

Scotland's Skills Delivery Landscape - Call For Evidence On Behalf Of James Withers, Advisor To The Scottish Government

October 2022

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This call for evidence is hosted on behalf of James Withers in his role as Independent Advisor to the Scottish Government on the Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape.

Foreword



Building the future system to equip our population with the skills they need to succeed is a big task. If we get it right, it will shape the kind of Scotland we want to see in future and it will ensure we nurture and unlock the potential that lies in all individuals, at all stages in their lives.

Against that context, I am pleased and privileged to have been asked by Scottish Ministers to lead this independent review of the skills delivery landscape.

What do we mean by that landscape? To me, it is the complex web of touch-points that help us develop the skills we need throughout our lives. From the years we spend in education to the further training or advice we need to enter, re-enter or thrive in the workplace.

The foundation upon which we need to build a future skills system is constantly moving. We see the world changing at extraordinary speed. Our workplaces must adapt and respond to a climate emergency as well as embrace a transformation in technology. They need to be modern and fair places to work, creating an environment that allows for personal and professional success. Ultimately, the world of work must be a platform for successful and happy lives.

In my previous role as Chief Executive of Scotland Food and Drink and, before that, CEO at National Farmers Union Scotland, I have seen how important skills are to the success of communities and business.

Since my appointment to lead this review, I have had countless messages from people involved in the delivery of skills development programmes and those who have been recipients of them. There is a shared passion for this subject and desire to get it right. This review – and this consultation in particular – is designed to help harness that.

I approach this Review with an open mind. I am determined to be driven by evidence. We need to identify what already works well and where improvement is needed. Of course, we are also not short of reviews of many individual facets of the skills landscape, from our curriculum, or tertiary education system, to provision of apprenticeships and careers services. The review won't duplicate work already done, rather it will consider how we structure a skills system to deliver on their outcomes.

We also not short of aspiration either. The Scottish Government has set out a bold 10-year ambition in its National Strategy for Economic Transformation. That strategy

rightly identifies an effective skills system as a core ingredient of success. Hence, my task and this review.

I am spending time building my knowledge of the existing skills landscape, meeting with the public agencies at the heart of the system. I'm meeting people and organisations with experience of how the system works and views on what they need of it in future. We will hosting a series of workshops and webinars so key users of the skills system can share their experiences and their ideas for the future.

This call for evidence is to ensure everyone has a chance to share their views. I know the current system can be complex. That can make conversations around it complex too. In many ways, complexity is a natural consequence of a country trying to deliver a skills system to reflect the variety in backgrounds and experiences of our people. It also needs to deliver at multiple different points in our lives, to fuel a diversity of business sectors and communities, all in a world changing at immense speed.

However, if we step back from the complexity this really boils down to a single question: how do we build a skills landscape that is fit for the future and can unlock the potential that lies in us all?

There are several questions in this consultation spanning different aspects of the skills landscape. Feel free to answer them all, feel free to answer only one. I would ask you to look at the Part 1 in particular; it captures a few overarching questions at the heart of this review.

It is a review that really matters, so thank you in advance for taking part.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

James Withers
Independent Advisor

Responses

We are inviting responses to the call for evidence by 23 December 2022.

Please respond using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space. Access and respond online at: <https://consult.gov.scot/fair-work-employability-and-skills/skills-delivery-independent-review>. You can save and return your responses during the consultation period, please ensure that responses are submitted before the closing date of 23 December 2022.

If you are unable to respond using the consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form and send to: skillsdeliveryreview@gov.scot

Handing your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise. To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: <https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot> . If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help James Withers make his recommendations on the issues concerned. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be published.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this exercise has been conducted, please send them to skillsdeliveryreview@gov.scot

Context for this call for evidence

In September 2022, the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training set out to parliament that he would be initiating an independent review of the skills delivery landscape in Scotland as part of work to ensure that the skills system is fit for purpose for delivering Scotland's national outcomes and meeting future economic challenges including the transition to net zero.

James Withers has been appointed as Advisor to the Review. The Terms of Reference set out his remit and the Review's scope and purpose to explore how the public body and advisory landscape can be adapted to drive forward the Scottish Government's outcomes and ambitions for skills. Specifically, it will look at the skills functions of Scotland's public bodies and make recommendations on their roles and responsibilities within the future delivery landscape.

Purpose of this call for evidence

The purpose of this call for evidence is to gather evidence from all interested parties to inform recommendations in relation to the future of the skills delivery public body and advisory landscape, including the future remit and status of Skills Development Scotland.

The call for evidence asks wider questions relating to Scotland's skills system which will help to inform the Independent Advisor's recommendations as well as providing an opportunity for specific feedback in relation to the functional areas identified in the Terms of Reference as being specific focus for the Review.

Beyond this call for evidence, there are additional engagement opportunities that will allow you to contribute to all these areas in more detail. These are detailed on the Skills Delivery Review part of the Scottish Government website.

The results of this process will be used to inform the work of the Independent Advisor to the Scottish Government which will conclude with an independent report by James Withers to the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training by Spring 2023.

This call for evidence is divided into the following sections:

1. Skills Delivery Landscape
2. Apprenticeships
3. National Occupational Standards
4. Upskilling and Retraining
5. Sector and regional skills planning
6. Careers and young people
7. Employer engagement

We are interested in your comments and ideas so there is space left after each section for you to provide these. If you need more space, please use the box at the end of the questionnaire, indicating to which of the seven sections your comments refer.

Part 1 – Skills Delivery Landscape

The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, published in March 2022, recognises the importance of skills to the economic wellbeing of Scotland's places, people and communities. Its vision is for a skills and education system that can provide individuals with the skills they need to have rewarding careers, and businesses with a skilled workforce which will enable the economy to flourish.

In June 2021, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published its Review of Coherence and Sustainability which set out its proposals for the future of tertiary education and the wider post-school system in Scotland. The Scottish Government's response in October 2021, broadly accepted and agreed with the recommendations and committed, as priority, to take forward work to set out more clearly its longer-term strategic intent for tertiary education and research in Scotland.

Subsequent work to develop a Purpose and Principles for post-school education, skills development and research, as part of wider education reform, is positioned as delivering a set of evidence-led outcomes that will help to inform future strategic decision-making across the education and skills system.

If the NSET and Purpose and Principles can together be seen to articulate the Scottish Government's ambitions for an integrated post-school education and skills system, the intention of this Review is to consider how the delivery landscape might be adapted to deliver those ambitions and related outcomes. As the Purpose and Principles is yet to be published, this call for evidence focuses on the ambitions and commitments articulated in the NSET.

The current skills delivery landscape comprises national public bodies that support the education and skills ecosystem including:

Skills Development Scotland was created in 2008 from Careers Scotland, Scottish University for Industry (learnirect scotland) and the skills and learning functions of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. SDS employs around c.1,520 FTE staff and has a network of around 60 public access centres across Scotland and a presence at other public sites including secondary schools and colleges. In 2021/22 SDS had a budget of £230m.

The **Scottish Funding Council** (previously the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council) was created in 2005 under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) 2005. Its duties are to secure coherent, high quality further and higher education and research by Scotland's 26 colleges and 19 universities. SFC employs 109 FTE staff and in 2021/22 SFC had a budget of £1.9bn.

Following a Review led by Professor Ken Muir, the Scottish Government, as part of its Education Reform programme, intends to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority with a **new public body responsible for qualifications**. It will also see the creation of two new education bodies to replace Education Scotland; a new national agency and an independent inspectorate.

Since SDS was created in 2008, there has been further strengthening of enterprise services with **South of Scotland Enterprise**, created in 2020, joining **Scottish Enterprise** and **Highlands and Islands Enterprise** in working to support businesses across Scotland, including in relation to workforce planning and development.

This national public body landscape is supported by delivery bodies at local and regional level, as well as various advisory, governance and implementation groups.

Question 1: If there was one thing you would like to see change in how our skills landscape is structured and delivering, what would it be?

Question 2: Thinking about the vision in the Terms of Reference for a system that is simple, people-focused and built on collaboration, how well are we doing against that vision just now? Can you provide specific examples of:

- a) success in the work of public agencies or the private/third sector; or
- b) elements that don't work, are confusing or need to be improved?

Question 3: Thinking about the different national agencies and partners involved in skills delivery, are there areas where more clarity is required about roles and responsibilities or where you think the balance of responsibilities should be changed?

Question 4: Thinking about how our economy and society is changing and the Scottish Government's ambitions for a skilled workforce as set out in NSET, do you have any evidence on where the current skills and education landscape needs to adapt or change and how it could be improved? Please provide evidence to support your answer.

Question 5: Can you provide any evidence of skills structures in other places that are delivering outcomes in line with Scotland's ambitions which Scottish Government should look to in achieving its ambitions?

Part 2 – Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a job which lets people earn a wage and gain skills, experience and industry-recognised qualifications. There are three apprenticeship programmes operating in Scotland.

Since 2008 Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has been the public body responsible for the funding and operation of Scotland's Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme. MAs are available to anyone in Scotland aged 16 or over and offer industry-recognised qualifications at various SCQF levels. SDS is involved in the design and development of MA frameworks (of which there are over 80 across a range of sectors), and delivers MAs through contracts with independent training providers, colleges, third sector and directly with employers.

MA funding is based on a contribution-rate model which SDS administers. Funding contributions depend on the type of apprenticeship, the qualification level and the age of the apprentice. Funding is in place for all MAs aged 16-24 and funding for individuals aged 25+ is restricted to key and supporting sectors. The contribution is paid directly to the learning provider delivering the apprenticeship.

Following the Commission for Developing Scotland's Workforce Review in 2014, Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships were introduced. Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) provide work-based learning opportunities for secondary school pupils in S4-S6 as one of their senior phase subject choices at SCQF level 6 (equivalent to Scottish Highers) and, through pilots, at level 4/5. Graduate Apprenticeships (GA), offer work-based learning at SCQF level 9 to 11 (equivalent to undergraduate and postgraduate degree level).

In 2019 the Scottish Government took the decision to move the funding responsibility for Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships to the Scottish Funding Council as part of efforts to identify a sustainable funding solution for the programmes, following the end of European Social Funding (ESF). Since 2021/22 new GA starts have been funded by SFC while FA starts have been funded jointly by SDS (through local authorities and independent training providers) and SFC (through colleges). The two agencies are currently operate a joint delivery model for the FA and GA programmes.

A Review of FAs by Education Scotland HM Inspector of Education (HMIE) published in March 2022 noted the complexity of the current funding and delivery model and presented some challenging messages about the FA programme in relation to design, delivery and impact. The Scottish Government has committed to a phased approach to improvement of the FA programme which will be aligned to the findings of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment being led by Professor Louise Hayward, which is due to report to Ministers in March 2023.

The Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) was created in 2015 in response to a recommendation from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Final Report for an MA supervisory board. For the past six years, SAAB, the secretariat for which is housed within SDS, has provided the employer voice and leadership in apprenticeships. Following the closure of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and Sector Skills Councils, SAAB

identified a potential gap in employer leadership in the design and development of new apprenticeship frameworks in Scotland as a key priority and assumed specific responsibility for overseeing this aspect of the system.

The Apprenticeship Approvals Group (AAG) was formed in 2019 and took on responsibility for approving new Scottish apprenticeship frameworks in April 2020 with the purpose of establishing a consistent approach to the approval of new MA, FA and GA frameworks. SDS, SG and SQA Accreditation, all sit on the AAG which is chaired by an independent employer representative. The group, like SAAB, is intended to be employer-led and its secretariat is supported by SDS.

Question 6: Do you have any evidence relating to the outcomes of the current funding and delivery of apprenticeship programmes (Modern Apprenticeships, Foundation Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships) in terms of either outcomes for learners and/or the needs of employers?

Question 7: The Terms of Reference sets out an ambition for apprenticeship programmes to be an embedded part of the wider education system to ensure that there are a range of different pathways available to learners. Do you have any views or evidence on how changes to the operation of apprenticeship programmes could support this ambition?

Question 8: Apprenticeships are often described as being 'demand-led'. Do you have any evidence about how process for developing and approving apprenticeship frameworks responds to skills priorities? Please include suggestions of how the development process could be enhanced.

Question 9: SAAB and AAG are described as employer-led groups. Do you have evidence on the benefits or risks of employer leadership in apprenticeship development or the impact it has on outcomes for apprentices and/or employers? Please include suggestions for how the governance of apprenticeship design and delivery could be strengthened.

Part 3 - National Occupational Standards (NOS)

National Occupational Standards (NOS) were introduced over 40 years ago to support vocational education, training and qualifications. They are statements of the standard of performance that an individual must achieve when carrying out functions of their occupation in the workplace. They are recognised in a consistent way across the UK, so achievement of a standard in one nation of the UK is recognised in all others.

NOS are the central industry benchmark for measuring competency and in responding to the skills needs of industry. They describe best practice in the skills, knowledge and understanding an individual will need to carry out their job in a competent manner. They provide individuals with a guarantee that their qualification will have a recognised standard with the required skills they need to develop their career.

In many sectors, together with professional standards, NOS underpin vocational qualifications. They are a mandatory component of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and Competency Based Qualifications (CBQs) accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the underpinning competency standard the qualifications contained in Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship frameworks.

The UK Government withdrew from the funding and formal use of NOS in 2016 and closed the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). Skills Ministers across the three devolved administrations (DAs) (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) have remained committed to retaining NOS across the UK.

This commitment includes providing public funding and resource to implement the agreed strategic direction as set out in the NOS Strategy '2022 and Beyond', published in September 2022, which sets out the DAs' ambitions for the development and promotion of NOS within the skills and education system.

Since the three-nation approach was agreed, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has been the managing agent for NOS on behalf of the DAs. The DAs provide funding to SDS for NOS management to support management of the programme. In this role, SDS contracts for the development of NOS, and related SVQs working closely with SQA Accreditation, and is responsible for maintaining NOS operations including the ongoing management and maintenance of the NOS Database system.

Question 10: Do you have any evidence on how the current arrangements for NOS are delivering against the intended ambitions of the NOS Strategy?

Question 11: The NOS Strategy positions NOS as the foundation of vocational training and learning in Scotland. Do you have any evidence to support how changes to the delivery landscape for developing and championing NOS could support this ambition?

Part 4 – Upskilling and Reskilling

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation recognises the importance of lifelong upskilling and reskilling as key to helping people progress to more fulfilling, secure, well-paid and fair work and to navigate changes in the economy, particularly as people’s careers are now longer and more diverse than ever before.

The Scottish Government currently provides additional investment to support upskilling and reskilling through two core programmes: Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) delivered by SDS through independent training providers and colleges, and the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), delivered primarily by SFC through colleges and to a lesser extent through the Open University in Scotland, with further delivery supported by SDS through private training providers. Evaluations of both programmes are due to be published shortly and will consider how the programmes can be adapted to maximise impact.

Additionally, both SDS and SFC have standalone upskilling interventions. SDS delivers a workforce planning service “Skills for Growth” which supports small and medium sized organisations that have identified growth plans and need to develop their workforce. SFC supports upskilling and reskilling opportunities in colleges through core provision, and manages the Upskilling Fund delivered through universities which provides shorter, more flexible provision focused on meeting the needs of employers and the economy.

In 2020-22, responding to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, the Scottish Government provided additional investment through the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF) and the North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund (NEERSF). Both programmes were set up as short-life solutions and have recently completed their delivery. The Scottish Government will be reporting on their impact in early 2023.

SG direction under NSET, as set out in the Terms of Reference for this Review, is to consider how the existing education and skills system can be ‘optimised’ to better support upskilling and reskilling throughout life. A key commitment is to the development of a lifetime skills offer which makes it easier for individuals and employers to navigate existing careers and skills support. This work is in the early stage with a focus on building the evidence base to inform policy proposals.

A focus of this work is on ‘short, sharp’ provision which facilitates flexible learning and training opportunities for those looking to upskill and reskill. This was also a key theme arising from the SFC Review which recommended that the SG provide greater opportunities for upskilling and reskilling, building on the NTTF and the Young Person’s Guarantee investment, and that SFC pilot a National Micro-credential Framework and delivery plan to develop a comprehensive approach to certifying modular courses.

Question 12: Do you have any evidence to demonstrate how the existing delivery arrangements for upskilling and reskilling, including the specific funding programmes, are impacting on intended outcomes for learners and/or industry and sectors?

Question 13: Do you have any evidence about what measures, if any, should be in place to understand the quality of national skills programme delivery funded by public investment through independent training providers?

Question 14: Thinking about the government's ambition to optimise the existing system for upskilling and reskilling throughout life, do you have any evidence to support how changes to the delivery landscape could help to achieve this ambition?

Part 5 – Sector and regional skills planning

SDS has undertaken skills planning activities since 2011; coordinating the development and implementation of Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) for a wide range of industry sectors including Financial Services, Life Sciences, Tourism, Engineering and Construction. It has also led on skills action planning to support Scottish Government ambitions including in relation to Rural Scotland, Early Years Learning and Childcare and Climate Emergency Skills.

SDS also supports the development of Regional Skills Investment Plans (RSIPs). These plans set out actions to better align skills provision with regional economic need and ambitions. To date, RSIPs have been developed in the Highlands and islands, Glasgow City Region, Edinburgh City Region, the North East, Tay Cities, the South of Scotland and Ayrshire. The implementation of the RSIPs is a cross-agency responsibility, coordinated by SDS.

Alongside this work, SDS remains responsible for gathering and sharing labour market intelligence and insights which underpin and inform its sectoral and regional skills planning work. It also provides secretariat support for the implementation group for the Scottish Government's Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (CESAP).

More recently, The Enterprise and Skills Review: Report on Phase 2 set out a vision to *'align the relevant functions of the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland to ensure that Scotland's people and businesses are equipped with the right skills to succeed in the economy'*. The Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board was subsequently established and set out a programme of work, involving SDS and the SFC, to deliver improved Skills Alignment.

In the report 'Planning for Skills' published in January 2022, the Auditor General reviewed progress against the Skills Alignment agenda. This report, which traces the development of the structures and projects, noted shortcomings in the governance and leadership provided by the Scottish Government and was critical of the collaborative relationships between all partners. It recommended that the Scottish Government take urgent action.

Subsequent to the 'Planning for Skills' Report the Scottish Government has established the Shared Outcomes Assurance Group and Shared Outcomes Framework to oversee the work that SDS and SFC are jointly progressing on skills planning. This includes a series of pathfinder projects led by SDS and SFC, which are 'tests of change' in determining approaches to skills planning.

The SDS-led pathfinders build on the body's work under the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan, published in December 2020, and are looking at the skills needs arising from the transition to net zero and specifically to support commercial and domestic heat decarbonisation.

The SFC-led pathfinders are regional in their focus and build on the proposals in the SFC Review for a revised approach to strategic provision planning and skills

alignment which could better explore strategic planning and partnership working at a regional level to assess demand based on a balance of learner and employer needs. These projects are still underway with the first work packages due to conclude before the end of 2022.

Question 15: Thinking about the overall ambition to ensure that the skills and education system is aligned to local, regional and national skills priorities, what aspects of the current delivery landscape are working well to support this ambition?

Question 16: The Auditor General recommended that the Scottish Government take urgent action to deliver improved governance on skills alignment. Do you have any evidence to support whether the current arrangements are likely to deliver progress?

Question 17: The NSET sets out a vision for a system which is agile and responsive to future needs, where labour market insights can inform strategic provision planning. Do you have any evidence to indicate how changes to the delivery landscape could better deliver this vision?

Question 18: Skills Development Scotland currently leads and coordinates approaches for Skills Investment Plans for sectors and Regional Skills Investment Plans. Do you have any evidence to demonstrate the success of this approach or to support the impacts of SIPs on sector skills outcomes or RSIPs on regional outcomes?

Question 19: One of the major challenges and opportunities facing the economy is the just transition to net zero. Thinking about the current delivery landscape, how well is it structured to deliver this ambition?

Part 6 – Careers and Young People

The Scottish Government's *Careers Strategy: Moving Forward* was published in February 2020 and set out a vision for a careers system in Scotland which is flexible and delivers for every citizen, regardless of where they live in Scotland, their age or circumstance.

In November 2020, the Scottish Government launched the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), a commitment to bring together employers, partners and young people with the aim of connecting every 16 to 24 year old in Scotland to an opportunity (job, enterprise, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering).

As part of the YPG, SDS was asked to bring together the views and experiences of young people, parents, employers, teachers and experts across the careers system to provide recommendations for how Scotland's careers services could better support career development from early years until a young person enters employment.

The Careers by Design Report was published in February 2022 and builds upon Scotland's Careers Strategy. The Scottish Government accepted all ten recommendations presented by the Report and the Board responsible for leading the Review, is now working to develop an Implementation Plan to present to Ministers by the end of 2022.

One of the ten recommendations from the Report was to "Create a Career Service Coalition" to understand the quality of provision across organisations who deliver CIAG and provide a mechanism for its improvement. The specific status and role of the coalition, now named the 'Careers by Design Collaborative' will be set out as part of the Implementation Group's final report.

In addition to open-access careers guidance for all adults, SDS has a statutory requirement to deliver careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) services in all state secondary schools in Scotland, with at least one dedicated member of careers staff working in every school. SDS also provides ongoing CIAG services to young people aged 16-19 to progress and sustain a positive destination. Careers services are also delivered through colleges and universities, often by the institution, SDS has partnership agreements with all Further Education Colleges and SDS Careers Advisers are present in most sites.

Question 20: Do you have any evidence to inform how the new Careers by Design Collaborative could be embedded within the wider education and skills system and delivery landscape to enable the recommendations of the Careers Review to be taken forward to ensure people can access the advice, information and guidance that they need?

Question 21: Alongside Careers information, advice and guidance, do you have any evidence to demonstrate what additional support young people, including those from marginalised groups, might need to develop their skills and experience to prepare them for the world of work? Please include details about who you think should be responsible for providing this support.

Part 7 – Employer Support and Engagement

Employers play a critical role in skills delivery: advising on the professional and occupational standards which underpin qualifications; supporting delivery of work-based learning pathways and work-integrated learning opportunities; helping to inform provision planning at local, regional and national level; workforce planning; and investing in the upskilling needs of their workforce.

Employer investment in training has declined over the last decade. In 2020, less than a quarter (22.3%) of Scotland's working age population in employment reported receiving job-related training within the last 3 months. In a challenging fiscal environment, the Scottish Government has indicated a need to ensure that the public and private sectors are working together to invest in the skills needs of the economy and workforce.

SDS currently provides support to employers and industry with workforce planning and skills development including through its advisory services, administration and promotion of apprenticeship programmes, Skills for Growth programme, and Growth and Inward Investment Fund. It maintains relationships with sectors and industries and also runs the PACE programme which supports those businesses facing administration with redundancy support for individuals through its careers' services.

In 2014 Scottish Government established the employer led Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Network as part of its Youth Employment Strategy. The network comprises 20 regional employer led boards and its focus is on bringing about permanent improvement in the relationship between employers and young people in education. It is supported by a National Team, and Scottish Government provides funding for the groups which it has committed to maintain until 2025.

Question 22: Do you have any evidence about how the current arrangements for employer engagement in skills and education are supporting delivery of Scottish Government's ambitions and outcomes?

Question 23: Thinking about the different aspects of the system in which employers have an interest, and the existing mechanisms for feeding into policy and delivery, do you have any evidence to support how changes in the delivery landscape could improve the partnership working between Scottish Government, its public bodies and employers?

Question 23 is the final question of this call for evidence. You can access and respond online to this call for evidence at: <https://consult.gov.scot/fair-work-employability-and-skills/skills-delivery-independent-review>

If you have any questions about this exercise, please send them to skillsdeliveryreview@gov.scot

The Respondent Information Form is available in the supporting files.



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This publication is available at www.gov.scot

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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80525-140-8 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, October 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1177162 (10/22)

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