

Title:

Effective Demand-led Employment and Skills Boards (ESBs) – 5 Key Factors

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Sub-regional Level

Taking responsibility for identifying issues and needs within their areas

Having the confidence to make any necessary changes, building upon and streamlining current arrangements.

Strong Independent Partnership Manager

To drive forward the agenda

Ensure partnership maintains momentum

Gain buy-in from both public and private sector representatives.

Co-ordination and Support at the Regional Level

Most often led by the Regional Development Agency, to reduce duplication and facilitate communication across the region

Share good practice and drive quality and accountability

Ensure clear link to the Regional Economic Strategy

A Figure Head Championing the Achievements of the Board

Promoting its role and the benefits across the Sub-regional community, most effectively played by a well-known local employer.

Clear Guidance and Championing at National Level from the Employment & Skills Commission

Supported by relevant Government departments to ensure a joined-up approach.

Other Major Issues***Strategy and Delivery***

- Some ESBs focused mainly on strategy development, others exclusively focused on delivery issues
- Most successful ESBs tended to have a balance between strategy and delivery, with different mechanisms for consultation and debate, depending on where issues fell on the delivery-strategy spectrum

Governance

- Strong co-ordination of local partnerships offering advice
- Sharing of good practice
- Setting the criteria or Terms of Reference
- Regional Board

Membership

- Gaining both public sector and employer representation important
- Techniques such as workplace visits, virtual memberships, newsletters and forums have proven effective for engaging employers
- Senior public sector representatives who were able to make decisions regarding funding and priorities for their organisations, moved things forward faster.

Funding

- Most ESBs felt having influence over funding directed to their area and being able to “Bend the Spend” more important than securing a separate funding pot for the ESB.
- Small allocation of funds to secure long-term commitment for the Partnership Manager’s post.