input and at Levels 3 or 4, there is far more flexibility in its delivery. This has also been assisted by the transferability of credit and award under the new regulations. However, this is not the case with the certificate or diploma as the structure of the course fits into a traditional academic year. This is exacerbated where the qualification is validated through an HEI due to internal processes rather than an independent awarding body. In theory, there should be flexibility and adaptability in delivery, but as CETT case studies in 2008 indicated, the reality has been different.

Where staff can access training at a time which is conducive to the company's needs, the distance from the institution to the place of work needs to be considered as most colleges will not travel more than five miles to conduct observations. So, despite a course being found, the person might well have to decline or withdraw as one of the crucial requirements of the course cannot be met.

Mentoring staff on ITT programmes

In addition to the pedagogical input trainee teachers obtain on the course, they are required to have a mentor to develop their teaching of the subject. This is seen as important by Ofsted and government as they recognise that due to the wide range of subjects available in the LLS, it is necessary that ITT courses are generic. The role of the subject specific mentor is to help the trainee teacher apply what they have learnt in the generic setting to the specific environment within which they work (DfES, 2004, Ofsted, 2007, 2008). Invariably therefore, this mentor will be in the workplace where the trainee teacher works which removes some of the control the training college has over the mentor. Within FE colleges, there are structures to support mentoring and if a college has not yet formalised this, they are in the process of doing so, often with a member of staff identified as the lead mentor who co-ordinates the allocation, training and monitoring of the mentoring process (Eliahoo, 2008, 2009). In addition, as many FE colleges also train their own staff to be teachers, they are more aware of the regulatory requirements and are able to offer a more holistic approach. This is not necessarily the case in WBL.

WBL providers recognise the importance of having well qualified staff, however, at present they generally do not give the same level of importance to mentoring as does the government or Ofsted for various reasons. Company 1 has five staff currently studying at different institutions for their DTLLS. They all have the same person designated as their mentor, who is also responsible for ensuring that staff are trained. As the company recruits subject specialists and puts them through an intensive induction process in which they are shown how to do lesson plans, schemes of work and the basics of teaching the subject, it is felt there is no need for new staff to be given a formal mentor. In addition, before undertaking their teacher training, staff will have passed a six-month probation at the company ensuring that the company is satisfied with their teaching performance. However, the company noted that if it was seen

that a staff member needed support, they would receive it in the same way a learner would. Mentoring, for the company, is 'learner led'. Despite having five staff undergoing their ITT, the company had not been asked to supply a mentor nor received documentation from the FE colleges concerned about the importance of mentoring in the ITT process (Ofsted, 2007, 2008). Having said this, Company 1 had participated in a joint observation of a trainee teacher, although the mentor felt that the FE tutor took more from the observation than he did. This was due to the fact that he knew his sector and had recently completed his Cert Ed at a college whereas the teaching environment was new to the FE teacher educator.

In contrast, Companies 2 and 3 have not yet had to find a mentor for staff. One staff member in Company 3 was taking their DTLLS but withdrew due to the misalignment of assessment to the WBL environment. Both companies were clear that if a mentor was required for the staff member, they would be found and that the person designated as a mentor would take on the role on top of their other work commitments with no remission or pay despite Ofsted and other research recommendations (Ofsted, 2003, Eliahoo, 2008, IOE, 2008). If there was no suitable subject specialist mentor on the permanent staff, problems could be encountered as the companies would not necessarily be able to afford employing one and colleges do not have the funding to pay for trainee teachers working outside the institution to have a mentor. Companies 4, 5 and 6, again took a different approach where they mentored each other whilst undertaking the course themselves. The organiser however, had the majority of mentees and two people, including the organiser, had no formal mentor.

This variety of approach to mentoring accords with the findings of Switch CETT (2008, p8) although they provided no detail. However, they 'appreciated that the wbl (sic) sector already has extensive use of the mentor system in the workplace, it being seen as an important way of overcoming some of the obstacles of delivery in the workplace.' The results confirmed that providers were aware of the benefits of mentoring and had considered ways to introduce it. 'The only concern was about developing enough suitable mentors who were able to lead on teaching matters.' (Switch CETT, 2008, pp14-15) This last point contrasts with the information obtained from the WBL providers interviewed for this project. The differences may be accounted for by the differences between FE colleges and WBL providers but also a difference between large and small WBL providers.

Eliahoo (2008, p9) in her study identified that Ofsted is aware that mentoring will not necessarily be suitable for LLS due to the variety of subject areas covered, often by one teacher. Other points raised include who would be the best mentor in such circumstances or where trainees work across a number of companies or institutions and who would pay the mentor. She suggests that additional training is needed for mentors, which accords with the recommendations in Ofsted's reports (2007, 2008) but again, the question comes back to who will fund the mentor training for WBL providers and given providers' pragmatic approach to mentoring staff undertaking their ITT, why would they see the need to be trained as a mentor?

This research did not focus on the students being mentored but rather on the providers' attitude and ability to mentor trainee teachers. One can safely assume that given the amount of research conducted on the mentor/mentee relationship that common issues exist around line managers mentoring trainees and who the best person is to mentor the mentee who is the only subject specialist in the organisation (Thurston, 2008).

However, there is a clear need to reduce some of the confusion over how WBL staff who need to undertake ITT can access funding, particularly given the new qualifications and the intended flexibility. The issues raised apply across the board as evidenced in discussions amongst practitioners, employers and students as well as by the range of research conducted to date on the introduction of the new reforms. It should be noted that in some cases, answers to the questions are available. However, the question was still raised meaning that the aspect is still perceived as a problem. The confusion has arisen due to the complexity of the LLS which contains a dominant sub-sector, FE colleges. Some authors tend to use the term FE generically, whereas others are more specific, using FE for the colleges, WBL for work-based learning and LLS when all are included. This lack of standardisation, especially from government, LSC and LLUK, is part of the reason for the confusion. WBL providers, amongst others, are not clear about what applies to their particular sector or not.

Conclusions

This research project set out to explore how small WBL providers are engaging with the new reforms particularly with regard to the mentoring of staff undertaking their ITT, but also to ascertain the differences and similarities between companies in order to better support their training needs.

It is clear that all the companies interviewed are supportive of staff development and see the value in having staff who are qualified as teachers to teach. This is evidenced by their membership of a forum for WBL providers on ITT and the fact that a number of the providers employ industry specialists with school teaching backgrounds. Having qualified teachers improves the quality of provision and makes delivery more credible. For all, staff development and assessment of teaching quality is important as evidenced by the quality assurance procedures in place.

Before companies commit themselves to additional costs they will not necessarily be able to afford, they require clear information on what is required and who is ultimately responsible. The nature of the company in terms of size, structure and subject areas, impacts on the response to change. This is demonstrated by Companies 4, 5 and 6 where individuals have taken it upon themselves to organise their own PTLLS training, whilst Companies 1 and 3 currently support staff on an individual basis, providing the staff member does their training outside of work hours. Company 2 requires that staff who want to be trained do so of their own accord, but are prepared to discuss ways to support them in their training providing the costs can be contained.

All companies noted in a separate interview conducted on behalf of LLUK that information was not always communicated and that getting answers to

questions from the website or helpdesk was not easy. It is therefore recommended that:

- Comprehensive guidance on access to funding be made more widely available to all concerned, ie LLS, LSC, HEFCE and that where regional differences are likely to occur, these be highlighted with how to ascertain the detail.
- Communications between all involved in the sector (government, LLUK, providers, mentors, learners, employers) be improved.
- Further research be conducted into the WBL sector to better understand the complexities of the sector to identify cost-effective ways of small and medium size companies being able to support their staff undertaking ITT.
- Colleges and HEIs to engage more fully with WBL providers to better understand their needs so that trainee teachers are better supported and prepared. This includes more flexible access.
- CETTs can play an important role in helping bridge the gaps between the different sectors, especially as anecdotal evidence suggests that Adult and Community Learning might be more closely aligned with WBL than with FECs and as seen by the Westminster Partnership CETT responding to WBL needs by developing a blended learning PTLLS course which will be delivered by an FEC.

Next steps

Share findings with other bodies involved in supporting WBL providers developing their staff to enable better understanding of the sector and more integrated support.

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Appendix

Questions for WBL ITT mentoring

1. What is a WBL provider?
2. How does your company fit that definition?
3. How big is the company?
 - What subject(s) does the company teach/deliver/assess?
 - No of students per subject?
4. Who is responsible for ensuring staff are qualified to teach?
5. How many staff in your company?
6. What is the divide between assessors and trainers?
 - How many of your assessors also train?
 - Approximately how many hours of training to assessing?
7. Do you provide ITT training or do you send your staff elsewhere? If so, where?
8. What do you understand by 'mentoring'?
9. What are the requirements for specialist subject mentoring?
10. How do you meet these requirements? Cost? Who?
11. What is the impact on the company of meeting these requirements?
12. Are the company's needs met better through ITT or mentoring? Why?

Case study 1

Company 1 is a specialist subject provider. It has 110 staff nationally and 1,862 live learners. They have their own premises with a workshop and classrooms where extra tuition takes place if required. They also deliver training at the client's premises if they have the facilities and dependent on the contract.

The company employs about 45 assessors who will each be responsible for approximately 60 learners and 13 trainers who see every student through the course. Technically, no assessors do training, however in reality, if an assessor sees something is wrong, they will correct it which can be regarded as training. There is a close relationship between the tutor, assessor, administrative staff and recruitment staff to ensure a holistic approach to learners' achievement. However, it is the assessor who manages the learner's workload. In addition to the NVQ the learner undertakes, they will also be doing either Key Skills or Train 2 Gain.

The company currently has five staff undergoing initial teacher training (ITT) and one starting in September 2009. The staff do their ITT at a Further Education College which can be close to home or their main place of work.

One person is responsible for ensuring staff are trained across the company. This person is also the designated mentor for official purposes. The company does not see the need for subject specialist mentors or subject learning coaches as the company ensures that staff know what they need to. Not all staff need mentoring and the few who do, get it in the same way that their students would. In other words, mentoring is learner-led.

Case Study 2

Company 2 is a private company which provides a range of training from Train 2 Gain, through to employability skills, information, advice and guidance, business and health and social care. It is West London based, although it covers a wide geographical area depending on the contract, including Sussex, Oxfordshire, some East of England and even Gibraltar. The company has 35 FTE staff on the payroll, including 12-13 part-time tutors. There are also a large number of contractors, including around 50 NVQ assessors. At any one time they have around 300 learners undertaking NVQs. Delivery takes place either at the main office which has appropriate facilities or at other locations, depending on the contract.

The company is divided into four sections each with its own specific remit. Each of these is responsible for ensuring their learners achieve. Little training is done in reality. Most of the staff are assessors and they do very little training. 38 assessors can train if needed, but not all are qualified trainers. Currently, an NVQ requires 18 hours of input, including 15 hours of training for Train 2 Gain (this requirement for Train 2 Gain will be removed in August 2009). Not all of this needs to be done by the assessor. Trainers run workshops

The company employs staff who can meet its needs as required. They often have a wide variety of skills and knowledge. As a result, a teaching qualification is not necessarily a priority, although a number are trained. Continuous Professional Development is required and two days are set aside each year for whole company training. If staff want to undertake formal ITT, they are required to fund it themselves in their own time. At present there is one person considering converting his QTS to QTLS and is investigating doing CELTA or DTLLS. If he requires a mentor, the company will provide this if there is a subject specialist already on the payroll as the mentoring will become part of their work. If an associate has to be used, this will need to be carefully considered due to the cost implication. The company would like all assessors to be PTLLS trained, but at present there is no funding for this training.

Several staff and the Managing Director are responsible for ensuring staff are appropriately trained and there is a teaching and advising Quality Assurance programme in place. Section heads observe as appropriate. In the past the company has delivered City & Guilds 7302 courses, but do not do so any longer due to lack of funding. Unlike FE colleges and other larger providers, there is not enough funding to 'cream' money off other projects to supplement ITT.

Case Study 3

Company 3 is a large work-based learning provider. It contracts with employers to provide training across a range of subjects covering railway and transport, engineering maintenance, customer service, business administration, health & social care and domestic energy as well as learning and development and employability. It is one of the biggest NVQ providers in the South East Region with approximately 3,600 live learners of which 93% are from the main subject area.

The company has 50 staff on the payroll, which includes 20 experts and 10 administrators. Other staff are brought in as required which can be for a few weeks (assessors) or as much as eighteen months for specific courses. There are a large number of assessors but these are based in the contracting companies and are trained as part of the contract. Approximately 20 trainers are also assessors but the division of their workload is variable, depending on what is needed at the time and the contract specification.

One of the two managing directors is responsible for staffing but the practicalities are delegated to a Senior Consultant. Very few staff are trained, in reality, only one or two. One staff member teaching health and social care was doing their DTLLS but withdrew for various reasons. There are about eight staff who need training under the new regulations but the problem is organising release. This is slightly more manageable than when it was believed that assessors also needed to be PTLLS trained as the number then would have been 24.

The company is keen on staff development and supports staff as needed. It has recently employed a dyslexic specialist to support staff and provide staff development in supporting learners. Mentoring is done as part of the quality assurance process where experienced staff support new staff. There are also internal observation systems in place to help support and develop staff. There is a need for WBL trainers to be qualified in the long term so that they have the knowledge and skills, it is also important for quality assurance procedures. However, the big issue is finding funding for the PTLLS part of the course. The company is keen to find a solution to the funding issue and has approached LSC on a few occasions for information. Staff, too, are keen to be trained as they are asking what the policy is.

Case Study 4

Companies 4, 5 and 6 are all involved in health and social care training as well as Level 2 literacy and numeracy. All training is done in the workplace around the candidate's usual working routine as they are working towards a vocational qualification. They are not given time out to the qualification due to financial constraints and as the qualification requires that the candidate is observed as competent in their vocation, so candidates are seen as needed on a one-to-one. This can mean that assessors/trainers work odd hours depending on candidate shift patterns and other constraints.

Staff across the three companies are freelance and as a result work across different companies as required. The biggest of the three companies, 4, has 15 staff and 200 candidates at any one time, company 5, has 7 staff with 30 candidates every 6-9 months whilst company 6 has 4 staff and 20 candidates also over 6-9 months.

As the companies see assessors as doing some training – and need to have a scheme of work to ensure their candidates cover all aspects of the course – they need to be qualified. In addition, assessors spend 15 hours providing underpinning knowledge and 10 hours assessors. They are also working to the guidelines, which note that assessors must be PTLLS trained by 2010.

15 staff from across the three companies have undertaken to complete the PTLLS qualification themselves. Company 4 is accredited by one of the awarding bodies for this purpose. The staff train and mentor themselves, although one person from Company 4 provides the main pedagogical training and undertakes most of the mentoring. She herself is undertaking the PTLLS simultaneously. Quality assurance is provided by an internal verifier who is not of the group before work is submitted to the external verifier as part of the qualification requirement.

Staff are funding themselves to undertake the PTLLS, which they do on a Saturday to ensure that no work time is lost. The benefit of staff undertaking this training is that they become more professional which is an incentive for obtaining more contracts and so employment becomes more stable.

