



Personal Invitation – **‘Employers in the driving seat? New thinking for FE leadership’**

Dear Regional Network Chairs/Members

Employers are being increasingly encouraged by government to be ‘in the driving seat’ of skills development. This raises numerous issues for future leadership and change in our sector around, for example, the heightened need for leaders and practitioners to have a proper understanding of an employer’s business strategy while simultaneously working out how government programmes can support what they want to do.

We would therefore like to invite you to personally contribute to a major new research project to develop this thinking on behalf of the FE and skills system. Through a series of nationwide facilitated round table discussions, the project, entitled **‘Employers in the Driving Seat?; New Thinking for FE Leadership’**, will offer the relatively rare yet vital space for FE sector leaders to stand back, review directions of travel and spend time thinking individually and collectively about their aims, their purpose and the way they reach decisions. By articulating and developing our thinking together, we can also fulfil the project’s wider aim of communicating a coherent and authoritative narrative that helps raise the profile and public understanding of work based learning as a whole.

A short introductory paper will be circulated for your consideration prior to your chosen roundtable meeting, but the following may give an insight into the sorts of questions that we’ll be addressing together:

- Has there been a rebalancing of the relationship between providers, employers and government? What effect might this have on the decisions sector leaders make?
- How is the FE and Skills system responding both individually and collectively?
- How far is the impact of provision the result of decisions and practice from within the FE community rather than the inherent design and intention of policy?

If you would like to attend, please confirm a first and second choice round table session (see below) that is most suitable for you via email to Anne White at Research@aelp.org.uk who will send you the joining instructions. All events are scheduled for 10.30am to 12.30pm followed by lunch (with the exception of no. 8 which will be held during the AELP National Conference).



No.	Location	Date
1	Cathedral View, London, SW1P	Wed 11 th April
2	St Mary's, Nottingham, NG1	Tues 17 th April
3	The Baltic, Gateshead, NE8	Tues 24 th April
4	Coventry Transport Museum, Coventry CV1	Thurs 17 th May
5	The Crystal, Royal Victoria Dock, London, E16	Tues 22 nd May
6	The Lowry, Salford, M50	Wed 30 th May
7	The Pump Room, Bath, BA1	Wed 20 th June
8	Novotel West London, Hammersmith, W6*	Mon 25 th June
9	The Studio, Leeds, LS1	Thurs 5 th July

*During AELP Annual Conference

The round tables will be facilitated by sector experts including Professor Chris James, leadership expert from University of Bath, and Mark Dawe, Chief Executive of AELP. We would be happy to cover all reasonable expenses incurred in enabling you to attend.

This research project is being conducted by researchers from Association of Employment and Learning Providers, committed to producing a meaningful and impactful evidence-base on current policy issues that matter to training providers (www.aelp.org.uk). The sponsor is the Further Education Trust for Leadership (www.fetl.org.uk), an independent think tank and charity working to strengthen and support the leadership of thinking in further education and skills.

We very much hope that you are as enthused by this project as we are, and very much hope you will be able to join us at one of the round tables.

Paul Warner, Director of Research and Development, AELP

pwarner@aelp.org.uk