

Mr P Swindlehurst
Secretary, UKIPG
c/o The Engineering Council (UK)
2ND Floor
Weston House
246 High Holborn
London, WC1V 7EX

Our Ref: GPCF 2

17 December 2009

Dear Mr Swindlehurst,

GATEWAYS TO THE PROFESSIONS COLLABORATIVE FORUM

I am writing to update you on the re-launch of the “Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum”. The work of the Forum will form part of the government response to Alan Milburn’s Panel on Fair Access to the Professions’ report “Unleashing Aspiration: the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions” (July 2009).

As you know from the last meeting of the Collaborative Forum, we agreed that the Forum should be restructured to support the relevant recommendations in the Fair Access to the Professions report. Recommendation 82 in the report supports the continuation of the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum but in a revised form.

The structure of the new Forum will build on the strengths of the earlier one. An Executive Group, chaired at ministerial level, will oversee the work of sub groups, comprising representatives from an expanded and diverse range of professions including the arts, media and creative industries. The proposed structure will allow members to be grouped to address agreed recommendations thematically.

The members of the new Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum will identify, agree, provide and promote focussed solutions that enable the effective implementation of relevant recommendations, to increase fair access, as proposed by the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions. This will include using the best mechanisms for promoting and marketing fair access strategies to all professions and employers.

As you can see, the work of the new Forum is key to ensuring that the outcomes envisaged by the recommendations are delivered. We will, therefore, look to the new

Collaborative Forum to lead the Professions in delivering the desired outcomes outlined in the report, as well as facilitate even closer dialogue and co-operation between government and the professions.

To give you a sense of how the restructured forum will potentially operate, I attach a draft version of the new terms of reference (Annex A) and a list of recommendations that we expect the Collaborative Forum to address (Annex B).

The re-launch is currently planned for mid January 2010, so it would be helpful if you could indicate whether you are interested in maintaining your membership of the Forum and also indicate which sub group(s), listed in the draft Terms of Reference, you would be most interested in joining **by 4th January 2010.**

Please indicate by sending an e-mail to mailbox collaborativeforum@bis.gsi.gov.uk. Also, if you have any queries, please contact Barry Keight either at the above e-mail address or telephone 0114 259 3432. Once we have received confirmation of your interest in joining the Forum, officials from my department will make contact to discuss further arrangements.

I hope I can rely on your continued support and membership as we re-launch a reinvigorated Forum and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



DAVID LAMMY

Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum: Draft Terms of Reference (9 Dec 09)

Aim

Enable more top achieving people, from less advantaged backgrounds, access to professions of their choice.

Core Remit

To identify, agree, provide and promote focussed solutions that address issues/barriers, to enable the effective implementation of relevant recommendations proposed by the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions.

Responsibilities will include:

- Reviewing progress against the recommendations made in the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions' final report;
- Advise and report on the activity being undertaken by the professions to increase fair access;
- Share best practice examples of effective measures to make access fair; and
- Advise on the best mechanisms for promoting and marketing fair access strategies to all professions and employers.

In addition the Forum will:

- Utilise membership knowledge and experience in providing advice to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on how best policies and practices can:
 - support widening access to the professions;
 - encourage both more, and more effective joint working between professional bodies, Sector Skills Councils and higher education, in support of high level skills strategy set out in "Higher Ambitions – The future of universities in a knowledge economy", "Skills for Growth – The national skills strategy" and "New Industry New Jobs".
 - be supported by relevant research findings and identify relevant evidence gaps;
 - review and assess the impact of variable fees and feed comments and information into the Independent Review of HE funding and student finance; and
 - evaluate progress and impact of Forum initiated activities on improving fair access to the professions.

- Provide peer support through joint and/or collaborative action and act as liaison to the professions and other key stakeholders engaged in promoting and disseminating best practice and innovation on widening access to the professions.

NOTE: The Forum is accountable for English issues only, but in some areas of its work there will be implications for the rest of the UK. Individual member organisations within the Forum will be responsible for engaging with the respective parts of their own UK wide organisations.

Conduct of Business

The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum is a voluntary Advisory Forum to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

The Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum shall consist of not more than five sub-groups that report to an Executive Group.

Executive Group

Membership of the Executive Forum will be small, consisting of the chairs of the sub groups and a few key strategic organisations, as be agreed by the BIS Minister, plus the relevant BIS policy official. The Executive Forum will be chaired by the Minister of State for Higher Education and Intellectual Property in the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

Secretariat support will be provided by the Department. The Executive Group is expected to meet at least twice before June 2010.

Sub Groups

Each Sub Group will be formed to address agreed recommendations from the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions final report, thematically.

We propose 5 sub groups with responsibility for recommendations covering similar/related topics, as follows:

- Sub Group 1 – Role models, mentors and employer links (Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 8, 9,10,13 and 39)
- Sub-group 2 – Information and support (including financial) (Recommendations 12, 25, 62, 63, and 67)
- Sub-group 3 – Quality and Kitemarks (Recommendations 47, 48, 51, 52, 60 and 88)
- Sub-group 4 – Recruitment, training and progression (Recommendations 44, 66, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74)

- Sub-group 5 – Regulatory and Corporate Issues (Recommendations 83, 84, 85)

We expect communications issues to be considered by all sub groups.

The membership of the sub groups will be formed from those Professions and key stakeholders who have expressed an interest in developing solutions to the barriers identified. Organisations may elect to be represented on more than one Sub Group. Decisions on membership of Sub Groups will be vested in the Executive Group.

Sub Groups will report to the Executive Group. Sub Groups will be expected to report to the Executive Group at least twice before June 2010.

Non-members can be invited to attend meetings on a one-off basis for presentation or discussion of a specific agenda item.

Expert sub-groups may be formed, for a time limited period, to address specific issues.

Secretariat support for Sub Groups is to be provided free of charge, from within the membership of the Sub Group.

Annex B

Recommendations from the Milburn report that are relevant to the Gateways to the Professional Collaborative Forum

Recommendation Number	Milburn Recommendation
4	The professions and Government should together introduce a national scheme for career mentoring by young professionals and university students of school pupils in Years 9 to 13. The national mentoring scheme should involve partnerships with employers, voluntary organisations, universities and schools.
5	The professions and the Government should organise a 'Yes you can' campaign, headed by inspirational role models, to encourage more young people to aspire to a professional career.
6	The Government, working with the professions and universities, should develop a national database of people willing to act as role models or mentors for young people in their former schools.
8	The Government should establish a national work taster scheme for older school pupils, starting with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. The professions should identify employers willing to take part. Together the Government and the professions should provide financial support for the project, which should be linked to the proposed national scheme for mentoring by young professionals and university students.
9	Each profession should recruit and support a network of young professional ambassadors who would work with schools to raise awareness of career opportunities for young people. Professional bodies should recognise as continuous professional development the contribution of young professionals who volunteer their time.
10	All schools should work with businesses and professions to promote and support professionally led outreach at late primary and early secondary age.
12	The professions and the Government should create a 'professions.com' website to link young people to existing online information about professional careers and schemes, such as internship and mentoring programmes. The professions should provide relevant content and material to develop this website.
13	The Government should bring forward seed-corn funding, in the region of £2.5 million to £3 million, to fund the recommended proposals on mentoring, work tasters and an online portal. Projects should be co-funded by a partnership comprising government, professional bodies and employers.
25	Schools, colleges and professions should work in partnership to produce career prospectuses and online information sources aimed at parents. Information could include routes into different professions

	and the remuneration and costs involved.
39	Each profession should develop partnership compact arrangements with university faculties. These arrangements might include linking up recent professional entrants as personal mentors with young people in schools, and issuing guidance about the profession and how to get into it. (See recommendations 4, 9 and 12)
44	The Government should work with universities to develop proposals to integrate a flexible element of professional experience into all higher education courses.
47	The professions, the Government, trade unions and the third sector should together produce a common best practice code for high-quality internships.
48	Each profession should make employers in its field aware of the best practice code and encourage them to adopt it for all relevant internship and work experience placements (including university 'sandwich' courses).
51	The professions, the Government, trade unions and the third sector should agree an Internship Quality Kitemark scheme for high-quality internship programmes. The Kitemark should set out the criteria that a high-quality internship placement should meet (based on the common best practice code for high-quality internships proposed in recommendation 47).
52	Each professional association should make the acceptance and use of the best practice code and Kitemark a condition of being a member of the professional association, and accept responsibility for making employers in their field aware of both.
60	Provision of all government-brokered or -supported financial assistance for interns should be dependent upon the internship placement in question having received the Internship Quality Kitemark. Professions should stipulate a similar restriction upon any financial assistance provided or brokered by them for similar purposes. Universities should support the Kitemark scheme by advertising it to students who are looking for internships.
62	Professions should work directly with banks and other lending institutions to provide privately brokered financing for those studying for relevant professional qualifications.
63	The professions should create an online resource that sets out the range of profession-specific financial support that is available for prospective interns and students of professional qualifications. The online resource should set out what support is available, where it can be accessed, the criteria used to disburse it and the various application methods and deadlines. Such information should be advertised on professional websites, as well as on the Government's Talent Pool Internship Portal.

66	Each profession should carry out a review of current practice on fair access to its profession, with a view to developing practical ideas for improvement. The professions should report publicly on these by the end of 2010, with a clear set of recommendations and an action plan for implementation.
67	The Government's online Professional Recruitment Guide should be amended and should be jointly and actively promoted by the professions and the Government to help employers to develop recruitment practices that can ensure fairer access.
68	Each profession should work with the National Apprenticeship Service and the relevant Sector Skills Councils to establish clear progression routes from vocational training into the professions, and ensure that learners are aware of these routes.
69	The Government and the professions should provide a repository of best practice setting out practical ways in which vocational routes can be expanded into the professions.
71	The professions should consider how to introduce apprenticeship schemes as part of their reviews of fair access processes in recommendation 66.
72	Each profession should examine the potential to devolve functions to paraprofessionals. The Government should ensure that, across all of the public services, reform programmes are being introduced to do the same.
73	The professions should work with the Government and others to set out clear progression maps from paraprofessional roles, and ensure that training systems support these routes.
74	Professional bodies and professional regulators should encourage businesses in their sector to ensure that they meet best practice in mid-career changes and career interchange routes. Regulators should publish information on how successful professional employers are being in providing more flexible entry and progression routes.
82	The Government and the professions should agree to continue the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum in the form of a UK Professional Forum. The new Forum should be chaired at ministerial level and should comprise senior representatives from a diverse range of professions.
83	The statutory and approved regulators of individual professions should embed the social mobility and fair access agenda into strategic plans.
84	Regulators should consider how to embed more widely the fair access agenda permanently into the work and strategic planning of their professions and take the appropriate regulatory action to do so.
85	The professions should routinely report on activities that are aimed at making access fairer as part of their established corporate social responsibility reporting arrangements.

88	The Government should introduce a fair access charter mark to recognise and reward those professional bodies and employers that take direct, effective and meaningful steps towards making access to their profession fairer.
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