



Skills for Learning Professionals

LLUK SQS Action Plan Consultation



Skills for Learning Professionals

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	p3
STRATEGIC AIMS	p4
OBJECTIVES DERIVED FROM THE STRATEGIC AIMS	p6
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS FROM DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES	p8



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this consultation is to engage representatives of different constituency groups within the lifelong learning sector in the development of an Action Plan for the LLUK Sector Qualifications Strategy, and to encourage them to support the implementation of the plan.

The Action Plan needs to be specific in that it should include descriptions of objectives and of the methods by which those objectives will be achieved. The strategic aims of the SQS were described in broad terms (eg 'explore the options for "professionalising" all parts of the lifelong learning workforce') so more specific objectives cannot just be lifted from the SQS. They have to be defined during development of the Action Plan.

There were nine strategic aims in the SQS and these are presented in the next section of this booklet. Five specific objectives for the Action Plan, which were derived from the nine strategic aims, are suggested in the following section.

The five specific objectives are intended to provide the focus for this consultation. For example, is each of the objectives worthwhile? What alternative or additional objectives would you suggest? What information is already available to contribute towards meeting these objectives? Do you have any of this information and, if so, can you pass it to LLUK?

The final section of the booklet provides a prompt list of questions. You may feel that not all of these are relevant, so please provide responses only to those which are appropriate to you.

Although the booklet does summarise the strategic aims of the SQS, further information is included in the accompanying Sector Qualification Strategy document.

STRATEGIC AIMS

The SQS presents LLUK’s vision of future qualifications as ‘valuable, accessible qualifications and learning provision to support the skills necessary for entry to, and development within the lifelong learning sector, to ensure the sector has the highly skilled and effective staff needed to provide the same for all the other sectors which depend on it for their learning and qualifications needs.’

The SQS applies to all four UK nations and cuts across all areas of work within Lifelong Learning UK’s footprint. The SQS aims to deliver the solutions identified in the Sector Skills Agreement process that have implications for qualifications. Eight out of the ten SSA solutions agreed across all four nations do have implications on qualifications and these have set the direction of the SQS alongside the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme.

SSA Solution ¹	SQS Strategic Aim
1. Explore the options for ‘professionalising’ all parts of the lifelong learning workforce	1. Explore the options for ‘professionalising’ all parts of the lifelong learning workforce
2. Develop an integrated CPD framework	2. Develop an integrated CPD framework
3. Develop a ‘skills for learning’ professionals’ qualifications framework	3. Develop a ‘skills for learning’ professionals’ qualifications framework
4. Promote collaborative working across the sector	4. Promote collaborative working across the sector
5. Facilitate the development of sector wide career pathways	5. Facilitate the development of sector wide career pathways
6. Develop recruitment programmes to address specific shortages in the lifelong learning sector	6. Develop recruitment programmes to address specific shortages in the lifelong learning sector
7. Develop a UK wide leadership and management strategy	7. Develop a UK wide leadership and management strategy
8. Develop the business case and resources to support the use of information learning technology (ILT)	8. Develop the business case and resources to support the use of information learning technology (ILT)

¹ The two SSA solutions that have not a direct influence on the direction of the SQS at this stage are:

- Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards learner-centred and demand-led learning and training opportunities
- Develop a knowledge bank for information, advice and guidance (IAG) professionals and others to support new entrants and existing staff in the lifelong learning sector



Skills for Learning Professionals

Because the SQS needs to engage fully with the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme, LLUK added another strategic aim, not taken from the national SSAs.

9. Ensure qualification design and review engages with the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (9)

The SQS discussed these various aims in general terms but did not specify what would be LLUK's objectives to progress in the relevant directions. Such objectives are needed for action planning and five possible objectives are suggested in the next section.

OBJECTIVES DERIVED FROM THE STRATEGIC AIMS

Achieving the five objectives listed below would demonstrate considerable progress along the nine strategic aims.

All of the five objectives relate to strategic aim 4 'to promote collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector to recognise and disseminate good practice' and to strategic aim 9 'to ensure qualification design and review engages with the UK Vocational Qualification Reform Programme.'

The discussion below each objective identifies the other strategic aims to which the objective relates.

1: TO DEVELOP DIAGRAMS OF CAREER PATHS

Strategic aim 5 'to facilitate development of sector wide career pathways' requires some such diagrams or their equivalents for the five constituency groups of CLD, FE, HE, LAIS and WBL, and possibly for discrete strands within each group.

The same aim and strategic aim 6 'to develop recruitment programmes' require that the diagrams include indications of joining points for these different career paths, from outside of the sector, from different constituency groups, and from different strands within individual constituency groups.

Strategic aim 7 'to develop a UK-wide leadership and management strategy' requires that the career paths include leadership and management roles.

2: TO OUTLINE THE COMPETENCIES ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS ON THE CAREER PATHS

Strategic aim 3 'to develop a "skills for learning professionals" qualifications framework' requires identification of the main competencies associated with the different occupations for which the qualifications will be developed.

The more detailed discussion of this aim within the SQS refers to the identification of areas of communality across the sector, and this requires that the competencies associated with occupations on the career paths relating to the five constituency groups are all described using common terminology. It also refers to a database of units across the sector to facilitate career progression, which again requires that the competencies associated with the different career paths are described using common language.

Strategic aim 7 'to develop a UK-wide leadership and management strategy' requires that the competencies outlined for the different roles include any concerned with leadership and management.

Strategic aim 8 ‘to develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector, particularly relating to information learning technology (ILT)’ requires that the competencies outlined for the different roles include any concerned with the use of ILT.

3: TO RELATE EXISTING QUALIFICATIONS TO THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS AND TO SUGGEST NEW QUALIFICATIONS, AS REQUIRED

The previous two objectives were preparatory steps towards strategic aim 3 ‘to develop a “skills for learning professionals” qualifications framework’. This objective relates directly to the design of the framework and would form the basis of all future qualifications development work in the sector. It should include reference to leadership and management roles and to the use of ILT as required.

4: TO OUTLINE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS

This objective relates directly to strategic aim 2 ‘to develop an integrated continuing and professional development framework and model for the lifelong learning sector where appropriate’.

Discussion of strategic aim 2 within the SQS notes that ‘not all CPD is qualification based for the lifelong learning sector and non-accredited provision is valued by the sector’, which statement confirms that the development of an integrated CPD model must be a more wide ranging development than can be incorporated within the SQS Action Plan. However, it also confirms that some CPD is qualification based and so that some will need to be addressed in the Action Plan.

The point of this objective is to sketch an overall picture of CPD requirements so that those that relate to qualifications can be dealt with in more detail in the future.

5: TO REPORT ON ADDITIONAL WAYS OF ‘PROFESSIONALISING’ THE LIFELONG LEARNING WORKFORCE

Strategic aim 2 ‘to explore options for ‘professionalising’ all parts of the lifelong learning workforce’ will necessarily be addressed to some extent by work on the preceding objectives in that the use of qualifications and CPD tend to be characteristic of professions.

However, these are not the only characteristics of professions and LLUK might want to investigate also other common characteristics such as the use of ethical codes and the practice of self-regulation. Possibly these could be explored initially alongside work on the other four suggested SQS Action Plan objectives.



Skills for Learning Professionals

QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

SQSs are being developed for all sectors of the UK economy to ensure that in future sector-relevant qualifications will be designed to address the needs of employers more effectively. They are subsidiary documents to the Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs), the SQS aims to deliver the SSA solutions agreed by employers and stakeholders that have implications for qualifications. .

The LLUK SQS was completed in April 2008 and it applies in all four countries of the UK. The SQS is intended as a long-term strategy but it is to be supplemented by an Action Plan which sets out what progress LLUK intends to make over the next 18 months. Five objectives have been suggested for the Action Plan and this consultation is to ask your views on the relevance of the objectives, their feasibility, and on how they might best be achieved. The five objectives are to

1. develop diagrams of career paths within the lifelong learning sector, within and between the different constituencies
2. outline the competencies associated with different occupations on the career paths
3. relate existing qualifications to the different occupations and to suggest new qualifications, as required
4. outline continuing professional development requirements for the different occupations
5. report on additional ways of 'professionalising' the lifelong learning workforce.



Skills for Learning Professionals

Name of person consulted Nichola Brown (the response is based on my opinions and through knowledge gained of the sector)

Job title Workforce Development Officer

Employer National Council for Voluntary Youth

Services.....

Date consulted 12 June 2008

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The following questions relate to each of the five objectives in turn. You do not need to answer all the questions if you feel they are not relevant to you, and the answers to some of the questions might make some of the other questions irrelevant (eg if you consider one of the objectives would be a waste of time then the questions about how to achieve the objective will probably be irrelevant). However, we would welcome your responses to as many of these questions as you can in the appropriate spaces.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP DIAGRAMS OF CAREER PATHS WITHIN THE LIFELONG LEARNING SECTOR, WITHIN AND BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES

This objective is probably the most important as definition of the career paths and identification of the main occupations within the lifelong learning sector will provide the basis for much of the development work to follow. The information is needed to help with recruitment programmes into the sector, to develop additional entry routes (eg, apprenticeship schemes), to show progression routes within the sector, and to specify relevant qualifications that will help learners to follow those progression routes.

Q 1.1 What are your initial thoughts on the benefits and risks of this objective?

Q 1.2 Would you want to amend this objective or suggest an alternative?

Yes, would like to see a career path produced for youth work only and no links to career paths to other LLUK constituencies – as do not think individuals would move across to these areas but instead to other children and young people occupational areas e.g. play work, Connexions Personal Advisers. Youth workers are community workers too – but still do not think they would move in to community learning roles (may need to do research to confirm my opinion). Therefore will need to show links to other career areas outside LLUKs footprint. Agree with suggestion to look at transitional module between play work and youth work.

Youth workers are often trainers therefore it is important the sector is kept up to date with the developments of the professional standards and qualifications for teacher, trainers and tutors. Training delivery is part of a youth workers role but still does not mean they would change career areas and be a full time tutor.

Q 1.3: Do you have any data that would be relevant to achieving this objective?

Q 1.4: Are you aware of any other research that would be relevant to achieving this objective?

Children's Workforce Network – mobility of the workforce group. CWDC may have data too.

Q 1.5: How would you recommend developing the initial diagrams of career paths? (eg, through interviews, seminars, desk research ...)

Agree with your examples plus talking to other SSCs

Would you like to contribute to this work? Happy to ask local infrastructure organisations if they could host a seminar/interviews with youth workers. Happy to host a focus group session at one of the NCVYS Workforce Development Task Group meetings.

Q 1.6: How would you recommend confirming the maps' usefulness? (eg, by postal questionnaires, web-based questionnaires, through conferences, ...)

Only useful if can see the linkages to other career areas outside the LLUK footprint.
Agree with your examples – but also request e-mail feedback (but difficult to know who has received a copy of the career path). It would be good to produce a careers guide for youth work with the information in it – web based.

Would you like to contribute to this work?
Assist with communication to the youth work sector.



Skills for Learning Professionals

OBJECTIVE 2: TO OUTLINE THE COMPETENCIES ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS ON THE CAREER PATHS

This objective is to provide additional information about the nature of the occupations identified in the career paths, and will inform future work such as the revision and/or development of National Occupational Standards and qualifications.

The intention is to identify competencies that are common to different constituency groups within the lifelong learning workforce and so the objective requires collaborative working across the sector.

Q 2.1: What are your initial thoughts on the benefits and risks of this objective?

Q 2.2: Would you want to amend this objective or suggest an alternative?

Look at the competencies in common with other occupational areas e.g. play work, Connexions PA.

Q 2.3: Do you have any data that would be relevant to achieving this objective?

Q 2.4: Are you aware of any other research that would be relevant to achieving this objective?

Would you like to contribute to this work?

Q 2.5: How would you recommend identifying the relevant competencies?
(eg, by reference to job descriptions, by occupational analysis...)

1. Use the NOS in youth work
2. Job Descriptions
3. Skills audits/competency frameworks developed by employers

Q 2.6: How would you recommend confirming the validity of the resulting lists of competencies? (eg, by postal questionnaires, web-based questionnaires, through conferences, ...)

Focus groups

Would you like to contribute to this work?

Promote focus group

Seek examples of practice re: competencies from employers

OBJECTIVE 3: TO RELATE EXISTING QUALIFICATIONS TO THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS AND TO SUGGEST NEW QUALIFICATIONS, AS REQUIRED

The focus of the SQS is on qualifications and so a key purpose of the Action Plan is to identify where the provision of qualifications adds value to the sector and/or where it could add more value. The following questions seek to elicit information that will contribute towards achievement of the objective.

Q 3.1: What are the benefits for employers, if any, of learners who have completed sector-specific training taking relevant qualifications?

It gives employers confidence that employees and volunteers have the knowledge to undertake the role.

Q 3.2: What are the drawbacks for employers, if any, of learners who have completed sector-specific training taking relevant qualifications?

Not always are individuals able to translate their learning in to practice. One Manager said to me “my best youth workers are not those who have the qualifications!”. Some individuals still have gaps in their knowledge/skills despite undertaking the qualification. Please see below taken from a consultation response to the DCSF Children’s Workforce Strategy Refresh July 2007:

1. Approach one – Improvements in training and higher education courses are needed

Many of our members have had direct contact with graduates from youth work and teaching courses. The workforce development officer at NCVYS is increasingly being made aware through research and direct contact from members, current recruitment difficulties in recruiting the calibre of staff needed for roles. Some have been involved with communicating their recruitment needs to universities. Improvements are needed with regards to changes in training and higher education courses. Some examples of feedback relating to leadership and management are provided as follows:

- Need to increase the understanding of policy areas by youth workers
- Need to instil in workers an understanding of the benefits of facilitation and youth led practice, how to conduct group work and create a needs led programme for young people
- Need to understand how the third sector operates at a local, regional and national level
- People need to leave courses with analytical, leadership, strategic and planning skills which are crucial for management roles

Additional comments are:

- Work with academic bodies and training establishments to develop new and stimulating programmes that will attract people to the profession e.g. on youth work training higher education courses there should be two routes, one for those who just want to work directly with young people and a second route for those who want a job role in youth services management at an operational or strategic level.
- Many of our members have called for flexible entry routes in to courses

- which take in to account previous experience and learning.
- One member has called for more options other than Foundation Degrees, to be made available for highly experienced but low qualified staff.

Some people have suggested there should be two routes at higher education level for youth workers – the first route 1) working with yp 2) youth services management. Professionally qualified youth workers normally end up taking on a management/strategic role and have little contact with yp on the ground so therefore should be fully equipped to undertake the management role. A post graduate qualification in youth services management might even be needed (fed this information in to the leadership and management strand /post graduate work LLUK led on – youth workforce reform programme, Children’s Workforce Network).

OBJECTIVE 4: TO OUTLINE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS

The reason to address CPD in the SQS Action Plan is only to clarify how it relates to the achievement and/or retention of qualifications. Other aspects of CPD can be addressed elsewhere in LLUK’s programme of work.

Q 4.1: What are your initial thoughts on the benefits and risks of this objective?

CPD is needed as it is impossible to equip individuals with all of the skills and knowledge they need by doing the appropriate occupational qualification. In particular for youth workers they need cpd to give them knowledge to deal with issues affecting young people e.g. alcohol, drug abuse, working with asylum seekers (yp), working with homelessness yp. Also need extra cpd concerning child protection, commissioning, financial management, managing volunteers etc.

Q 4.2: Would you want to amend this objective or suggest an alternative?

No a good idea

Q 4.3: Do you have any data that would be relevant to achieving this objective?

Training needs Analysis information from NCVYS, can signpost to audits conducted by local infrastructure organisations. Third Sector Capacity Building strand of the youth workforce reform programme has identified priority training needs (led by CWDC). This will help identify what additional training/dev needs youth works might have. However, TNA have been conducted across the youth workforce (also sometimes the children and yp workforce) but I would imagine the needs are similar.

Q 4.4: Are you aware of any other research that would be relevant to achieving this objective?

OBJECTIVE 5: TO REPORT ON ADDITIONAL WAYS OF 'PROFESSIONALISING' THE LIFELONG LEARNING WORKFORCE

The strategic aim 'to explore options for "professionalising" the lifelong learning workforce' is broader than exploring the further use of qualifications in the sector. However, qualifications might be one of the ways of 'professionalising' the workforce.

Q 5.1: What role do you think that qualifications might play in further 'professionalising' the lifelong learning workforce?

Qualifications should not be the only benchmark to judge competence or whether an individual is professional. I think being professional is more than just having qualifications – it is an approach, a skill....For the voluntary youth sector it is important that people achieve recognition of their existing skills and competence and complete additional training that is needed. You can be professional without having the appropriate qualification.

Q 5.2: What initiatives other than the use of qualifications might help to professionalise the lifelong learning workforce?

I like the idea under LLUK's SSA to look at a General Professional Recognition Learning and Skills Scheme. It would be beneficial to look at non-academic routes to explore professional status of a youth worker. More information on page 27 in my feedback to the last draft of the Sector Qualification Strategy. More flexible approaches to looking at 'professionalising' the workforce are needed. The voluntary sector is the largest workforce in the youth sector – so important not to go with strategies which support the minority of the workforce e.g. statutory sector staff.

Volunteer youth workers accreditation scheme in development by NCVYS.



Skills for Learning Professionals

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please you the following space is to record any additional comments

Additional Comments?

Look at the CWN review taking place about the role of regulation and licensing across the children's workforce.

Concern that on page 38 of the Sector Qualifications Strategy that the figures quoted regarding proportions of youth workers qualified – should have indicated this was for the statutory sector only in the results column.



Skills for Learning Professionals

