The Provision of Training in Britain: Case Studies of Inter-Firm Coordination
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Aims and methodology
This research examines how and why employers co-operate in the provision of training. The extent of employer co-operation in the UK is more widespread than is perhaps recognised. The analysis proceeds via a series of case studies:

- ReMIT and the garage trade
- Mid-Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- A Group Training Association: Aylesbury Training Group
- A Local Big Employers' Group
- ASSA: A Large Firm Supply Network Relationship

Key Findings

- ReMIT is the training arm of the Retail Motor Industry Federation, the main trade association for the motor sales and repair trade. It is by far the largest provider of training in the retail motor trade, with over 7,500 apprentices at any one time. It is involved at all stages of training, and co-ordinates a national approach to skill formation, for example creating the industry MA framework and aiding curricula design. ReMIT recruits young people for training, offering them to garages for interview, where they will hopefully be employed for their training course. After this recruitment, ReMIT subcontracts most off-the-job training to FEs, GTAs and private providers, while providing progress monitoring of both trainees and providers. Some basic training is carried out using ReMIT's own facilities. The main benefit of ReMIT is to medium and small independent firms, who are too small to organise their own training.

- Mid-Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry: - develops annually a training plan, based on consultation with local schools concerning the flow of leavers, an assessment of employer needs, and the estimated availability of funds. It then recruits, selects, inducts and matches young people to suitable employers, in a number of areas. About one-third of the trainees are MAs. The benefit the chamber provides is that it has a network of companies, and can use its reputation to successfully recruit and match young people and employers. It thus takes the burden of training away from employers.

- A group training association: Aylesbury Training Group:- GTAs are local associations of mainly small and medium sized employers who combine to share the costs of training and to obtain economies of scale. About half of all GTAs have their own training facilities. Aylesbury Training Group actively works with local firms to identify skill needs and develop training plans. It
then recruits young people from school leavers and the unemployed, who are then directly employed by the Group for a block period of centre-based foundation training. Following this period, trainees are helped to find jobs with local employers, with which they will continue their training, working towards level 2 and 3 NVQs (or sometimes higher). The Group maintains a role by visiting trainees in the workplace, reviewing performance and setting targets, and providing assessment and verification.

- Technical Training Enterprises Ltd (TTE). A local big employers' group:-founded by Shell, ICI and Associated Octel, along similar lines to other groups of large firms. The group was formed in order to provide apprenticeship training, with the aim of reducing training costs by pooling resources and obtaining economies of scale. Members signal their needs and offer places, which TTE then fills by selecting young people. Trainees are employed by TTE and sponsored by a participating company. Training is a mixture of TTE site-based and workplace experience, with the latter growing in importance as the apprenticeship proceeds, and also FE courses to supplement practical skills. TTE co-ordinates the links between the employer, the young person and the college throughout. TTE's main strength is the close involvement of member companies who drive the training process.

- ASSA: a large firm supply network relationship: - The Automotive Sector Strategic Alliance (ASSA) was formed to meet the training needs of a group of firms in the North-East. The instigator was Nissan, who wanted to extend training arrangements to their supplier firms. ASSA provides apprenticeships, which involve 2 years block-release at college and a further 2 years full-time on the shop floor. All apprentices are expected to gain NVQ level 3 qualifications. ASSA is involved in the selection of apprentices, directly employs some of them, inducts all into the world of work, and monitors their progress. It is not, however, involved in the actual training, which is subcontracted to other bodies, for example colleges or GTAs. In addition, ASSA organises training for line workers at a lower level, typically involving a 6 month course leading to a level 2 NVQ qualification. Member firms see real advantages in outsourcing training to ASSA, in terms of costs and standards.

Policy issues
There are real benefits of employer co-operation in the training market. Employer co-operation
- Reduces administrative costs
- Does not remove training too far from actual employers who should best be able to assess actual needs
- May reduce the poaching externality
- May ensure training in a broader range of skills, increasing transferability, compared to single-employer training

Thus, where single-employer provision is constrained, college provision inappropriate and private provision limited, multi-employer training has much to commend it.