



Skills for Learning Professionals

A SECTOR SKILLS AGREEMENT FOR THE LIFELONG LEARNING SECTOR

STAGE 3 – ANALYSIS OF THE GAPS IN PROVISION AND
MARKET TESTING

NORTHERN IRELAND

JUNE 2007

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skills
FOR BUSINESS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Stage 3 report for Northern Ireland. The aim of Stage 3, the gap analysis and market testing phase, is to reach a consensus on the priority skills issues across the lifelong learning workforce and to devise a series of solutions and actions to address the skills issues.

This report presents the findings from Stage 3 consultation activity with employers and stakeholders which has focused on developing an accurate portrayal of skills issues in each of the constituencies in Northern Ireland. This Stage 3 report also details a suite of 10 solutions identified and developed through consultation work and internal Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) mechanisms which are now being taken forward for further development and refinement, working with employers and stakeholders in Stages 4 and 5 of the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA).

Future workforce characteristics and policy drivers in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland, and its lifelong learning sector, is currently going through a period of intense change. The Review of Public Administration is impacting on all parts of the lifelong learning sector, in particular the shape and size of Further Education (FE) and the libraries sector. The recent elections and the opening of the Northern Ireland Assembly present great opportunities for the sector, whilst at the same time underlining the uncertainties that many working across the sector feel. The fast pace of change is reflected in the number of policies developed in the last two years.

National and Government policy plays a considerable role in influencing the future development and the demand for skills within the lifelong learning workforce in a variety of areas. A consistent theme through all the policies and strategies published by the Northern Ireland departments and agencies is the need to increase skills at all levels across the population. Whilst there is a sense that the structures that deliver services may change over the next two years, nevertheless there is a clear commitment to work together to improve the opportunities for all those living and working in Northern Ireland.

Research to date through Stage 1 and 2 of the SSA has shown that the lifelong learning workforce will increasingly be dominated by professional occupations and, to a considerably lesser extent, by support/associate professionals in the coming years. It is also anticipated that a growing proportion of this workforce will be employed part-time. The very high level of replacement demand for professionals reflects the age profile of the workforce.

Particularly important are the management and leadership skills needed to drive forward lifelong learning organisations in this changing environment. Increasing integration between lifelong learning constituencies in Northern Ireland will result in the growing demand for multi-skilled employees and partnership working across all parts of the lifelong learning sector.

Equally important for all practitioners across the sector are the customer, employer and learner engagement skills needed to build a more 'demand-led', 'customer-responsive' system.

The new infrastructures will rely on much improved Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills at all levels, and there is an ongoing need for the teachers and learner support staff to deliver Essential Skills.

Key policies in Northern Ireland are set to stimulate a step change in the quality and effectiveness of lifelong learning across Northern Ireland. They explicitly recognise that

to build the world class economy envisaged by the new Northern Ireland Assembly we need to build the capacity and capability of the workforce that will deliver the reforms.

Overarching themes across the lifelong learning sector

Using Stage 1 & 2 evidence initial gap analysis papers were developed for Northern Ireland for each constituent part of the lifelong learning sector. As this work developed and further consultation was carried out with employers and stakeholders it became evident that a series of themes relating to skills issues are common across the lifelong learning sector. LLUK has used these themes to develop a framework for the SSA and to identify areas for collaboration on solutions development across the lifelong learning sector, the skills issues within each of the nations were mapped under the following overarching themes.

- Skills related to learning delivery including pedagogy and information learning technology (ILT)

As the deliverers of lifelong learning, skills related to learning delivery, including pedagogy and ILT are some of the most important skills needs across all constituencies. However, the specific skill set related to learning delivery is different in each constituency ranging from developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques in FE to the increased demand for ILT within Higher Education (HE).

- Leadership and management – including employer engagement (engaging with industry)

Across the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland leadership and management skills issues were identified and reinforced through Stage 3 consultation work. The demand for skills to enable effective employer engagement was also highlighted and reinforced across the constituencies.

- Learner engagement and customer care

An increasingly diverse learner population including younger learners, adult learners and learner from disadvantaged backgrounds has resulted in a requirement for learner engagement across the sector. Within Libraries Archives and Information Services (LAIS) these skills needs are related to customer care in order to provide support and guidance to users.

- Multi-agency/ partnership working

The growth of collaborative business models in FE; initiatives related to widening participation in HE and skills strategy document have highlighted the need for skills related to multi-agency and partnership working across all constituencies in Northern Ireland.

- Recruitment and retention

Skills shortages and recruitment and retention difficulties were highlighted in all parts of the lifelong learning sector and reinforced through the Stage 3 consultation work.

- ICT

Skills related to ICT are a requirement for some parts of the lifelong learning sector in particular within the LAIS constituency. Technological change has brought with it higher expectations on the part of many users of information services as they anticipate that the latest and most complex technology will be available and used to deliver services.

These themes are explored further in Section 4 of this report in terms of understanding the wider implications of the skills issues across the lifelong learning sector.

Proposed Solutions and Actions

LLUK initially focused the Stage3 consultation work on developing an accurate picture relating to skills issues for each constituency in Northern Ireland. As this work developed, potential solutions to the skills issues were identified by consultation attendees and a detailed study of all feedback was carried out in order to inform the development of potential solutions. An internal LLUK ‘think tank’ session was then used to discuss and refine the potential solutions which had been identified. The combined outcome of these activities was the development of a suite of 10 solutions, which have now been reality checked in Northern Ireland through key employer groups and refined in terms of ensuring strategic fit in Northern Ireland. The proposed solutions LLUK will be taking forward in Stages 4 & 5 of the SSA are:

- **Explore the options for ‘professionalising’ all parts of the lifelong learning workforce** - LLUK is currently involved in a major area of activity working towards the development of UK wide National Occupational Standards (NOS) for learning delivery. LLUK is working across the 4 nations with key Government departments to consider a UK wide approach to developing standards for lecturers, teachers, tutors and trainers. This also encompasses higher education and teaching roles in libraries, archives and information services. Stage 3 consultations in Northern Ireland evidenced support for recognising professionalism within the Work Based Learning (WBL) sector and for the possible creation of a formal accredited qualification based around the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) qualification which is being introduced in England.
- **Development of an integrated CPD framework and model for the lifelong learning sector where appropriate** - LLUK identifies an aspiration that the lifelong learning workforce in all 4 nations and across all constituencies has access to an integrated Continued Professional Development (CPD) framework. Although a substantial amount of good practice exists in relation to CPD in parts of the sector, as part of the Stage 3 consultation process employers and stakeholders in Northern Ireland identified and supported a need for a more consistent approach to the application of CPD across the whole of the sector. LLUK acknowledges that this activity should not duplicate existing good practice but aims to focus on working with partners to explore options for the development of CPD frameworks and build a definition of what a CPD framework and model could look like for the sector
- **Develop a ‘skills for learning professionals’ qualifications framework** - Develop a ‘skills for learning professionals’ skills and qualifications framework to sit within the Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) and act as an introduction to working in the lifelong learning sector. This would provide the building blocks for standards and qualifications in the sector. Identified areas for potential development through SSA Stage 4 & 5 consultation are Employer Engagement, Information Learning Technology, Learner Support/ Customer Care and Multi-agency/ Partnership working.

- **Develop collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector to recognise and disseminate good practice** – This solution looks at the option of developing improved partnerships across constituencies and possibly nations building on and disseminating good practice already in existence.
- **Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards demand led learning and training opportunities** – A culture change is taking place in the planning and delivery of education and training. Much of this is being driven by the Leitch Review of Skills. This culture change will have a huge impact on staff in the lifelong learning sector in terms of how learning is delivered, how courses are funded and many other aspects of their work. There is a need for a programme of support to assist lifelong learning employers to make this transition in Northern Ireland and to develop and nurture skills relating to employer engagement.
- **Develop sector wide career pathways** - This area of activity is based on the creation of a framework outlining career pathways in the lifelong learning sector. Within the Lifelong Learning sector in Northern Ireland career pathways tend to be individual within each constituency and strand. There has been no real recognition of the lifelong learning sector, as defined by LLUK, as an holistic sector with entry and progression routes for defined career development opportunities.
- **Develop a knowledge bank for IAG professionals and others to support new entrants and existing staff in the lifelong learning sector - Stage 3** consultation work in Northern Ireland identified a lack of strategic careers guidance across the lifelong learning sector that is affecting entry to the sector and movement within it. It is critical that LLUK works with the sector and its partners to develop a knowledge bank of support for its own Information Advice and Guidance professionals and those outside it in order to attract new entrants.
- **Recruitment programmes to address specific shortages in the lifelong learning sector** – Targeted recruitment programmes are needed to encourage people to move across the lifelong learning sector or consider it as a career choice. Across the lifelong learning sector there is a demand for a variety of recruitment programmes to encourage a range of people to consider the sector as an attractive career option.
- **Develop a UK wide Leadership and Management strategy** - There is a plethora of provision in leadership and management across the sector but there is no overall cohesive approach to leadership and management training and take up. There are certainly areas of good practice but there is no overall clear picture. As with the other 3 nations, in Northern Ireland there are numerous initiatives and bodies working on the issue of leadership and management in lifelong learning and LLUK wishes to work with partners sector-wide to ensure the availability of a framework of appropriate leadership and management training programmes.
- **Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector, particularly relating to ILT** - New technology is transforming the way learning is delivered across the UK. It is essential that the lifelong learning workforce is equipped to keep up with the pace of change presented by technology in terms of supporting users in using ICT, learning delivery through technology and up-skilling staff in the use of technology

Moving into Stages 4 and 5 of the SSA in Northern Ireland

LLUK has now planned a further series of meetings with employers, partners and stakeholders to further develop, and refine the suite of 10 solutions to ensure they meet and address skills issues in the different constituent parts of the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland. This work will also focus on agreeing with the sector actions to be taken, the prioritisation of the solutions for each constituency in more detail and developing commitment to the collaborative working LLUK wishes to advocate with partners and employers across the lifelong learning sector. LLUK will also be continuing to develop a greater understanding of the skills issues across the Community Learning and Development (CLD) part of the sector and working with employers and partners representative of the seven strands of the CLD workforce to develop the solutions accordingly.

LLUK is also currently working with partners to address key data gaps identified as part of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 work of the SSA and to finalise a primary data research plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the report gives an overview of the lifelong learning sector and also the Stage 3 process of the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) process.

1.1 The lifelong learning sector and LLUK

LLUK is one of 25 independent, employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), funded by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in consultation with ministers in Northern Ireland. Together, the 25 SSCs make up the majority of the Skills for Business network (SfBn), the key goals of which are to:

- reduce skills gaps and shortages
- improve productivity, business and public service performance
- increase opportunities to boost skills and productivity
- improve learning supply, including apprenticeships, HE (Higher Education) and NOS.

The lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland brings together all provision that delivers or supports learning and knowledge management for young people over 14 and adults.

Since January 2005, LLUK has taken over the work of three former National Training Organisations (NTOs): FENTO (the Further Education NTO), PAULO (the NTO for community based learning and development) and isNTO (the information services NTO), together with the NTO responsibilities of HESDA (the Higher Education Staff Development Agency) and the learning and development standards, which were previously within the remit of ENTO (Employment NTO). As a result, LLUK represents five key constituency groups:

- **community learning and development (CLD)** – covering community based learning and community development activity and including youth work, family learning and working with parents
- **further education (FE)** – embracing FE colleges and specialist institutions
- **higher education (HE)** – including universities and colleges of HE
- **libraries, archives and information services (LAIS)**
- **work based learning (WBL)** – relating to provision by private training companies.

1.1.1 Community learning and development (CLD)

Community learning and development includes non-formal and informal learning delivered in community based settings, as well as dedicated community development activity and youth work. It includes work with parents and families aimed at building social infrastructure and quality of life. The range of community based activity undertaken means that many of those who work with LLUK standards in this area may be recorded as being employed in another sector. For example, health visitors work with LLUK standards but are sited within the 'Skills for Health' footprint. The constituency is comprised of employees and volunteers, although volunteers are often coordinated by a smaller number of dedicated, full-time professional staff. Employers can range from local councils and local authorities to smaller community groups and alliances, which are run by local committees. Funding comes from a variety of sources, including government and local authority grants, statutory training and education funding bodies, private charities and trusts, and the European Social Fund (ESF).

The CLD constituency comprises seven discrete strands:

- **Adult and community learning (ACL) / community based adult learning (CBAL).**
- **Community development** – relates to community development activity, which does not have individual learning as its focus, pertaining to activities such as campaigning, building community capacity and empowering communities to take charge of their own development.
- **Community development learning (CDL)** – relates to learning as communities, rather than individuals, and is one of the techniques used within community development.
- **Development education** – a very small strand, which is, in reality, a sub-set of ACL and community development, specialising in education for the sustainable development of communities and concentrating on areas such as overseas aid and environmental campaigns.
- **Family learning** – the workforce that concentrates on community based training activity for the family unit, supporting the family to learn as a whole.
- **Working with parents** – the workforce that trains those who work with parents specifically, both to support and enhance the development of parenting skills. As well as direct work with parents themselves, such workers may, for example, provide training support to health visitors, family court judges and other professionals who operate in a family support role.
- **Youth work** – the workforce designated as working with young people with a focus on their personal and social development, and the promotion of their inclusion, voice and influence. Youth workers work with young people individually and in groups in a variety of settings: youth centres and youth clubs; detached (street-based) projects; information, advice & counselling centres; and in partnership with schools, Youth Offending Teams and other children and young people's services. Youth work includes local authority and voluntary provision, for example, the Scouting and Guiding associations and small voluntary youth groups.

1.1.2 Further education (FE)

FE defines the constituency that encompasses the activities undertaken by colleges and institutions primarily concerned with post-compulsory, non-HE learning. The FE sector offers a great deal of WBL and community based learning provision, as well as traditional institutionally based courses and programmes. There are currently 16 FE colleges in Northern Ireland which merge into 6 area based colleges on the 1st August 2007. The Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC) is a key representative association for FE. Funding for the constituency is generally provided from statutory sources and fee income, although many colleges have developed training activities, which either fully recover outlay costs or deliver profits. The key funding agency for the FE sector in Northern Ireland is the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Northern Ireland. Colleges may also source funding from a variety of private and public funding mechanisms including regional development agencies and European funding.

1.1.3 Higher education (HE)

Also funded in Northern Ireland by DEL, the higher education constituency consists of 2 universities, 2 university colleges and the Open University. These are publicly funded HE institutions with different missions, activities and histories. They are self-governing and independent institutions and are major employers in their local area, making a significant impact on their local economy.

1.1.4 Libraries, archives and information services (LAIS)

This constituency includes librarians, archivists and information service providers in publicly financed libraries, as well as those in universities and colleges.

Information workers of all kinds are important to the social well-being and economic success of Northern Ireland, to an extent which is difficult to over-estimate. They are concerned with the form, content, arrangement, routing and preservation of information and with making it accessible and attractive to actual and potential users. They manage and support the information needs of the 'knowledge economy' generally and, in particular, they contribute to the success of commercial and industrial enterprises.

It is also widely recognised that libraries have always been central to education and self-improvement, with the power to drive more effective learning, whether for individuals or groups.

Northern Ireland has 113 public libraries, containing 2 million books available to borrow, and access to 4 million catalogued items, with an average of 7 million borrower visits each year. LISC estimate that there are 1,300 employees within the sector

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) funds the Library Service, which is administered by five Education and Library Boards. The Library and Information Services Council is the local advisory body on matters relating to the Library Service. Under the current Review of Public Administration (RPA) in Northern Ireland the Education and Skills Authority will replace the five Education and Library Boards and take on other support functions. A new regional Library Authority will assume responsibility for all libraries from April 2008.

Archive services are used increasingly to support self-directed and community based learning. The public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is funded by DCAL as the national archive for Northern Ireland in respect of both public and private records.

1.1.5 Work based learning (WBL)

Work based learning covers a broad range of activity including programmes undertaken by commercial and voluntary sector providers funded under contract to Government departments and agencies, as well as a significant amount of privately funded independent and in-company training. Some colleges are work based learning providers in their own right and have established their own private companies. Funding bodies contract with these college companies to deliver training programmes as well as with local authorities and with independent learning providers. Independent providers often use colleges to provide underpinning knowledge for their work based trainees.

DEL is the main provider of Government funded training programmes through a network of Recognised Training Organisations (RTOs). Some colleges are work based learning providers in their own right and have established an RTO within the College. DEL contract directly with these organisations to deliver training programmes, as well as with community based and private sector training providers.

DEL has recently introduced a new programme Training for Success – Professional and Technical Training. This currently means that employers in the sector range from large national training providers, to Northern Ireland national companies through to small community based training organisations.

The Northern Ireland Jobskills Providers' Forum is one of the key representative organisations in the sector. The majority of funding for a large part of this constituency is provided from statutory sources. WBL providers also source funding from regional development agencies, private and public sector employers and from European funding sources.

1.2 The SSA Process

The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) has developed the 'SSA process' in order to ensure that organisations, both public and private, are equipped to meet the realities of the modern working environment and the workforce is able to offer the right skills in the right places at the right time. The process is designed to encourage dialogue about skills between employers, workforce development providers and government funded agencies, mediated within each employment sector by the individual SSCs.

The SSA process comprises five inter-related stages:

- **stage 1** – a sophisticated assessment of each sector's needs to cover the long-term, medium-term and short-term, mapping the drivers of change in the sector, and determining skills needs (the skills needs assessment)
- **stage 2** – a review of the range, nature and employer relevance of current training provision across all levels
- **stage 3** – an analysis of the main gaps and weaknesses in current workforce development activity, leading to agreed priorities to be addressed
- **stage 4** – a review of the scope for collaborative action, engaging employers to invest in skills development to support improved performance and productivity
- **stage 5** – a final agreement of how the SSC and employers will work together with key partners to secure the necessary supply of training for their workforce in the future.

Due to the role LLUK has in the SfBn whereby it is the SSC that supports employers whose primary purpose is the support or delivery of lifelong learning across all other sectors, LLUK is currently undertaking an '**Impact Review**' as an additional stage in the process. This involves the review of all other sectors' SSAs to assess the potential effects and the demands that they will place on skills needs in the lifelong learning sector, both currently and in the future. This stage will provide an opportunity to obtain additional detail about the specific requirements of other industrial sectors, which it has not been possible to identify in detail through the LLUK SSA process to date. Early findings from this work are explored in more detail in Section 7 of this report.

1.3 Overview of Stage 3: Gap analysis and market testing

This is the Stage 3 report for Northern Ireland. The aim of Stage 3, the gap analysis and market testing phase, is to reach a consensus on the priority skills issues for the LLUK workforce and to devise a series of solutions and actions to address the skills issues. The methodology which outlines the approach taken with regards to this phase of work is detailed in Section 2 of this report.

To recap:

Stage 1 looked at the drivers of change such as demographics, technology, participation trends and expenditure. It also examined the skills needs in the existing workforce and future skills requirements.

Stage 2 set out the findings from an extensive programme of research into the extent and quality of provision.

Stage 3 analyses the gaps between the skills issues (raised in Stage 1) and the availability and quality of training (identified in Stage 2) with the objective of understanding if there is a gap between the demand for skills and supply of relevant training. The stage 3 process also focuses on the development of potential solutions which will be taken forward in Stages 4 and 5 of the SSA process for development with employers and stakeholders.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology used during the market testing and gap analysis phase of the SSA in Northern Ireland and also in context of the UK wide approach.

2.1 The gap analysis phase

The gap analysis phase of the SSA attempts to identify the gaps between the skills issues (raised in Stage 1) and the availability of training (identified in Stage 2) with the objective of understanding if there is a gap between the demand for skills and supply of relevant training for each of the five constituencies in the LLUK sector in each of the four nations.

The following sections provide details for the gap analysis phase as it was undertaken for skills issues raised in Northern Ireland.

2.1.1 Analysing the Stage 1 evidence

The first stage in the gap analysis process was to review all the information from the Stage 1 Skills Needs Assessment (SNA) to identify the priority skills issues for each constituency in Northern Ireland. Skills needs had been identified through a variety of sources including:

- Scenario planning workshops
- Employer and stakeholder interviews
- LLUK employers survey
- Labour market information on the LLUK workforce
- Policy drivers
- Other social, demographic and technical drivers

The purpose of this exercise was to identify those issues that were reported by a majority of employers and stakeholders as being skills issues for their workforce. Skills issues were considered for inclusion if they were reported by a majority of the information sources and, or if, employers and stakeholders in each of the four nations reported them.

Once the initial set of skills issues had been identified for each constituency, they were analysed further to draw out the specific skills requirement associated with the issue. In some instances, this involved undertaking additional research into secondary sources of information in order to investigate in more detail the skills issue under consideration.

Throughout this process attempts were made to differentiate between those issues relating to the existing workforce and those that were future skills needs. Particular effort was made to identify those issues that were emerging issues for the workforce based on recent policy changes and/or demographic or other key drivers. This involved keeping abreast of all new policy changes that had occurred since the completion of the SNA.

During this phase, LLUK researchers consulted with constituency experts (both internally and externally) in order to ‘reality check’ the findings. In many cases, this unearthed more information on current developments and schemes that related to the skills issues. This information was then incorporated into the analysis in order to strengthen the findings.

2.1.2 Synthesising the Stage 1 and 2 evidence

The next step in the gap analysis was to bring together the findings from Stage 1 with the information on current provision from Stage 2. The objective of this exercise was to assess the supply of education and training in relation to each of the skills issues identified from the Stage 1.

For each skills issue identified, the following Stage 2 information was considered:

- Number of providers delivering relevant qualifications
- Volumes of provision delivered by different providers
- Information on the type of qualification being delivered
- Information on the characteristics of learners enrolled, including whether studying full-time or part-time and types of financial assistance received
- Quality of provision delivered by providers in each of the four nations
- Employers views on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities undertaken by their current staff
- Information on where CPD activities are undertaken

The objective of this exercise was to build up a more complete picture for each of the skills issues by drawing on the available supply of provision. This entailed identifying any gaps in the volume and quality of supply that could negatively impact on the ability to address the skills issues identified in the previous stage .

Throughout the information-matching exercise effort was made to identify specific barriers to accessing education and training, such as geographical barriers where, for example, there is a lack of available training in a particular area, or financial constraints including a lack of available financial support. Other barriers including employee and/or employer reluctance to undertake training were also considered.

2.1.3 Preparation of gap analysis papers

In order to engage employers and stakeholders in discussions on the skills gaps for their workforce, a series of gap analysis papers were developed. The papers set out the key findings for each constituency from the gap analysis exercise, in relation to a specific skills issue(s). Initially these papers were developed at a UK level. However as this work progressed it was evident that due to the unique position of the lifelong learning sector within each of the nations and policy contexts, each constituency paper should also be developed at a four nations level. These papers were developed based on SSDA guidance. The template which was used is in Annex A.

The initial gap analysis papers were sent to an internal working group and other LLUK staff with constituency specific expertise as well as to the LLUK National Manager for Northern Ireland for comment. Feedback from the internal consultation was incorporated into the papers which were then used as the basis for starting to carry out consultation with employers and stakeholder as part of the Stage 3 process.

2.2 Market testing of the skills issues

2.2.1 Market testing of the skills issues – Northern Ireland

In order to reality check the initial findings of the gap analysis work in Northern Ireland, LLUK consulted with employers and stakeholders from the Northern Ireland Country panel in each of the constituencies at the start of this process. This generated a large

volume of feedback, including references to unpublished information sources, which were subsequently fed back into the papers. The gap analysis papers were then revised on the basis of this feedback and presented as five constituency papers to the full Northern Ireland panel. Panel members were asked to provide feedback on their specific area and this information was subsequently incorporated into the papers to produce improved versions of the documents where employers worked with LLUK to ensure the portrayal of an accurate constituency picture at a national level.

In Northern Ireland a series of consultation meetings were then scheduled and all employers and stakeholders who participated in the market testing were provided with a copy of the gap analysis paper for their constituency. This market testing process also utilised a variety of supplementary meeting fora including focus groups, existing keep in touch meetings, consultation events scheduled as part of standards work and conferences. The gap analysis papers were viewed as starting documents with the purpose of generating discussion on the skills issues and, towards the latter stages of this consultation activity, they were designed to identify potential solutions to address the skills issues. Participants were invited to provide feedback on the gap analysis papers and therefore to inform the development and direction of the overall Stage 3 SSA phase.

Specific questions that were asked included:

- Do you agree that this is a skills issue for your sector?
- Is there anything else we need to know about this issue?
- Are there any issues that we have missed for your sector?
- What are the potential solutions for each of the skills issues?

Feedback gathered throughout the consultation phase was used to inform and develop revised versions of the gap analysis papers which were then subsequently used at further meetings for wider consultation. Final versions of these papers were developed based on the cumulative feedback gained throughout the Stage 3 market testing period for Northern Ireland and are available in Annexes D-H.

A list of key employer groups and stakeholders consulted as part of this process in Northern Ireland can be found in Annex I. This list also includes Northern Ireland members of LLUK employer and stakeholder panels.

2.2.2 Market testing of the skills issues – UK wide working groups

To assess UK wide perceptions and feedback LLUK also sought to undertake a wide ranging market testing process with employers, stakeholders and other partners. LLUK is responsible for, or directly involved in a range of panels, networks and groups that also provided opportunities for testing out the findings of the gap analysis. Examples of UK wide working groups where consultation work was carried out included the UK HE panel, the UK LAIS panels and the UK CLD panel. The nature of engagement also differed across the 4 nations and within the 9 English regions reflecting different structures already in place.

2.3 Developing overarching themes

As the gap analysis papers were developed, both at a UK level and also a national level it became apparent that there were a series of themes relating to skills issues identified which were common across all or several constituent parts of the lifelong learning sector. In order to start developing a framework to build the SSA and to identify areas for

collaboration on solutions development across the lifelong learning sector, the skills issues within each of the nations were then mapped under the following overarching themes.

- Skills related to learning delivery including pedagogy and ILT
- Leadership and management including employer engagement (engaging with industry)
- Learner engagement and customer care
- Multi-agency/ partnership working
- Recruitment and retention
- ICT

After carrying out this exercise it was evident that, although the priority of the skills issue often differed across a nation/ region or constituency, the skills issues identified as part of the gap analysis work could be mapped into the overarching themes framework. Section 4 of this report details the mapping of the skills issues under the overarching themes and gives an overview of consultation feedback in terms of understanding the context for each constituency.

Evidence base tables have been produced by LLUK which link all of the Stage1, Stage2 and Stage 3 consultation feedback to the overarching themes; these can be found in Annex J.

2.4 Identifying and developing SSA solutions

2.4.1 Developing strategic fit with the nations

As section 2.2 of this report details, LLUK initially focused stage 3 consultation work on building an accurate picture relating to skills issues for each constituency in each nation. As this work developed, potential solutions to the skills issues were identified by the consultation attendees and a detailed study of all of the feedback gained was carried out in order to bring together this feedback to inform the development of potential solutions.

An internal ‘think tank’ session, comprising LLUK’s Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, Nations Managers and key personnel involved with both the development and delivery of the SSA was used to discuss and explore potential solutions. The outcome of this exercise was the development of a suite of 10 solutions, which have now been tested in each nation and refined in terms of ensuring strategic fit within each of the nations.

In Northern Ireland LLUK has worked with Country panel members to carry out initial consultation based around the solutions and has also facilitated a stakeholder session with representation from across the Northern Ireland SSA Project Board. Although the headline ambitions which these solutions set out to achieve are at a UK level the development of these solutions throughout stages 4 and 5 of the SSA work and subsequent implementation will vary greatly across the four nations and also within the five constituencies of the LLUK footprint, due to the policy systems and infrastructures currently in place. These solutions, suggested actions and potential impact for Northern Ireland are explored in more detail in Section 6 of this report.

3. THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND OVERARCHING VISION FOR THE SECTOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND

National and Government policy plays a considerable role in influencing the future development and the demand for skills within the lifelong learning workforce in a variety of areas. Building on the previous SNA report in Stage 1 of the SSA, this section of the Stage 3 report seeks to update the current situation in Northern Ireland and summarise the main policy drivers at work in Northern Ireland that impact on lifelong learning, and hence the workforce that delivers education, skills and information services.

3.1 Summary

Strengthening economic prosperity, productivity and social inclusion are key themes within Government policy in Northern Ireland and across the UK. The development of skills within the population as a whole is expected to contribute to the achievement of these goals. Public Service Agreements (PSA) and target indicators set out clear targets for improving the educational training attainment of young people and improving adult skills levels. In essence, these targets could be considered as the delivery targets for the sector and, in turn, they too are a contributory influence on the demands placed on the lifelong learning sector and its workforce.

However, because the lifelong learning sector is largely located within public sector, the way in which it responds and develops in order to address the demands placed upon it is also substantially affected by other policy developments. Specific policies have been developed and implemented in different ways within different constituencies.

Nevertheless some common policy themes can be identified, including:

- setting standards for service delivery and professional practice
- developing capacity within the lifelong learning workforce
- developing responsive and flexible services and offering greater choice and personalisation to meet the needs of employers and individuals
- strengthening partnership working, collaboration and service integration, involving employers and individuals in determining service provision
- Reducing bureaucracy and inefficiency within the system and service delivery infrastructure.

Annex B gives a list of the main policy documents which relate to, or have an impact on the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland.

3.1.1 Key policy drivers of education, skills and lifelong learning in Northern Ireland

In 1998 powers for education, learning and employment were devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly. This resulted in additional and considerable variations in the development and implementation of policy on common themes between Northern Ireland and other home countries in the UK.

Northern Ireland, and its lifelong learning sector, is currently going through a period of intense change. The Review of Public Administration is impacting on all parts of the lifelong learning sector, in particular the shape and size of FE and the libraries sector. The recent elections and the opening of the Northern Ireland Assembly present great opportunities for the sector, whilst at the same time underlining the uncertainties that

many working across the sector feel. The fast pace of change is reflected in the number of policies developed in the last two years.

The most significant structural changes are the creation of a single Education & Skills Authority and a single library service and delivery body for the whole country, along with the merger of the current 16 FE colleges to create six area based colleges. These changes, amongst other things, are expected to streamline administration processes whilst continuing to improve the quality of learning provision. It is likely that further structural changes will take place once the governance of lifelong learning and skills is reviewed under the new assembly.

This period of change reflects the changes across the policy landscape, not least stimulated by the end of civil unrest and the ensuing growth in the economy of Northern Ireland. *The Economic Vision for Northern Ireland* (2005) paves the way for the nation to build its private sector, to streamline the public sector and to develop a strong voluntary and community sector. There is an expectation that NI will attract much greater investment and build the knowledge economy needed to compete in the global marketplace.

The vision recognises the major challenges in Northern Ireland include ensuring young people, and those entering the labour market, have the skills they need and that they can update them regularly building better links between business and education; increasing higher level skills and reducing barriers to employment for those currently out of work. Northern Ireland recognises that to build these world class skills and economy there needs to be an excellent lifelong learning sector.

Success through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland (2006) has a wide-ranging vision that will ensure the nation has the essential skills, the employability skills and the work-based skills needed to ensure that it is highly competitive. The strategy supports the lifelong learning sector in raising the skills of those in and out of work and of those entering the labour market. It highlights four key themes:

- understanding the demand for skills;
- improving the skills levels of the workforce;
- improving the quality and relevance of education and training;
- tackling the skills barriers to employment and employability.

These frame all the subsequent funding and development decisions building the sector.

This strategy has been developed and is delivered within the context of the Lisbon Agenda which is to make the European Union (EU) “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010” and the recently released Leitch Report (2006), which highlights the need for the UK to have a world class skills base by 2020.

All parts of the sector have a role in supporting the Essential Skills for Living (2006) agenda, offering a range of provision supporting numeracy, literacy and ICT. Northern Ireland has the lowest rate of literacy and numeracy in the UK with approximately 24% of 16-65 year olds needing assistance with these skills. All parts of the Northern Ireland Government are committed to improving the essential skills of the population, increasing the quantity and quality of provision and driving up demand. The Learning Skills Development Agency Northern Ireland (LSDA NI) has the remit to provide quality improvement support to all of the Northern Ireland Colleges and work based learning providers in this area.

3.1.2 Key Policies for the lifelong learning constituencies

The lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland includes:

Higher education

As outlined in DEL's Higher Education Policy the key issues currently include:

- widening participation;
- delivering beyond universities, particularly through Further Education institutions and developing Foundation Degrees (two-year route to a degree with focus on employability);
- improving teaching and learning;
- developing an international perspective.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provides inspections on quality issues and this sector is currently funded directly from DEL.

Further education and training system

This sector will be dominated by the six area based FE colleges from August 2007, but also includes work based learning and community provision of learning. It incorporates learning for those in work, for those out of work and those entering the labour market, including those who face barriers to entering education or employment. This is underpinned by:

- *Success through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland.*
- *FE Means Business*, with its change in focus for FE Colleges to that of economic engagement and development.
- *Success Through Excellence - A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland* which highlights the role that LSDA NI, the Education and Training Inspectorate and LLUK will play in assisting the improvement of quality throughout the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland.
- *Training for Success Professional & Technical training - A programme designed to engage with young people and to develop within them the skills that employers require.*

Community learning & development

In Northern Ireland Community Education and Development is particularly important given the province's historical community divisions. The State of the Sector IV (2006) outlines the impact the sector has had on supporting individuals facing multiple barriers. The Economic Strategy emphasises the important contribution this sector makes to the economy, and the strategy for building the sector is outlined in Positive Steps (2005).

Youth work and parenting education

The strategy for children and young people in Northern Ireland (2005) and the strategy for Delivery of Youth Work (2006) clearly outlines the priorities for those working with those aged 0-25. Here the priority is to put in place integrated support for children, young people and their families to ensure that they are healthy, enjoy learning and achieving; live in safety and with stability, experience economic and environmental well-being, contribute positively to community and society and live in a society that respects their rights.

Families Matter (2007) outlines the importance of family and parenting education in underpinning all other parts of the lifelong learning agenda. It also supports again the partnership/multi-agency approach to developing services for the whole child.

Libraries, archives and information services

This constituency brings together public, private and voluntary sector libraries, archives and other services that support knowledge transfer. The services they offer span all aspects of lifelong learning from empowering people and communities to information provision and informal learning. *Delivering Tomorrows Libraries* (2006) clearly outlines the priorities for libraries under the new, single library service and delivery organisation, emphasising their role in contributing to the economic vision and skills strategy in Northern Ireland.

Finally, the Archives Task Force, in reviewing Northern Ireland's archives (The Report of the Archives Task Force, 2004) alongside those of the other three nations, recommends that Northern Ireland's archival heritage is "*unlocked and made open to all citizens in a way that engages them and empowers them to use archives for personal, community, social and economic benefit*". The Northern Ireland National Archive (the Public records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) is building its activities accordingly.

3.1.3 Other drivers of change

Closely related to policy development, **expenditure on lifelong learning** is also acknowledged as a significant driver of change within the sector. An analysis of public expenditure and investment in education services in Northern Ireland confirms that the sector should receive a healthy and stable flow of funding in the near future which, all other things being equal, is likely to sustain and possibly increase overall employment levels within it. However, not all constituencies will experience this equally. Moreover, the composition of this funding is likely to change and move towards attracting increased investment by employers and learners. In order to respond to this, the lifelong learning sector will require staff with the skills to secure and sustain funding from an increasingly diverse range of sources and to offer provision that responds in both content and style of delivery to the needs of increasingly demanding paying customers, be they participants or their employers.

Demographic change is an issue with implications for the potential numbers of participants in lifelong learning services and their specific demands and needs. Northern Ireland's population is expected to increase by around 5% in the period 2004-54. Like the rest of the UK and nearly all European nations, Northern Ireland will also witness an ageing of its population. This suggests that, whilst demand for lifelong learning services from younger learners may remain relatively stable, demand from older learners will increase. This is already apparent within the trends in participation in lifelong learning. The growth in HE participation in recent years has been driven by mature students as have increases in participation at postgraduate level, although undergraduate students continue to make up the majority of the population. It is clear that older users of lifelong learning services may have different needs, preferences and behaviours compared to the more traditional younger users of services, with whom lifelong learning staff may be more familiar. This change will probably require an updating of skills and approaches to service delivery for lifelong learning staff.

The increasingly **global economy** will place an increased premium on skills within the workforce as a whole. It is expected that new industries, occupations and working practices will require new skills and knowledge, whilst demand for replacement skills will be stronger in some labour markets than others. Again, this is clearly indicative of an increase in adult participation in skills development. LLUK is currently working with other sectors to identify the potential demands which will be placed on the lifelong learning workforce through the Impact Review. Initial findings from this area of work are detailed in section 7 of this report. **Migration** is another important facet of globalisation, in the short term potentially resulting in increased demand for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision for those entering Northern Ireland, with increasing

diversification of their skills needs over the longer term. The lifelong learning sector will need to be able to respond to these changing demands, as well as being skilled in working with an increasingly diverse population. In addition, the migration of skilled workers places pressure on the development of international standards for skills and qualifications. The proposed European Qualifications Framework is likely to have implications for some parts of the lifelong learning sector, including potentially increasing the flow of European students into the lifelong learning sector, as well as enabling greater competition for students between providers in Northern Ireland and those overseas.

Finally, **technological change** has significant implications for the development of skills across the UK workforce as a whole, influencing demand for lifelong learning provision, as well as shaping the delivery of that provision and hence skills needs within the sector itself. The lifelong learning workforce will require a changing repertoire of skills in order to cope with the introduction of new ICT hardware and new services and provision (or methods of delivering services or provision) based on technology. These skills will require continual updating to keep pace with rapid technological innovation.

Public service agreements and target indicators

Current UK education and training policy, affecting the core business of most constituencies within the lifelong learning sector, is focused on the delivery of ambitious PSAs and achievement of targets in relation to key indicators. The indicators, shown in table 3.1, broadly divide into two major strands of policy aimed at improving productivity and social inclusion:

- improving the educational training attainment of young people
- improving the skills levels of adults.

Table 3.1: PSAs and targets for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland	
Young people	Adults
Improve GCSE achievement at age 16	Increase the proportion of working age people qualified at NVQ level 2 or above Increase the proportion of working age people qualified at NVQ level 3 or above For those who lack literacy and numeracy skills, increase the number achieving a recognised qualification

Source: Skills in the UK: the long-term challenge: interim report (Leitch, 2005), table C.4, p.143

The lifelong learning sector and its workforce have a critical role to play in the achievement of these high level indicator targets and in delivering the additional step-change in UK-wide skills levels advocated by Lord Leitch (2006).

Increasing employers' involvement in skills development

Increasing employer engagement and involvement in skills development is central to the flexible and demand-led approach advanced in the UK's Lisbon Strategy NRP (HM Treasury, 2005b), endorsed by Lord Leitch (2006) and reflected in the implementation of many UK policies. This approach is also supported by the developing SSAs being published by the SSCs. Employers in all sectors are increasingly demanding a greater

say in all aspects of skills development in order to shape the skills of both their current and future workforce.

The report from the National Audit Office, *‘Employers’ perspectives on improving skills for employment’* (Bourn, 2005a) assessed employers’ views about the ways in which they wanted publicly-funded training to be improved and whether, from their perspective, such provision represented value for money. The report suggested that employers wanted a simple way of getting advice on the best skills training for their staff. Employers also wanted bespoke training provision able to meet their particular needs, with more flexible delivery options to make provision available at a time and place convenient to both employers and employees. The report advocates stronger collaboration between colleges and private training providers and the involvement of employers in the design and delivery of provision in order to develop “innovative solutions which meet employers’ needs” (p.12).

Increasing community and voluntary-sector involvement

Increasing the involvement of the community and voluntary sector through statutory-voluntary sector partnerships is another key mechanism evident within UK-wide strategies for engaging learners with low-level skills and tackling social exclusion.

A report from the National Audit Office, *‘Working with the third sector’* (Bourn, 2005b), makes the case for increasing the community and voluntary sectors’ role in the delivery of public services, seeing them as having a key role in promoting participation and empowerment and contributing to local regeneration. More specifically, it suggested an increasing role for community and voluntary organisations in the delivery of lifelong learning and related services. However, the report also found that organisations within the voluntary and community sector, needed to train existing employees and volunteers and invest more in improving service delivery, particularly with regard to financial and management skills, in order to increase their capacity for partnership working with the statutory sector.

3.1.4 How the policy framework drives up the skills needs

A consistent theme through all the policies and strategies published by the Northern Ireland departments and agencies is the need to increase skills at all levels across the population. Whilst there is a sense that the structures that deliver services may change over the next two years, nevertheless there is a clear commitment to work together to improve the opportunities for all those living and working in Northern Ireland.

Particularly important are the management, leadership and partnership working skills needed to drive forward lifelong learning organisations in this unsettled period. Equally important for all practitioners across the sector are the customer, employer and learner engagement skills needed to build a more ‘demand-led’, ‘customer-responsive’ system.

The new infrastructures will rely on much improved ICT skills at all levels, and there is an ongoing need for the teachers and learner support staff to deliver Essential Skills.

The policies outlined above are set to stimulate a step change in the quality and effectiveness of lifelong learning across Northern Ireland. They explicitly recognise that to build the world class economy envisaged by the new Northern Ireland Assembly we need to build the capacity and capability of the workforce that will deliver the reforms.

3.2 Northern Ireland Workforce Profile and Supply of Provision

This information is taken from the Stage 1 and Stage 2 reports of the SSA for Northern Ireland and is intended as an update with regards to the workforce profile of the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland. Annex C details the UK workforce profile and the supply of provision taken from the Stage 1 and Stage 2 UK reports for comparison

3.2.1 Workforce numbers

The Northern Ireland workforce is estimated using figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and constituency-specific sources. Where data was missing or inadequate, a number of stakeholders were asked to provide estimates of workforce numbers (these constituencies were WBL and youth work within CLD). Given the data discrepancies and data gaps within the LLUK constituencies, it is very difficult to establish an accurate global estimate of the size of the lifelong learning workforce as a whole. However it is necessary to provide a benchmark figure for the purposes of this report and any overall estimate should be treated with extreme caution. With this in mind, it is suggested that the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland comprises in the region of **16,200** individuals. Section 3.3 of this report outlines a primary data research plan LLUK has put in place to address the data gaps identified within Stage 1 of the SSA process. A profile breakdown of each constituency based on figures from national sources such as the LFS and constituency specific data sources is detailed below.

- In the **CLD** constituency, the variation between the LFS and LLUK 'Market assessment' (2004) figures is possibly explained by absence from the relevant Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code of youth workers and other sub-groups within the constituency. Stakeholder estimates suggest that youth workers alone could account for approximately 130,000 individuals missing from the LFS total. Keeping the above in mind, an approximate total for CLD in Northern Ireland is **2,697**, not including an estimated 22,000 volunteers. However, according to the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), the number of paid staff in this sector is around 29,000 (NICVA, 2006).
- In **FE**, variations between the LFS and other sources may be related to the 'missing' unspecified amount from SIC 80.21 (general secondary education), which is not included in the total, and also to sector-specific data that covers teaching staff only. Owing to differences in the 'units' used for the purpose of calculation (a mixture of 'headcounts', 'contracts' and 'full-time equivalent', as well as the varying timescales used for data collection, it is difficult to produce a grand total for FE. The total workforce of FE is **6,357**, according to the LFS. The DEL 2004/05 headcount for teaching staff only, gives a figure of **5,311**.
- In the **HE** constituency, LFS data aggregated across the four quarters of 2004/05 provides a recent figure of **6,747**. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Staff Record uses the staff contract population, an indicator of HE staff contracts active on 1st December 2004. However, while the total UK workforce, according to HESA was 340,000, there is no figure available that is specific to Northern Ireland.
- In the **LAIS** constituency, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) database only covers accredited library and information professionals, and does not include other library and information related occupations, archivists, and records managers. Neither is it possible to identify CILIP members working in Northern Ireland as the CILIP database does not distinguish between members based in Northern Ireland and those in Eire. LISC estimates employee numbers to be in the region of 1,300.

- Coverage of the **WBL** constituency is very limited and the robustness of the available data could be seriously questioned. The LLUK ‘Market assessment’ (2004) relied heavily on an assumption about the number of private WBL providers. Stakeholder estimates put the figure for Northern Ireland at **1,625**.

These estimates mentioned above are presented in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Estimates of the size of the lifelong learning workforce in Northern Ireland

Constituency	LFS 2005	Estimates from constituency-specific sources	Stakeholder estimates
CLD	2,697 (SIC 80.42, but excludes youth workers and possibly other strands)		1,210 paid 22,111 volunteers (Youth Council for Northern Ireland)
FE	6,357 (SIC 80.22 and 80.30/1. Could also include unspecified amount from 80.21)	5,311 (headcount for teaching staff only) (DEL, 2004/05)	
HE	6,747 (SIC 80.30/2 & 3)		
LAIS	380 (SIC 92.51)		1300 (LISC estimate)
WBL	(No separate SIC coverage)		1,625 (Jobskills Providers’ Forum, Northern Ireland, and LLUK estimates)

3.2.2 Workforce characteristics

Various sources of data contributed to the development of the estimate of the total workforce within the lifelong learning sector to be in the region of 16,200 individuals, with HE, FE and CLD being the largest and LAIS the smallest constituencies in terms of workforce numbers.

Examining the characteristics of the lifelong learning workforce reveals particular issues relating to:

- **Female employment** – 70% of the workforce in Northern Ireland (as defined by SIC codes) were female, based on data from the LFS. This is the highest percentage of any home country.
- **An ageing workforce** – the LFS suggests that the majority of the workforce (55%) were aged between 35–54 years, of these 30% were aged between 45-54 years.
- **A professional workforce** – nearly two thirds (66%) of the workforce (based on the LFS and SIC codes) were professionals – a considerably higher proportion than found in other public sectors or the economy as a whole, and the highest of any of the home countries.
- **Full-time, permanent employment** was the norm for the workforce as a whole. The LFS shows 68% working full-time and 74% employed on a permanent basis.

3.2.3 Overall supply of provision

The supply of provision for LLUK is complex at a UK level. The lifelong learning workforce is the main supplier of provision and training not only to the workforces of all of the SSCs, but also to itself.

The lifelong learning sector delivers skills and qualifications to most workforces within the UK. Whilst other SSCs investigate the supply of provision for their sectors as something that, with the exception of in-house training, originates from outside their sector, LLUK's investigation of provision supplied to its workforce, relates to that which is primarily delivered by its own members of the same workforce.

Research carried out for Stage 2 work of the SSA indicated that there are at least 664 providers in the UK, offering programmes which were relevant to at least one constituency of the lifelong learning workforce during the academic year 2004/05.

Across Northern Ireland, the number of institutions identified as delivering provision relevant to the lifelong learning sector during 2004/05 was:

- 3 HE institutions (HEIs)
- 16 FE providers

There is no supplementary secondary data for WBL in Northern Ireland.

Further details of the provision supplied in the HE and FE constituencies are described below:

- The three HE providers in 2004/05 were:
 - Queen's University of Belfast
 - University of Ulster
 - Stranmillis University College
- There was a 54% increase in the number of learners in HE on learning programmes relevant to the lifelong learning workforce, though this was largely due to the dramatic growth in the take-up of Jobskills related provision, which increased by over 500%. The take-up of Essential Skills learning opportunities showed the next largest increase (28%).
- The overall number of learners on LLUK-relevant learning programmes in FE increased by 16% between 2003/04 and 2004/05; the largest rate of growth was in CLD (51% increase from 2003/04) . However, this was counteracted by a 59% decrease in FE relevant provision.

3.2.4 Supply for the constituencies within the lifelong learning sector

This section details the number of providers that have provision relevant to the workforce of each separate constituency; however data are limited to relevant provision from HE and FE providers.

- In terms of provision for the HE sector, 3 providers, all of which were HEIs, were identified as supplying relevant provision across the UK during 2004/05
- 6 providers of relevant training programmes for the FE sector were identified in the UK, of which 3 were HEIs and 3 were FE colleges.
- 10 providers supplied programmes relevant to the CLD workforce in 2004/05, of which 8 were FE colleges
- There was no provision of programmes relevant to the LAIS sector in Northern Ireland during 2004/05

- 17 providers supplied programmes relevant for the post-compulsory sector, of which 14 were WBL providers

3.3 Key data gaps for Northern Ireland

An extensive array of national data sources and supplementary constituency-specific data sources was analysed as part of the Stages 1 and 2 SSA work. National sources such as the LFS and the HESA were used to obtain comparable data for most constituencies across the 4 nations. Moreover, other secondary constituency-specific sources were analysed to contextualise the national data.

The above-mentioned exercise resulted in good coverage for some parts of the lifelong learning sector: excellent coverage of HE; good coverage of FE; some coverage of LAIS (libraries, archives and information services) and some coverage of youth work, community development and community based adult learning within CLD; and, to a lesser extent, WBL.

In conclusion, the main data gaps in Northern Ireland identified through the Stage 1 and 2 work of the SSA are as follows:

- Archives and records management
- CLD
 - community based adult learning
 - youth work
 - other strands of CLD (community education, development education, family learning and working with parents)
- WBL

Based on Stage1 & 2 findings LLUK is currently working with partners to address these key data gaps and finalise a primary data research plan.

3.4 Current/ key skills issues - what lies ahead for the sector in Northern Ireland

3.4.1 Defining ‘skills’ and the relationship between ‘skills’ and ‘qualifications’

The concept of ‘skills’ is varied and lacks a perfect measure (Leitch, 2005, p.20). This is partly to do with the difficulty of defining, measuring and capturing skills acquisition and development among individuals. Leitch also suggests that “*there are three component indicators of an individual’s or a population’s ‘human capital’*” (p.37):

- innate ability
- qualifications and knowledge acquired through formal education
- competencies and expertise acquired, for example, through training on the job.

It is hard to find a suitable proxy for skills within standard UK-wide and sector- or constituency-specific data sources. The most common and widely used proxy indicator is qualifications, but this has its limitations. Using qualifications as a proxy will never fully take account of skills, as they are most often developed through

“There is no perfect measure of skills ... the most common measure of skills is qualifications, although of course it is possible to have skills without having qualifications.”

(Leitch, 2005, p.20)

experience or ‘on the job’ training in the workplace and are not formally recognised in any way. A fuller description of skills should also include transferable skills (such as literacy and numeracy) and wider employability skills (such as team-working and problem solving), which may be under-represented (or indeed obscured completely) within formal qualifications designed to recognise particular types of professional, occupational or technical competencies and expertise.

Nonetheless, qualifications data is useful in that it does allow some comparisons to be made about skills levels (in the narrowest sense) across different occupations and employment sectors and there was little option but to take this approach in the analysis of existing secondary data sources for this report.

However, building on the classification model adopted for the national employer skills surveys, the primary data collection and analysis undertaken during this research has addressed the limitations of using qualifications as a proxy measure by categorising skills more fully in the following way:

- **professional/occupational/technical skills** – skills which are specific to particular occupations such as: pedagogical or teaching skills for lecturers; Information Communications echnology (ICT) Professional skills for ICT staff and information retrieval skills for librarians
- **transferable skills** – skills which are needed in work, learning and everyday life such as: communication; applied numeracy; ICT use; and foreign language/Welsh language skills
- **wider employability skills** – such as: problem solving; team-working; improving own learning and performance; and inter-personal and customer-service skills.

A further complication in the analysis of qualifications data is the wide range of terminologies and definitions of types of skills at different levels, which are used within different data sources and country and constituency contexts. Leitch (2005) provides a good discussion of this issue and proposes the use of the five-level National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) framework, despite the fact that this has been updated to an eight-level National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The LFS (on which much of the analysis was based) and several of the other secondary constituency-specific data sources also utilise this five-level framework, and for this reason it has been adopted throughout this report.

3.4.2 Current skills needs and priorities within the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland

The lifelong learning workforce is a highly professional workforce, made up of a high proportion of staff within SOCs 1-3, incorporating: managers and senior officials; professional occupations; and associate professional and technical occupations. It is, therefore, not surprising that a high proportion (77%) of the lifelong learning workforce across Northern Ireland held qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 4 or above. Northern Ireland had the highest incidence of NVQ level 4 or above qualifications within the workforce, while England had the lowest.

Moreover, in the years 2001–2005, numbers of the lifelong learning workforce holding an NVQ level 4 or above qualification increased across all four home countries of the UK, but particularly, and more recently, in Northern Ireland, which has seen a 60% increase. These rises have been predominantly driven by increases in the proportion of those within professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations.

However, against this backdrop of already high and increasing skills levels within the workforce, especially among professionals and support/associate professionals, the demand for high-level skills continues to outweigh supply. Employers across the UK lifelong learning sector face difficulties in recruiting staff as a result of skills shortages and encounter an even greater challenge in terms of the numbers of existing staff with skills gaps, i.e. perceived to be lacking skills important to the successful performance of their role.

Skills shortages – where applicants for vacant posts did not have the required skills, work experience or qualifications – made up a higher proportion of vacancies within lifelong learning establishments, compared with the all-sector average within Wales and Northern Ireland, but a lower proportion in England. In addition, skills shortages were responsible for more ‘hard to fill’ vacancies within the lifelong learning sector than the all-sector average in each of the home countries in the UK. However, the considerably lower all-sector average and lifelong learning figures in Northern Ireland suggest that issues involved in the recruitment challenges faced within this country are not related primarily to the lifelong learning sector but are wider and more general.

In Northern Ireland, employers from all constituencies more commonly reported skills shortages than employers in other countries. Employers from all constituencies reported skills shortages among managers and professionals, predominantly at NVQ level 4.

Skills gaps – where current employees were perceived to be lacking the appropriate levels or types of skills to enable them to successfully perform in their role – involved considerably higher numbers of cases than skills shortages. The proportion of employees within the lifelong learning sector deemed to have skills gaps was lower than the all-sector average in the countries where comparative data was available. The low incidence of skills gaps in Northern Ireland may be associated with its higher proportion of the workforce already qualified to NVQ level 4 or above.

Similar to the picture for skills shortages, skills gaps were most commonly reported at NVQ level 4 for managers and professional occupations. However, in contrast to the UK as whole, skills gaps were also reported at this level amongst support/associate professionals. Among administrative staff, a larger proportion of employers in Northern Ireland than elsewhere reported skills gaps at NVQ level 3.

In addition to the current priorities resulting directly from these skills shortages and skills gaps, stakeholders identified leadership and management, and transferable and wider employability skills, as particular priorities across all lifelong learning constituencies within the UK. Moreover, stakeholders representing different constituencies within Northern Ireland sometimes identified the same priority skills needs for their country. Additionally in Northern Ireland, FE and HE stakeholders agreed that teaching and learning staff needed to develop skills for embedding Essential Skills assessments within other programmes of learning.

3.4.3 Future skills requirements

Research to date shows that the lifelong learning workforce will increasingly be dominated by professional occupations and, to a considerably lesser extent, by support/associate professionals in the coming years. It is also anticipated that a growing proportion of this workforce will be employed part-time. The very high level of replacement demand for professionals reflects the age profile of the workforce.

It is perhaps not surprising to learn that employers anticipated that demand for higher level skills at NVQ level 4 and above, and also at NVQ level 3, would increase, and that

increasing the skills levels of the existing workforce was more important to them than increasing the size of the workforce within particular occupations. Higher-level professional skills are, therefore, a key priority for lifelong learning sector employers, but transferable and wider employability skills are also recognised to be important for a wide range of lifelong learning occupations in the future.

However, within this research it has not been possible to consider in any depth the specific subject specialisms (and related skills needs), which will be required of the lifelong learning workforce at these different qualification levels. The 'Impact Review' of the SSAs developed by other SSCs, to be undertaken by LLUK, may provide details of the demand for subject-related skills across the workforce as a whole, and allow the potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce's skills needs to be more clearly ascertained.

Lifelong learning employers across the UK identified the following overall priority future skills needs:

- increasing demand for professionals and support/associate professionals, especially in FE, HE and WBL
- increasing demand for particular professional/technical/practical skills for professionals, such as teaching and supporting learning in FE and HE, records management and librarianship in LAIS, and occupational competence for WBL trainers and assessors
- increasing demand for transferable and wider employability skills, such as ICT and customer service skills, and, especially, leadership and management skills, across most constituencies
- increasing integration between lifelong learning constituencies, resulting in growing demand for overlapping job roles and multi-skilled staff, and partnership skills.

4. OVERARCHING THEMES

This section of the report gives an overview of the overarching themes as outlined in the methodology section of this report. This information has been collated based on the Stage 3 consultation feedback and from the final versions of the gap analysis papers for Northern Ireland which can be found in Annexes D-H. Research findings from Stages 1 and 2 of the SSA are also referenced within this stage of the report. The gap analysis papers detail individual skills issues for each constituency and the information detailed within this section of the report summarises the key skills issues within the overarching themes. This information is presented based on the format provided in the SSDA guidance which can be found in Annex A. The overarching themes are also linked to the proposed solutions at this stage. More detailed explanation of the proposed solutions can be found in section 5 of this report.

4.1 Learning delivery including pedagogy and ILT

As the deliverers of lifelong learning, skills related to learning delivery, including pedagogy and ILT are some of the most important skills needs across all constituencies. However, the specific skill set related to learning delivery is different in each constituency.

In CLD, there is a requirement for tutoring skills as well as Essential Skills in order to deal with communities that have communication and learning issues.

Within FE, skills required include assessing learners' needs; planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes; developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques; e-learning and distance learning; reflective pedagogy and pedagogical skills development in coaching and related issues.

Within HE, use of ILT is growing, often blended with or replacing traditional face to face teaching. Lecturers and students commonly use ILT for independent working, research and presentations. Skills needs related to learning delivery and ILT have been identified for the technical support workforce, in relation to specialist technical skills and practical skills including ICT skills; design and manual skills to build research equipment; advanced technical skills to operate and maintain large complex pieces of equipment; knowledge of local set up; ability to evaluate products and services; effective lab management and safety and general skills including communication skills, project management, staff/teacher management, teaching and coaching skills.

In WBL, there is a need for 'softer' skills including the provision of high quality careers advice and guidance to young people, unemployed adults and individuals interested in changing careers. Though tutors and assessors are currently able to provide guidance within their subject specialism, there is a need for a more co-coordinated approach. Tutors and assessors are also expected to act as counsellors to their learners, develop action plans and provide ongoing learning support.

Occupational groups affected

These skills needs predominantly affect teaching, training and tutoring professionals.

However, some specific examples include

- professional and support professional staff within the CLD workforce, specifically youth community officers; youth support workers; and parent support workers
- teaching and learning support staff in FE, specifically lecturers and tutors

Demand side evidence

- The CLD constituency anticipates a rapid increase in the proportion of its workforce qualified at levels 2, 3 and 4.
- In Northern Ireland a higher proportion of FE staff is qualified to level 4 or above than in any other UK home country. However, stakeholders agree that teaching and learning staff need to develop skills for embedding Essential Skills assessments within other programmes of learning.
- It is also anticipated that technicians in HE will move from demonstrating roles into teaching roles.

Supply side evidence

- In Northern Ireland, a teaching qualification is not mandatory for appointments to posts in FE teaching. However new entrants to full-time teaching or associate lecturer posts in FE who lack a BEd or a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) must complete the Post Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education PGC(FHE) qualification offered by the University of Ulster within 3 years of taking up post.
- The training offered by FE to the lifelong learning sector was mostly either generic post-compulsory provision or intended for CLD employees. These two areas saw the greatest growth in enrolments in 2003/04 and 2004/05.
- Three HE institutions in Northern Ireland offer qualifications for the post-compulsory sector and a small percentage of HE constituency employees (1.5%) is undertaking study with the Open University.
- Overall there is very little provision for teaching of skills related to learning to members of the HE constituency. No programmes were identified that lead to level 4 qualifications for technicians.
- There is very little WBL specific training available over the lifelong learning sector as a whole. The few specific offerings that are available are mostly offered by HE. Most of these programmes are first degrees, DipHEs and non-research Masters degrees which may offer a suitable training for teachers and trainers within WBL.
- There was a small number of enrolments on teaching and training qualifications that were relevant to the WBL workforce in Northern Ireland. Learners enrolled on qualifications relevant to the WBL workforce in FE were most likely to be enrolled on Assessor or Verifier awards, with the bulk of provision at level 3.

Nature of gaps

Market gaps – these have resulted from a difference in the supply and demand of the particular learning delivery skills.

Likely impact if not addressed

Without the skills of learning delivery, the lifelong learning workforce will not be able to deliver on its core activities and responsibilities.

Related issues/themes

- Leadership and management
- Learner engagement and customer care
- Recruitment and retention
- ICT

Related proposed solutions

- Explore options for ‘professionalising’ all parts of the lifelong learning workforce
- Develop an integrated CPD framework and model
- Develop a ‘skills for learning professionals’ qualifications framework
- Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards demand-led learning and training opportunities
- Develop collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector
- Develop a UK leadership & management strategy
- Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector

4.2 Leadership and management

Overview

Leadership and management skills, predominantly at Level 4, were identified as a skills need across all five constituencies in Northern Ireland. Specific skill sets include:

- management and supervisory skills
- strategic leadership
- advocacy and team working
- project management
- financial management
- bid writing/fund raising
- conflict management
- entrepreneurship and innovation
- performance management
- engaging employers
- business management
- change management
- inter-personal skills
- business development
- HR/personnel skills
- organisation behaviour
- negotiation skills
- employment law

The need for the above-mentioned skills has arisen due to a variety of reasons. Within CLD, the increasing role of voluntary and community organisations in delivering more public services has implications for the skills needs of the workforce in terms of effective management and operation of organisations (especially the voluntary workforce); securing public funding; and financial management.

In FE, there is requirement for stronger leadership and management skills to implement successfully the growth of collaborative business models. In HE, the demands and challenges of operating in an increasingly internationalised market require real institutional strengths in leadership, governance and management. Leadership is expected to become more distributed and will require the development of leadership skills throughout the workforce.

Within LAIS, currently, there is often a dichotomy between the need for professional library/archivist skills and management skills with many individuals being promoted on their high quality librarian skills, without sufficient management training, thereby resulting in a skills need for leadership and management.

Finally, within WBL, providers and stakeholders identify time and resource issues as major barriers to accessing leadership and management training, particularly for small and medium sized enterprises.

Occupational groups affected

Predominantly affects management staff but also affects professionals, support professionals and staff with management potential.

Demand side evidence

All constituencies identified development of management and leadership skills as a priority. More specifically,

- Within CLD, the most commonly reported need for managers was to have more transferable and wider employability skills in areas such as leadership, partnership working, interpersonal skills, outreach, creative thinking and ability to promote social inclusion and empower communities.
- In LAIS, employers identified wider employability skills as a priority, particularly management and supervisory skills, blended with library management skills; advocacy and team-working.

Supply side evidence

- In CLD, management staff undertook CPD activities primarily through HE, with a large proportion of employers indicating satisfaction with the CPD activities undertaken by management staff
- There is very little contextualised provision for the management of CLD activities available through FE and HE providers throughout the UK, including Northern Ireland. However, this type of provision is emerging. In 2004/05 there were 25 enrolments on post-compulsory education management provision offered with Queen's University, Belfast, an increase of 15 compared to the previous year.
- In LAIS no vocationally-relevant management and leadership oriented education provision was identified in Northern Ireland from the data available up to 2004/05. However this area of professional training is emergent in Northern Ireland. In January 2006, 15 students registered on the 2 year part-time Postgraduate Certificate in School Library Management at the University of Ulster.
- Although there is a variety of WBL related learning programmes offered by HE, none have been identified as having a specific focus on management of these activities. Very few management related qualifications specific to WBL were offered by FE. They attracted only 15 enrolments in 2003/04 and 2004/05.

It is however important to note that many people in the sector undertake generic management qualifications including Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Certificates and Diplomas and MBAs.

Nature of gaps

Market gaps – these have resulted from a difference in the supply and demand of the particular leadership and management skills.

Institutional weaknesses – there may be a poor supply of labour to the sector owing to inherent barriers such as time and resource issues preventing access to leadership and management training in WBL.

Likely impact if not addressed

Without contextualised leadership and management training, management and other staff (with management responsibilities) will not be able to deliver the changing needs evolving within individual constituencies.

Related themes

- Multi-agency and partnership working
- This issue was also raised in following themes and is therefore related to these:
 - learning delivery
 - learner engagement and customer care
 - ICT
 - recruitment and retention

Related proposed solutions

This overarching theme links directly with:

- Develop a UK wide Leadership and Management strategy

However it also links with the following proposed solutions:

- Explore options for 'Professionalising' the lifelong learning workforce
- Develop an integrated CPD framework
- Develop a 'Skills for Learning Professionals' qualifications framework
- Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards demand led training opportunities
- Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector

4.3 Learner engagement and customer care

An increasingly diverse learner population including younger learners aged 14-19, adult learners and learners from disadvantaged backgrounds has resulted in the requirement for learner engagement skills across parts of the lifelong learning sector (FE, HE and CLD). Additionally in Northern Ireland, key priorities relate to engaging with migrant workers, learners within Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and existing students with poor essential skills. Specific skills include:

- identifying learner needs
- engaging and supporting learners
- communication and bilingual skills
- workforce diversity and disability awareness
- facilitating and enabling independent learning

Within LAIS, skills needs are related to customer care with a need to draw on a wider range of skills in order to establish user needs and provide support, advice and guidance to users. Specific skills needs include:

- customer engagement
- supporting adults with basic skills needs
- inter-personal skills
- communication and bilingual skills

Learners enrolled on WBL programmes are a heterogeneous group incorporating young people, the unemployed and adult learners across a range of settings and with a broad spectrum of prior attainment and social needs; thereby requiring the workforce to have learner/customer engagement skills.

Occupational groups affected

This skills need affects all staff who provide support to learners and/or customers but also extends to all those in management, professional, support professional and technical and administrative roles who have direct contact with learners.

Demand side evidence

- Almost a third of all employers felt that their existing management staff lacked transferable skills including communication and language skills. Smaller proportions indicated that they believed professional and learning support and technical staff lacked these skills.
- However, half of all employers in Northern Ireland reported that their professional and paraprofessional staff lacked transferable skills including communication and bilingual skills.
- Stakeholders in Northern Ireland revealed that transferable and wider employability skills are a priority. These include interpersonal and outreach skills and skills to promote social inclusion and empower communities. In particular it is anticipated that youth workers will need to develop advice and guidance skills.
- Wider employability skills such as customer services and the ability to support people to help them learn are a priority for LAIS, as are transferable skills such as communications.
- Employers in Northern Ireland identified a growing future need for customer service skills in archives and records management and an increasing demand for 'people skills'.

Supply side evidence

- There is very little evidence of training provision that specifically addresses these skills needs in Northern Ireland.

Nature of gaps

Market gaps – these have resulted from a difference in the supply and demand of the particular learner engagement and customer care skills.

Likely impact if not addressed

With lifelong learning organisations working more and more like businesses, it is essential for all staff to be skilled in customer and learner engagement in order to provide a competent service.

Related themes

- Learning delivery
- Leadership and management
- This issue was also raised in, and therefore related to, the multi-agency and partnership working theme.

Related proposed solutions

- Develop a ‘Skills for Learning Professionals’ qualifications framework
- Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards more demand led training opportunities
- Develop collaborative working across the sector
- Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector

4.4 Multi-agency and partnership working

Overview

The growth of collaborative business models in FE; initiatives such as widening participation in HE and various skills strategy documents have highlighted the need for skills related to multi-agency and partnership working across all constituencies in Northern Ireland.

Within CLD, youth work strategies talk about developing and implementing a strategy for youth work practice within the formal education sector, in geographic communities, in communities of interest and across other Government departments.

In FE, collaborative business models for FE colleges are emerging, focusing on provision for young people aged 14-19 (with schools and the Children's Workforce Network), for adult workforce development (with employers), for HE delivered in FE colleges (with HE) and for tackling social exclusion (with the CLD constituency), all of which, will have implications for the FE workforce who will be required to develop effective partnership working skills and business skills.

The widening participation agenda in HE will require staff who can support learning in community and employment settings and may involve collaboration with WBL and CLD providers. In LAIS, staff in libraries will increasingly need to draw on a wider range of skills to establish user needs and provide support, advice and guidance to users. They will need to have skills relating to youth work and early years education or teaching.

Occupational groups affected

This skills issue predominantly affects management staff but also affects all other professional, support and administrative staff that may have to get involved in partnership related activities.

Demand side evidence

There are specific instances where employers have cited multi-agency and partnership working as a skills need within their workforce.

- Within CLD, employers reported a need for managers to have more transferable and wider employability skills in areas that included partnership working, outreach and ability to promote social inclusion and empower communities.
- In HE, employers identified the importance of developing professional/technical/practical skills in the context of the widening participation agenda and of catering for learners with diverse needs.

Supply side evidence

- No sector specific provision relating to multi agency working and partnerships was identified within provision delivered via FE, HE, WBL or CLD.

Nature of gaps

Market gaps – these have resulted from a difference in the supply and demand of the particular multi agency and partnership working skills.

Likely impact if not addressed

If this issue is not addressed, organisations will not be joined up, which is essential to enable them to work effectively with other stakeholders and providers in order for every organisation to meet the objectives.

Related themes

- Learner engagement
- Leadership and management

Related proposed solutions

- Develop a 'Skills for Learning Professionals' qualifications framework
- Develop collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector

4.5 Recruitment and retention

There are various recruitment and retention difficulties in parts of the lifelong learning sector as follows:

Within CLD, there is a shortage of high quality tutors in literacy, numeracy and ESOL as it is hard to compete with the higher salaries offered by colleges.

Within FE and WBL, there is a shortage of subject specific knowledge and experience, as well as teaching and pedagogical skills. This is because FE cannot match the salaries offered by schools and industry, and therefore cannot compete for the higher paid and better qualified people in the labour market.

Within HE, there is a number of existing skills shortages in specific subject areas of business and management; IT; economics; electronics; law; medicine and teacher education (further education and higher education). Many of these occupations are in strong demand in the private sector and broader public sector. In addition, the market for skilled professionals is becoming increasingly internationalised and HEIs face strong competition from institutions abroad in attracting skilled professionals. Overall, there are recruitment problems in relation to Essential Skills staff.

LAIS employers reported difficulties in attracting skilled applicants into professional roles in the sector.

Occupational groups affected

This skills issue affects all staff.

Demand side evidence

- In Northern Ireland employers were more likely to experience recruitment problems for support staff with specialist professional and technical skills. Fewer employers experienced difficulties recruiting professional staff across all constituencies.
- Employers in Northern Ireland reported skills shortages at level 4 in recruiting managers and professionals in CLD. Applicants were most likely to lack specialist professional, technical and practical skills, including subject specific skills and knowledge and teaching and pedagogical skills.
- Within HE, employers in Northern Ireland reported shortages among administrative staff at level 3 (compared to level 4 in the rest of the UK), suggesting that the Northern Ireland administrative workforce in HE is less well qualified than in other UK home countries.
- In Northern Ireland, almost two thirds of LAIS employers reported that applicants to professional roles lacked specialist technical and professional skills (64%), while 29% of employers felt that paraprofessionals lacked these skills.
- In WBL, employers reported that they experienced difficulties in recruiting professional staff with professional, technical and practical skills. This includes teaching and subject specific knowledge and experience. Just under one third of Northern Ireland employers (31%) reported that applicants for support professional and technical roles lacked professional, technical and practical skills.

Supply side evidence

- Within LAIS at present, individuals who wish to pursue relevant qualifications have limited access in Northern Ireland and have to participate through the University of

Aberystwyth open learning route. There is also a need for short courses and continuing professional development of the workforce, especially due to the changes that will result from the Review of Public Administration.

- Essential Skills are vocationally embedded in programmes and all Essential Skills tutors must have the Queens' University Essential Skills Tutor qualification.
- The Lecturers into Industry initiative seeks to align the outputs of the FE sector with the needs of the Northern Ireland economy. It gives lecturers the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills through structured placements.
- Approximately half of Northern Ireland employers reported that they made a large or very large investment in the education and training of their current professional and paraprofessional staff. Just under half reported that they made either a small investment or no investment in the training of their professional and paraprofessional staff.
- Northern Ireland employers expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with CPD provision available to support/associate professionals.
- There is very little WBL specific training available over the lifelong learning sector as a whole. The few specific offerings that are available are mostly offered by HE. Most of these programmes are first degrees, DipHEs and non-research Masters degrees which may offer a suitable training for teachers and trainers within WBL. Most of these programmes are concentrated within 2 centres in the UK, one of which is Queen's University, Belfast.

Nature of gaps

Market gaps – these have resulted from a difference in the supply and demand of the particular skills mentioned above.

Institutional weaknesses – there may be a poor supply of labour to the sector due to inherent barriers such as lower salaries compared to other sectors.

Likely impact if not addressed

Without the availability of contextual and relevant qualifications, the workforce will not possess the correct skills and the shortages will continue to exist.

Related themes

- Learning delivery
- Leadership and management

Related proposed solutions

- Develop an integrated CPD framework
- Develop a 'skills for learning professionals' qualifications framework
- Develop a knowledge bank for IAG professionals
- Develop career pathways
- Recruitment programmes
- Develop a Leadership and Management strategy across the lifelong learning sector

4.6 ICT

Skills related to ICT are a requirement for some of the constituencies of lifelong learning. Within CLD, the use of ICT from the basic level through to design of Information Technology systems was perceived to be an important area, especially in relation to the development of community websites and good quality databases.

In FE, staff had a good awareness of the potential of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) to support learning but few had the necessary skills to use them effectively.

In HE, as noted earlier, there are skills gaps for technical support professionals at level 4, including specialist technical and practical skills including ICT. More generally, ICT is particularly relevant to universities and colleges where learners often require assistance in using learning platforms and accessing on-line content.

ICT skills needs have special relevance in LAIS, particularly skills related to digitisation and remote access to services. Technological change has brought with it higher expectations on the part of many users of information services as they anticipate that the latest and most complex technology will be available and used to deliver services. Users also expect that LAIS staff will be highly skilled in the use of ICT and able to provide advice and guidance on its use. The LAIS constituency is already utilising the benefits of ICT in general with high levels of ICT hardware use and training provided to staff, along with internet training. Regular skills updating is essential in order to keep pace with technological change. Specific ICT skills in relation to LAIS include digitisation, management of metadata, database building, developing e-libraries and collections, basic and advanced ICT user skills, ICT systems development, web management and web content, support of general users of basic ICT.

Occupational groups affected

This skills gap affects all staff that use ICT facilities.

Demand side evidence

- Employers in Northern Ireland reported internal skills gaps for their existing management staff in relation to professional, technical and practical skills including ICT skills.
- Stakeholders across the UK within LAIS reported increasing use of ICT to widen the range of library services and improve preservation of and access to archives. Stronger ICT skills are required in archives and records management and there is demand for skills in developing e-libraries and archives using the internet and digital technology.
- Some employers in Northern Ireland attributed skills gaps in WBL to lack of ICT skills.

Supply side evidence

- ICT related provision that is likely to be suitable for a CLD context is plentiful in the HE and FE sectors. No such provision was identified in the WBL sector in Northern Ireland.
- In the UK as a whole there was little evidence of provision that directly addresses ICT needs within the publicly-funded WBL context.

Nature of gaps

Market gaps – these have resulted from a difference in the supply and demand of particular ICT skills.

Likely impact if not addressed

ICT is the core of technological change. Without training and upskilling in ICT, the workforce will not be able to deliver to the learners and users of today who are technically competent and IT savvy.

Related themes

- Learning delivery
- Leadership and management

Related proposed solutions

This overarching theme links directly with:

- Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector

However it also links with the following proposed solutions:

- Develop an integrated CPD framework and model
- Develop a 'skills for learning professionals' qualifications framework
- Develop collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector
- Develop a UK Leadership & Management strategy

5. NORTHERN IRELAND SOLUTIONS

As detailed within section 2.4 LLUK used a variety of methods to develop a suite of solutions for consultation and development through Stages 3-5 of the SSA process. This included an extensive exercise to collate suggested solutions identified as part of the Stage 3 consultation process, the findings of which were refined into a suite of 10 solutions following an internal LLUK think tank session. To meet constituency needs across Northern Ireland these solutions will be developed as LLUK progresses through Stages 4 and 5 of the SSA. This section gives an outline of the 10 proposed solutions aims and the current context in Northern Ireland. The diagram at the end of Section 5 details which proposed solutions have been identified to address skills issues under the overarching themes.

5.1 Explore the options for ‘professionalising’ all parts of the lifelong learning workforce

Explore with the lifelong learning sector the implications of what this might mean in each of the constituencies and in which areas of the sector this approach could potentially support individual progression and recruitment.

LLUK is currently involved in a major area of activity working towards the development of UK wide NOS for learning delivery. LLUK is working across the 4 nations with key Government departments to consider a UK wide approach to developing standards for lecturers, teachers, tutors and trainers. This also encompasses higher education and teaching roles in libraries, archives and information services.

Stage 3 consultations in Northern Ireland evidenced support for recognising professionalism within the WBL sector and for the possible creation of a formal accredited qualification based around the PTLLS qualification which is being introduced in England.

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

LLUK is in discussion with DEL and the Department for Social Development (DSD) with a view to producing a workforce development strategy for the CLD, FE and WBL constituencies. Further work is to be done with DCAL for the LAIS constituency. The proposed workforce development strategy would determine appropriate levels of qualifications for lecturers, trainers and tutors across the sector including issues around licence to practice and CPD. DEL’s “*Success Through Excellence*” – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland has identified the need to ensure quality across the System. The document outlines five key strands of support and measurement. One of the strands is the use of LLUK standards in the development of the lifelong learning workforce.

This is currently a major issue within the Youth Work sector in which the revision of their NOS Standards has led to a debate around whether all Youth Workers, both employed and volunteers, should be required to have a licence to practice. Within parts of the sector there are examples of professional and vocational qualifications which act as such a licence. They include the Libraries sector and WBL where awarding bodies regulate the qualifications that tutors, assessors and verifiers require. Within CLD there is currently no requirement for regulation however within the Youth Work sector there is currently a debate as to the effectiveness of a registration Scheme.

The introduction of the Preparing to Teach (PTLLS) Qualification and the Qualified Teacher Learning & Skills (QTLS) status in England has raised debate in Northern Ireland as to the applicability there of such a workforce development tool. Currently within the FE sector, full time and associate lecturers are regulated by DEL. This means that lecturers must complete the PGC(FHE) at the University of Ulster within 3 years of taking up post. Essential Skills tutors must also complete an Essential Skills Tutor Qualification at Level 4 provided by Queens University Belfast. Currently a pilot programme is being established by LSDA NI to assist FE staff to record formal and informal learning. This is focused around 3 key areas:- professional development required for the person's current job, career development, and personal development.

In HE there is a qualification, offered by the HEA, which all lecturers take.

Within the LAIS constituency Professional Bodies regulate the professional development of their membership who must provide evidence of CPD on an annual basis.

Across the WBL awarding bodies set criteria for the level of qualifications that assessors and verifiers must have. As part of this there is an annual ongoing development plan, agreed with the awarding body.

Aims of this solution:

- To explore and develop this concept with the sector and ensure relevancy across the lifelong learning sector
- To provide a framework and opportunities for employees across the sector to move from a non-professional to a professional role where appropriate

Action for LLUK:

- Explore with constituencies in Northern Ireland what 'professionalising' may mean
- Carry out subsequent investigation and mapping of associated qualifications and frameworks
- Define more closely the registration and regulation systems in Northern Ireland.

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Work with LLUK to understand and determine the demand and the appropriateness of the concept in Northern Ireland
- Work with LLUK in the development of the underpinning NOS and SQS

Impact and added value:

- A common understanding of what 'professionalising' means for the workforce could inform how we align the Lifelong Learning workforce across all constituencies as well as with those in the schools workforce
- This will develop within the sector the concept of practising 'professionally' rather than becoming professionals. This will ensure parity and allow for increased movement across the sector.

Links to the LLUK Impact Review:

One of the key themes of the Impact Review is 'capacity building to ensure quality of delivery'. Any moves towards 'professionalising' the lifelong learning workforce will have a direct impact on the quality of provision. This area connects to the CPD framework providing opportunities for industrial updating to teaching staff. There could be opportunities for collaboration with SSCs around sector specific needs and the possible exploration of skills passports, currently being developed across the SfBn

5.2 Development of an integrated CPD framework and model for the lifelong learning sector where appropriate

LLUK identifies an aspiration that the lifelong learning workforce in all 4 nations and across all constituencies has access to an integrated CPD framework.

Although a substantial amount of good practice exists in relation to CPD in parts of the sector, as part of the Stage 3 consultation process employers and stakeholders in Northern Ireland identified and supported a need for a more consistent approach to the application of CPD across the whole of the sector. LLUK acknowledges that this activity should not duplicate existing good practice but aims to focus on working with partners to explore options for the development of CPD frameworks and build a definition of what a CPD framework and model could look like for the sector. There is currently no clear consensus about what CPD means across the constituent parts of the lifelong learning sector.

Successful delivery and development of this aspiration will be reliant on effective collaboration in terms of sharing best practice and current developments within this area. LLUK seeks clarity and aims to deliver joined up thinking around CPD frameworks for the lifelong learning sector in the longer term.

Questions for consideration:

- What does CPD mean for each constituency?
- Should CPD be a mandatory requirement at a national level?
- How will CPD service the individual rather than the institution?
- Could the concept of an ‘entitlement’ to CPD be introduced?

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

In Northern Ireland there are many employees within the sector who are members of professional organisations; these may include lecturers, trainers, tutors, support staff, librarians and archivists who have to meet the CPD requirements of their membership organisations. Each is primarily concerned with the subject specialist knowledge required for the profession, and not with updating the pedagogical skills required to make an effective difference to learners.

In addition DEL, through its Quality Improvement Strategy “*Success through Excellence*”, has tasked LSDA NI to provide support programmes for all FE and Training providers whose provision has been evaluated by the ETI as requiring improvement. There are different regulations and practice within each of our constituencies:-

- Within CLD there is currently no requirement for regulation however within the Youth Work sector there is currently a debate as to the effectiveness of a registration Scheme.
- As previously mentioned DEL regulates full time and associate lecturers in the FE system.
- The HEA offers initial training for HE lecturers
- Awarding bodies and professional bodies regulate CPD for LAIS and WBL

Therefore there are many employees within the sector who have no or little requirement to update their pedagogical skills.

Other programmes in place in Northern Ireland should also be considered when reviewing potential developments of CPD frameworks. For example, LSDA NI led the way in terms of the Lecturers into Industry programme. This is an initiative in which

lecturers have the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills through structured placements in industry, resulting in improved curriculum delivery. Technicians also have an opportunity for a 4-6 week placement to update their skills and to experience the latest equipment, technologies and software, hopefully leading to a greater appreciation of how they can enhance student learning and support course teams and curriculum development. LSDA NI has made recommendations regarding a ‘Trainers into Industry’ programme and it is essential that opportunities for industrial updating are built into CPD requirements.

Aims of this solution:

- To map existing CPD frameworks and models in the sector with a view to creating an overarching CPD framework for the whole lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland
- To create a model for CPD across Northern Ireland and constituencies
- To create an accepted definition of CPD across Northern Ireland and constituencies
- To investigate the possibility of gaining accredited CPD for work experience/ in house training, for example, the LSDA NI Lecturers into Industry programme can lead to a City & Guilds Senior Award.
- To case study CPD best practice so it can be shared across smaller organisations/ institutions
- To ensure that there is an equal entitlement and offer of CPD to staff at all levels, on different contractual bases and across all constituencies

Action for LLUK:

- Create LLUK guidelines for an integrated CPD framework for all nations and constituencies – value added aspect to workforce development within the sector.
- Work with partners to explore the feasibility of creating a CPD framework across Northern Ireland and across the lifelong learning constituencies.
- Work with employers and partners to scope out current practice within this area across the sector, case study CPD good practice and identify potential funding opportunities for CPD
- Work with the sector in Northern Ireland to create an accepted definition of CPD.
- Identify how to promote inter-constituency sharing of CPD delivery & mentoring
- Identify how to source funding and obtain accreditation for informal learning

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

Whilst LLUK explores the feasibility of developing of a CPD model across the sector employers will offer support by:

- Sharing existing approaches to CPD and exploring them with LLUK as possible case study examples
- Develop the concept of ‘CPD Advocates’ for the lifelong learning sector
- Working with LLUK to support the possible development of a framework and model for Northern Ireland

Impact and added value:

- An integrated sector wide CPD framework will encourage the sharing of resources and materials which may be common to all constituencies
- The development of an integrated CPD framework will ensure that all staff within the lifelong learning workforce in Northern Ireland have access to CPD at all levels – including voluntary staff.

- A CPD framework will help staff in the sector with their personal career planning and facilitate mobility within the lifelong learning workforce
- A comprehensive CPD framework, once it is in place, could contribute significantly to retaining staff within the sector, boosting morale and enabling people to progress in their careers
- A comprehensive framework will help those with responsibility for staff development in the lifelong learning sector with their planning and delivery

Links to the LLUK Impact Review:

CPD has been identified as a key theme through the Impact Review of other SSCs' SSAs. There is a variety of options for working with other SSCs to provide industrial updating and CPD for tutors that is relevant to the sector/subject they are working in. LLUK will need to work with the SfBn to consider its role in terms of supporting CPD relating to industrial updating and demand from other parts of the lifelong learning sector. It is critical to note that CPD for lifelong learning staff is being demanded from across industry sectors and expressed within SSAs as demonstrated by Construction Skills/ CITB.

5.3 Develop a ‘skills for learning professionals’ qualifications framework

Develop a ‘skills for learning professionals’ skills and qualifications framework to sit within the SQS and act as an introduction to working in the lifelong learning sector. This would provide the building blocks for standards and qualifications in the sector. Ultimately this work should place a greater emphasis on implementing NOS across the sector and also on facilitating organisations to use standards more effectively. This work will be built into the development of the SQS for the lifelong learning sector.

Identified areas for potential development through SSA Stage 4 & 5 consultation are:

- Employer Engagement
- Information Learning Technology
- Learner Support/Customer Care
- Multi-agency/ Partnership working

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

LLUK currently is the custodian of a range of NOS. Many of these standards have been used to develop qualifications in each of our constituencies. In addition to this there are examples of excellent practice where LLUK standards have been used to develop workforce development tools to assist with recruitment induction, performance management and appraisal.

At a recent Northern Ireland Country Panel meeting it was noted that:

- Future development of a framework of standards must be transferable across the sector
- Future workforce development strategies should be based on competency based standards
- Employers and stakeholders endorsed the wider application of NOS and supported LLUK’s work with partners to develop the tools that will encourage this.

The Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) in Northern Ireland are currently working with QCA in England and Qualification and Curriculum Division, Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Wales (DELLS) to develop a new Qualifications and Credit Framework for all qualifications developed for the sector. LLUK in Northern Ireland are currently involved in pilot programmes to test and trial qualifications for Youth Workers and Working with Parents and an application has been submitted to extend this to learning support practitioners.

The concept of a ‘framework’ of standards and credit based qualifications would assist learning professionals to select credits which are appropriate for their current role and for future career development.

Aims of this solution:

- To provide a clear framework of skills and qualifications that are relevant across the lifelong learning sector
- To provide clarity for people in the sector around skills and qualifications
- To develop a database of units across the sector to facilitate career progression, entry into and movement across the lifelong learning sector.

Action for LLUK:

- Develop toolkit of resources to support ‘skills for learning professionals’ around employer engagement, information learning technology, learner support/ customer care and multi-agency partnership working
- Include exploration of NOS and identification of case studies around the 4 main areas identified

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Assist LLUK in ensuring effective consultation with employers in terms of developing this area of work

Impact and added value:

- The development of a database of units across the lifelong learning sector will facilitate career progression, entry into and movement across the lifelong learning sector
- Enhanced understanding of the different standards which relate to the sector and how these can be used effectively

Links to the LLUK Impact Review:

The Impact Review of SSAs found that Skills for Justice is developing a qualification in Multi-agency Working. LLUK could also learn from the numerous skills passport and license to practice programmes being run by other SSCs.

5.4 Develop collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector to recognise and disseminate good practice

There is a great deal of good practice evident in all parts of the lifelong learning sector. This solution looks at the option of developing improved partnerships across constituencies, and possibly nations, to disseminate this good practice.

Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs) have been created in England following the publication of 'Equipping our teachers for the future' (Department for Education and Skills, DfES, 2004). The emphasis in the CETTs is on sharing good practice and improving CPD. 11 CETTs have been established in England, all of which are consortia of providers working together.

The aim of this solution in Northern Ireland would be to look at the success of the CETTs programme in England and explore if and how the concept of CETTs could be viable in Northern Ireland perhaps through UK partnerships. Feedback from Stage 3 consultations has suggested that due to the size of the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland this work may well also include the possible development of standards and benchmarking for driving up levels of excellence within the lifelong learning sector there.

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

Many FE Colleges have been recognised as providing the highest standards of vocational training and have been awarded the status of Centre of Excellence. The Centre of Excellence for Teacher Training concept has not been established in Northern Ireland. However the standards required have been set by DEL at postgraduate level, with full time and associate lecturers required to complete a PGC(FHE) at the University of Ulster.

Owing to the composition of the lifelong learning sector there are many examples of parts of our sector providing learning and qualifications for other parts of it, for example HE in Northern Ireland provides a wide range of qualifications for our sector including qualifications for Lecturers in FE, Youth Workers, CLD workers, librarians and Essential Skills tutors in WBL and FE.

Aims of this solution:

- Provide a model for developing collaborative working across the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland
- Explore the viability and demand for centres for excellence in teacher training across the five constituencies in Northern Ireland
- To work with the sector to establish standards and benchmarking for driving up excellence within Northern Ireland

Action for LLUK:

- LLUK needs to ensure that the appropriate terminology and approach is developed for the constituencies in Northern Ireland to ensure inclusion across the sector
- Explore with the sector and partners possible collaboration models

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Work with LLUK to explore and develop potential models of collaboration across the sector
- Work with LLUK to explore demand relating to Centres for Excellence in Northern Ireland

Impact and added value:

- Improved sharing of good practice across constituent parts of the sector
- A focus on establishing standards across the sector will improve cohesion
- Improved partnership working across the sector
- Dissemination of good practice will help to improve sector resources, both within and between constituencies
- Building mechanisms for collaborative working across the sector will bring different parts of the sector together to canvass opinions and help influence policy relating to the whole lifelong learning sector
- Engaging with HR managers to measure the impact of the use of LLUK standards on organisation and individual performance

Links to the LLUK Impact Review:

Many SSA actions from the other SSCs relate to the development of new forms of delivery. LLUK will work with the SfBn to determine the potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce from these actions.

5.5 Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards demand led learning and training opportunities

A culture change is taking place in the planning and delivery of education and training. Much of this is being driven by the Leitch Review of Skills. There is a move from the more traditional planning-led provision to demand-led provision – the demand very much being evidenced in SSAs from the other 24 SSCs.

This culture change will have a huge impact on staff in the lifelong learning sector in terms of how learning is delivered, how courses are funded and many other aspects of their work. There is a need for a programme of support to assist lifelong learning employers to make this transition in Northern Ireland and to develop and nurture skills relating to employer engagement.

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

As part of the FE means Business strategy, employers within the FE system have been tasked to react to the needs of employers and ensure that the range of qualifications and learning interventions meet the needs of the Northern Ireland economy. This is in line with the Leitch Review recommendations. Also the widening participation agenda has led to the HE sector reaching out to non-traditional learners and developing qualifications in areas that meet the needs of employers.

The importance of learner-centred provision cannot be over-estimated. Currently Northern Ireland is experiencing a major change in the political landscape which offers its economy the opportunity to grow and develop. A major contributor to this is the skills levels of the people who can deliver it.

Aims of this solution:

- To ensure that no lifelong learning employers are 'left behind' in the transition from supply to demand-led provision
- To assist lifelong learning employers in developing their employer engagement strategies

Action for LLUK:

- LLUK to build partnerships with SfBn to investigate sector specific elements identified through Impact Review findings
- Develop standards as set out in the 'Skills for Learning Professionals' framework

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Assist in the development of the support programme by sharing good practice in employer engagement

Impact and added value:

There is currently a focus in Northern Ireland on successful demand/ supply side engagement to ensure that available provision and support is driven by what industry demands. LLUK can support the workforce to respond to this challenge effectively and improve links with industry and engagement levels in some parts of the sector.

Links to the LLUK Impact Review:

Collaborative action with other SSCs could help link lifelong learning employers to employers in industry. LLUK has the opportunity to work with the SfBn in the Business Interchange programme. This will provide industrial updating for teachers through placements with employers but needs further exploration within Northern Ireland.

5.6 Develop sector wide career pathways

This area of activity is based on the creation of a framework outlining career pathways in the lifelong learning sector. This information could then be disseminated to IAG services (e.g. Schools, careers services, Educational Guidance service for Adults (EGSA)).

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

There are currently no clear progression routes or career pathways that map across the whole lifelong learning sector in any of the 4 nations.

Within the Lifelong Learning sector in Northern Ireland career pathways tend to be individual within each constituency and strand. There has been no real recognition of the lifelong learning sector, as defined by LLUK, as an holistic sector with entry and progression routes for defined career development opportunities.

Career advice and guidance is provided by a range of organisations including school and college career advisers, careers officers in Government Job Centres and specialist advice provided by organisations, including EGSA.

Aims of this solution:

- To provide a ‘framework’ of career routes across the lifelong learning sector
- To ensure there is positive image of the sector
- To work with partners to develop resources to support career planning services

Action for LLUK:

- Map existing career routes and the future structure of sector
- Explore best practice within the SfBn and the development of career pathways within other SSCs

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Assist in the creation of the framework

Impact and added value:

- Clearer career pathways for individuals in the sector, thus improving the sector’s image, attracting new entrants from diverse backgrounds and improving staff retention
- Clearer career pathways could raise aspirations and, in particular, help people move from non-professional to professional roles
- Could attract new people into the sector

5.7 Develop a knowledge bank for IAG professionals and others to support new entrants and existing staff in the lifelong learning sector

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

Stage 3 consultation work in Northern Ireland identified a lack of strategic careers guidance across the lifelong learning sector that is affecting entry to the sector and movement within it. It is critical that LLUK works with the sector and its partners to develop a knowledge bank of support for its own IAG professionals and those outside it in order to attract new entrants.

LLUK should also explore the role of the LLUK Information and Advice (IA) service acting as the hub for this information, to facilitate and enable the delivery of IAG through nation specific IAG services and across the UK.

Aims of this solution:

- To develop a consistent approach to IAG across all of the lifelong learning sector in Northern Ireland
- To improve IAG within and outside the sector about careers in lifelong learning
- To improve the image of the sector
- To work with partners, including Professional Bodies in Northern Ireland to develop resources to support IAG and career planning services
- To increase the available pool of excellent recruits and support progression through the sector

Action for LLUK:

- Review current IAG practice within Northern Ireland
- Map existing career routes and the future structure of sector
- Review the LLUK IA service – possibly with a view to its becoming the hub of information on career pathways within the lifelong learning sector – connecting the IA service with IAG services across the 4 nations.
- Review work underway through the SfBN around IAG

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Assist in the creation of the framework to identify IAG needs
- Identify best practice examples of IAG within the sector
- Ensure staff have access to and work with LLUK to review IAG resources as they become available

Impact and added value:

- Developing a knowledge bank of support for IAG professionals that will ensure more consistent delivery of careers advice across the sector and that parts of the sector which traditionally have difficulties in attracting staff have increased opportunities to do so.
- Increased movement of employees across constituencies could boost retention rates within the whole sector
- A knowledge bank would help new entrants with their personal career planning and raise awareness of different opportunities for existing staff

Links to the LLUK Impact Review:

The Impact Review has highlighted that there are tutor shortages in certain areas. Improved IAG about careers in the lifelong learning sector could attract people from other sectors into FE. This is particularly relevant to staff in industry who may not wish to continue in the industry but can pass on their skills by going into teaching.

5.8 Recruitment programmes to address specific shortages in the lifelong learning sector

Targeted recruitment programmes are needed to encourage people to move across the lifelong learning sector or consider it as a career choice.

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

Across the lifelong learning sector there is a demand for a variety of recruitment programmes to encourage a range of people to consider the sector as an attractive career option. At present these programmes exist on an individual basis and individual organisations appear to use them as and when need arises. Lifelong Learning employers in Northern Ireland expressed support for the LLUK pilot programme to fast track construction lecturers into the FE system in England. This could be used as a model for further exploration.

LSDA NI has led the way in terms of the Lecturers into Industry programme, an initiative where lecturers have the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills through structured placements in industry. This has been reflected in improved curriculum delivery.

Action for LLUK:

- LLUK will work with key partners within the careers guidance field in Northern Ireland and across the SfBn to develop programmes and ensure accurate information and resources are available to encourage a wide range of people to consider the sector as an attractive option
- Research into salaries in the sector for promotional work and comparison with other sectors
- Scope the current demographics of the lifelong learning sector and the impact they have on the workforce in particular subject specialisms in order to facilitate succession planning
- Work with the SfBn to scope subject specific skills shortages across Northern Ireland
- Work with LSDA NI and partners to build on success of 'Lecturers into Industry' programme and facilitate development in other parts of the sector

LLUK should work with the SfBn to identify opportunities for attracting Industry professionals into the lifelong learning sector and to build a reverse model of the Lecturers into Industry programme. It should also explore the 'Give Something Back' strand of the FE White Paper programmes in England.

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Continue to develop innovative routes into the sector which take into account work based skills and experience
- To continue to offer on the job training to develop pedagogical skills in new entrants to the sector
- Offer support and promotion of recruitment campaigns and programmes as appropriate

Aims of this solution:

- To address key skills shortages within the sector as identified through the Stage 3 gap analysis work and attract new recruits to the sector from more diverse backgrounds.

- To improve the image of working in the lifelong learning sector

Impact and added value:

- A coordinated series of recruitment programmes would help to address recruitment and retention issues in the sector
- Ensuring the future recruitment needs of the sector are met, particularly in light of the impact review and the possible increased demand for staff in certain areas

5.9 Develop a UK wide leadership and management strategy

There is a plethora of provision in leadership and management across the sector but there is no overall cohesive approach to leadership and management training and take up. There are certainly areas of good practice but there is no overall clear picture. As with the other 3 nations, in Northern Ireland there are numerous initiatives and bodies working on the issue of leadership and management in lifelong learning and LLUK wishes to work with partners sector-wide to ensure the availability of a framework of appropriate leadership and management training programmes.

LLUK is engaged in the development of Management and Leadership Standards through the Management and Leadership Champions scheme in the SfBn.

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

Stage 3 consultations with employers and stakeholders evidenced leadership and management as a key skills issue in each of the five constituent parts of the sector. The development of a cohesive leadership and management strategy for the sector in Northern Ireland was also supported. As with England, Scotland and Wales there are numerous initiatives and bodies in Northern Ireland working on the issue of leadership and management in lifelong learning. This work is facilitated by the Management and Leadership Network Northern Ireland whose role it is to support the implementation of a Leadership & Management strategy to boost the global competitiveness of Northern Ireland.

Within the FE system LSDA NI delivers and co-ordinates a range of leadership and management programmes in partnership with the Institute of Leadership & Management. These are tailored to the needs of the FE system, and are based on the LLUK standards for leadership and management. The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) also provides leadership programmes at a senior level.

The Leadership & Management Network acts as a resource centre for leadership and management development. DEL has recently published its leadership and management strategy and implementation plan “*Leading to Success.*” This sets out the Department’s vision for development for employers within Northern Ireland. This is based around 4 key areas: - understanding the demand; improving skills levels; improving quality and relevance of programmes; and identifying and removing barriers to investment.

Aims of this solution:

- To map leadership and management provision and engagement across the whole of the lifelong learning sector within Northern Ireland
- To build on current leadership and management strategies within the 4 nations and ensure the needs of the lifelong learning sector are accommodated
- To understand where there are gaps in the lifelong learning sector in terms of leadership and management provision, building on the Stage 2 findings
- To facilitate transferability across the sector at managerial level and ensure that all groups have equal opportunities to achieve leadership and management positions
- To work with partners to develop a strategy for the lifelong learning sector that helps people to navigate the huge variety of provision in order to find out what is appropriate for them and for the lifelong learning sector in particular

Action for LLUK:

- LLUK to work with partners, including the Management and Leadership Network in Northern Ireland to identify and develop a framework of appropriate leadership and management training programmes for the sector – to be reflected in the development of the SQS framework
- LLUK to carry out increased research with employers into the qualifications profile with regards to leadership and management across the sector
- LLUK to ensure that the leadership and management NOS meet the needs of the sector in Northern Ireland and also have UK wide acceptance

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- Develop a UK wide leadership & management strategy
- Continued involvement and support in terms of developing/ revising leadership and management standards

Impact and added value:

- Longer term, the development of a leadership and management strategy across the lifelong learning sector will increase the uptake of appropriate leadership and management programmes
- The development of a leadership and management strategy across the sector will bring clarity to the use of management and leadership NOS for the sector
- Successful development of a leadership and management strategy for the sector will facilitate partnership working and deliver more effective benefits to the sector

5.10 Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector, particularly relating to ILT

New technology is transforming the way learning is delivered across the UK. Assessment of NVQs, for example, can be carried out by the learner being videoed doing a task and the assessor watching from a remote location at a different time or date. VLEs are used by colleges and universities to great effect alongside many other tools such as interactive whiteboards. It is essential that the lifelong learning workforce is equipped to keep up with the pace of change presented by technology in terms of supporting users in using ICT, learning delivery through technology and up-skilling staff in the use of technology.

Current situation in Northern Ireland:

It is critical that LLUK works with the sector in Northern Ireland to facilitate the development of ILT strategies (particularly within FE colleges and also across all constituent parts of the LLUK sector)

DEL's e-learning strategy has specified that LLUK standards for e-learning will be used in staff development within the sector. This will apply to the FE system in Northern Ireland.

Within the LAIS constituency, LISC has identified a need to upskill the workforce with the necessary IT skills, which may include the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). In addition to this there is a requirement for many specialist high level information services based on IT skills within the sector. At present these skills are usually developed around a particular software package and the sector has identified a need to take a strategic approach to this.

Aims of this solution:

- To map the current support mechanisms available in the sector and identify gaps in provision
- To 'future proof' the lifelong learning workforce by introducing measures to keep up with the pace of technological change
- To work with partners to support the lifelong learning workforce in the quality of using e-learning in teaching and training, but also for customer engagement within the LAIS sector
- To ensure that lifelong learning employers plan for the ICT/ ILT skills needs of their workforce and that e-learning resources are available to all

Action for LLUK:

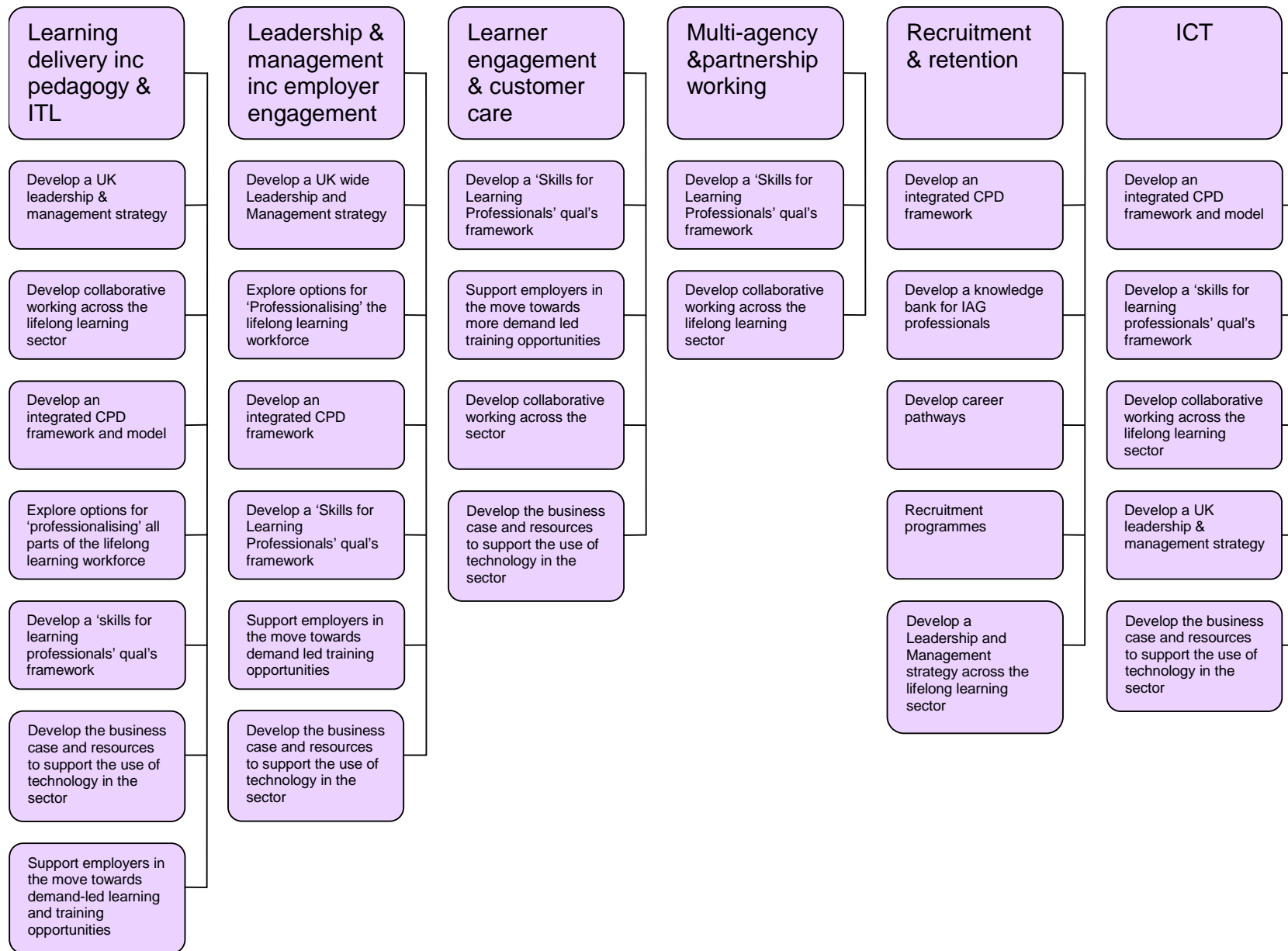
- Owing to changes in technology the development of exact specifications would not be plausible however guidelines on how to operate and maximise opportunities within this environment could be developed
- Increased work to be done in terms of scoping the ILT environment and research into current provision

Support from lifelong learning employers to:

- A core group of employers to work with LLUK to develop innovative methods for ensuring increased adoption of e-learning across the whole sector
- Commit to including ICT/ILT skills needs in all workforce development planning

Impact and added value:

- Maximising opportunities from technology will provide a workforce that is equipped for technological change and can readily adapt
- Ensure enhanced quality of learning delivery that makes best use of opportunities presented by ICT/ ILT
- An enhanced experience for all learners



6. DEVELOPING THE SSA WITH EMPLOYERS AND PARTNERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This section of the report details actions which will be undertaken in terms of progressing the development of solutions through Stages 4 & 5 of the SSA and how LLUK will work with employers and stakeholders to take this work forward.

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
‘Professionalising’ the lifelong learning workforce			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with constituencies in Northern Ireland what ‘professionalising’ may mean Carry out subsequent investigation and mapping of associated qualifications and frameworks Define more closely the registration and regulation systems in Northern Ireland Develop work on SQS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA DEL DSD DCAL Department of Education (DENI) Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) General Teaching Council NI Irish Congress Trade Unions HEA LSDA NI NATFE University and College Union Parenting Forum QCA Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector, LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers’ Education and Training Network LISC NI Jobskills Providers’ Forum PRONI Rural Community Network Women’s Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows’ Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Exploration of current CPD models, and subsequent development of an integrated CPD framework and model for the lifelong learning sector if appropriate.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create LLUK guidelines for an integrated CPD framework for Northern Ireland • Work with partners to explore the feasibility of the creation of a CPD framework across Northern Ireland and across the lifelong learning constituencies. • Work with employers and partners to scope current practice within this area across the sector, case study CPD good practice and identify potential funding opportunities for CPD • Work with the sector in Northern Ireland to create an accepted definition of CPD • Explore accreditation and funding opportunities for informal learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEL • DSD • DCAL • DENI • ETI • General Teaching Council NI • HEA • Irish Congress Trade Unions • NATFE University and College Union • LSDA NI • Parenting Forum • PRONI • Youth Council NI • Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANIC • Association of Chief Librarians • Community Workers' Education and Training Network • LISC • NI Jobskills Providers' Forum • PRONI • Rural Community Network • Women's Support Network • Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Explore and develop 'Skills for Learning Professionals'			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop toolkit of resources to support 'skills for learning professionals' around employer engagement, information learning technology, learner support/ customer care and multi-agency partnership working To include exploration of NOS and identification of case studies around the 4 main areas identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA DEL DSD DCAL DENI ETI HEA Irish Congress Trade Unions LSDA NI NATFE University and College Union Parenting Forum QCA NI Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers' Education and Training Network LISC NI Jobskills Providers' Forum PRONI Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Develop collaborative working across the Lifelong Learning sector to recognise and disseminate good practice			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLUK need to ensure that the appropriate terminology and approach is developed for the constituencies in Northern Ireland to ensure inclusion across the sector • Explore with the sector and partners possible collaboration models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEA • DEL • DSD • DCAL • Department of Education • Education and Training Inspectorate • Higher Education Academy • Irish Congress Trade Unions • LSDA NI • NATFE University and College Union • Parenting Forum • QCA NI • Youth Council NI • Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANIC • Association of Chief Librarians • Community Workers' Education and Training Network • LISC • NI Jobskills Providers' Forum • PRONI • Rural Community Network • Women's Support Network • Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Support lifelong learning employers in the move towards more demand led learning and training opportunities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map existing good practice and mechanisms Develop standards as set out in the 'Skills for Learning Professionals' framework Consider outcomes of the LLUK Impact Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEL DSD DCAL DENI Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry ETI HEA Irish Congress Trade Unions Invest NI LSDA NI Management and Leadership Network NATFE University and College Union Parenting Forum QCA NI Youth Council NI Skill NI SfBn 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers' Education and Training Network LISC NI Jobskills Providers' Forum PRONI Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Develop sector wide career pathways			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map existing career routes and map future structure of sector Explore best practice within the SfBn and the development of career pathways within other SSCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice NI DEL DSD DCAL DENI Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry ETI EGSA HEA Irish Congress Trade Unions learndirect NI NATFE University and College Union Invest NI LSDA NI Parenting Forum QCA NI Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers' Education and Training Network LISC NI Jobskills Providers' Forum PRONI Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Develop a knowledge bank for IAG professionals and others to support new entrants and existing staff in the lifelong learning sector			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current IAG practice within Northern Ireland Map existing career routes and map future structure of sector Review the LLUK IA service – possibly with a view to it becoming the hub of information on career pathways within the lifelong learning sector – connecting the IA service with IAG services across the 4 nations. Review work underway through the SfBn around IAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice NI DEL DSD DCAL DENI Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry ETI EGSA HEA Invest NI Irish Congress Trade Unions learndirect NI NATFE University and College Union Invest NI LSDA NI Parenting Forum PRONI QCA Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers' Education and Training Network LISC NI Council for Ethnic Minorities NI Council for Voluntary Associations NI Jobskills Providers' Forum Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Recruitment Programmes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with key partners within the careers guidance field in Northern Ireland and across the SfBn to develop programmes and ensure accurate information and resources are available Work with the SfBn to scope subject specific skills shortages across Northern Ireland Work with LSDA and partners to build on success of 'Lecturers into Industry' programme and facilitate development in other parts of the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice NI DEL DSD DCAL DENI Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry ETI Inspectorate EGSA HEA Invest NI Irish Congress Trade Unions learndirect NI NATFE University and College Union Invest NI LSDA NI Parenting Forum QCA NI Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Change Community Workers' Education and Training Network LISC NI Council for Ethnic Minorities NI Council for Voluntary Associations NI Jobskills Providers' Forum Public Records Office NI Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
To develop a UK wide leadership and management strategy for the lifelong learning sector – work with partners to build a framework of leadership & management training programmes for the sector			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with LSDA NI current activity with regards to a framework for FE and WBL Consider expansion across the lifelong learning sector Further consultation on draft leadership and management NOS in Northern Ireland Map existing leadership and management training provision Map work done across the SfBn Map other related existing and developing NOS e.g. learning and development, LAIS, Youth Work, learning support practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA DEL DSD DCAL DENI Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry ETI HEA Irish Congress Trade Unions Invest NI LSDA NI Management and Leadership Network NATFE University and College Union Parenting Forum PRONI QCA NI Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers' Education and Training Network LISC NI Jobskills Providers' Forum Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

Key Strategic Activities	Lead Partners	Work with our employers	Mapping to Skills Policies
Develop the business case and resources to support the use of technology in the sector, particularly relating to information learning technology			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map current training provision for ILT Map example of e-assessment Gather best practice examples on use of ILT in Northern Ireland Look at use of ILT in remote areas of Northern Ireland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA DEL DSD DCAL Department of Education Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry Education and Training Inspectorate Higher Education Academy Irish Congress Trade Unions Invest NI LSDA NI NATFE University & College Union Parenting Forum PRONI QCA NI Youth Council NI Skill NI 	<p>In order to scope this work across the sector LLUK will need to work with the following employer groups in Northern Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANIC Association of Chief Librarians Community Workers' Education and Training Network Libraries Information Services Council NI Jobskills Providers' Forum Rural Community Network Women's Support Network Youth Action 	<p>Success Through Skills: The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland DEL 2006</p> <p>Success Through Excellence – A Quality Improvement Strategy for the Further Education and Training System in Northern Ireland DEL 2007</p> <p>FE Means Business DEL 2006</p> <p>Delivering Tomorrows' Libraries DCAL 2006</p> <p>Libraries Deliver LISC 2006</p> <p>Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work 2005-2008 Department of Education 2005</p> <p>State of the Sector IV NICVA 2006</p> <p>Families Matter DHSS 2007</p> <p>Essential Skills for Living DEL 2006</p> <p>Training for Success: Professional & Technical Training DEL 2006</p> <p>Higher Education Policy DEL</p>

7. WHAT IS THE IMPACT REVIEW?

Owing to the unique position that LLUK occupies within the SfBn and representation of both the supply and demand side of skills delivery there is an additional strand of activity which LLUK has been developing in parallel with the SSA work from Stage 3 onwards. This area of work concentrates on reviewing the other 24 Sector Skills Councils' SSAs to understand their potential impact on future workforce planning and implications for the lifelong learning sector workforce across the UK. The Impact Review is being carried out by researching and analysing the Sector Skills Agreements of the other 24 SSCs in the network and identifying potential ways in which the SfBn can collaborate across workforce development activities to ensure quality of learning delivery for all.

Work on the Impact Review began in November 2006 and will run until March 2008 in line with predicted publication timescales for all SSAs. Initial analysis, carried out between January and March 2007 focused largely on the Tranche 1 & 2 SSCs where SSA final reports were available to review. Further research will be undertaken as the final tranche of SSAs is published, to ensure that the potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce of the findings from all 24 Sector Skills Councils has been assessed.

7.1 How the Impact Review connects to the LLUK SSA



One of the key aims of the SSAs across the SfBn is to enable employers to influence supply side delivery, this means that many SSA actions are likely to have an impact on the lifelong learning workforce, either directly or indirectly.

The diagram above demonstrates how the Impact Review now connects to LLUK's SSA. The Impact Review will ensure that Stage 3 solutions identified through our SSA also take into consideration the wider SSA solutions which are being developed from a demand side perspective across the SfBn. There are clear links with some of the themes which have been identified through the Impact Review to the solutions that LLUK has developed as part of Stage 3 of the Sector Skills Agreement; these links are detailed in section 5 of this Stage 3 report.

7.2 Overview of key SSA themes

Work carried out on the Impact Review has identified a series of common themes which are emerging across SSAs analysed to date. The themes are described in more detail below with direct examples of potential SSA solutions. These initial themes are identified at a UK level. Further work is planned by LLUK to gather wider intelligence in terms of potential impact at a nations level within Northern Ireland through work with the SfBn forums which currently exist.

Themes identified to date:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and lecturers
- New qualifications

- New forms of delivery
- Capacity building within the lifelong learning sector to cater for increased demand
- Capacity building within the lifelong learning sector to ensure quality of delivery

7.3 Continuing professional development

Overview and potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the lifelong learning workforce involves the introduction of tools and approaches that support industry-relevant and up-to-date provision. These SSA actions are distinguished from the wider priorities of making provision more ‘fit for purpose’ by suggesting either a mechanism or process for knowledge transfer, by which teachers and tutors can ensure that their skills base continues to reflect industry practice.

The implications of these CPD-related actions for the lifelong learning workforce are relatively clear, even if the detail on the actions varies across SSAs. The most tangible is the e-Skills passport, as it is a direct tool for ‘upskilling’ the lifelong learning workforce. It has widespread applicability – both sectorally and geographically – and therefore could be an important part of workforce development. The drive to establish this has been based primarily on links with the Learning and Skills Council, England (LSC) in England.

7.4 New Qualifications & Areas of Learning

Overview and potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce

SSC development work on new qualifications and provision is apparent across a range of levels and types of qualifications:

- Specialised diplomas
- Apprenticeships and modern apprenticeships
- HE qualifications (foundation degrees; degrees; post-graduate qualifications).

There is also a separate series of actions under which SSCs are looking to develop new courses to address gaps in vocational provision.

There is a lot of activity within the SSAs relating to the development of new qualifications and areas of learning. SSCs are generally looking to collaborate with colleges, providers and universities as part of the development process.

7.5 New forms of delivery

Overview and potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce

This theme relates to both new institutions and new approaches to delivering learning. The most substantial activities are new institutions for delivery, notably skills academies. More broadly, there are numerous references to the development of credit-based and bite-sized learning, as well as the flexible delivery of courses and qualifications.

New forms of delivery will arguably have a greater long-term impact on the lifelong learning workforce and sector than new qualifications. The common messages from the SSAs are of a ‘step change’ in how provision is organised, managed and delivered.

There is evidence of ambitious plans across some SSAs. However information currently available does not enable LLUK to develop an accurate picture of the extent of demand.

Qualifications reform is likely to have a medium to long-term impact. The main current opportunity for impact relates to skills academies. These are the products of an existing programme, part of which has already reached the launch phase.

The potential impact of flexible learning should not be under-estimated. LLUK's own gap analysis papers produced as part of Stage 3 consultation activities, identify skills issues around meeting the needs of a wide range of learners through the widening participation agenda. Flexibility in delivery is an important component of this agenda. Diversity is discussed in detail by a number of the SSCs, including ConstructionSkills, SEMTA and Skills for Logistics.

7.6 Capacity building to cater for increased demand

Overview and potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce

This theme relates to an anticipated increase in the volume of learners in relation to specific occupations or vocational areas. It focuses on workforce planning and the notion that an increased demand for learning will impact on supply – most notably in terms of the volume of provision that is available. Unlike many of the other themes, it therefore has an implied geographical dimension.

Capacity building to cater for increased demand (in terms of numbers of learners) is implicit within some SSA actions, but rarely is it directly addressed or evidenced. Direct workforce planning is only apparent in a small number of examples. What is more evident in the SSAs is the wider case being made for a potential future increase in the number of learners to reflect sector trends (e.g. new technology).

7.7 Capacity building to ensure quality of delivery

Overview and potential impact on the lifelong learning workforce

This theme relates to a range of activities to improve the quality of provision, especially in terms of ensuring it is industry-relevant and fit for purpose. There may be an identified need for 'skills updating' among parts of the lifelong learning workforce. Fundamentally, though, in SSA terms there tends to be a focus on promoting links between industry and the lifelong learning sector. The theme shares similarities to those activities targeting CPD for the lifelong learning workforce.

Activities to improve the quality of provision will, almost by definition, impact on the lifelong learning workforce. The difficulty is that these improvements tend to be broadly-defined in the context of the SSA. There are fairly common assertions along the following lines: 'provision does not meet employer needs' or 'provision needs to be better aligned with industry need'.

GLOSSARY

ACL	Adult and Community Learning
ANIC	Association of Northern Ireland Colleges
CBAL	Community Based Adult Learning
CCEA	Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment
CDL	Community Development Learning
CEL	Centre for Excellence in Leadership
CETTs	Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training
CILIP	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
CLD	Community Learning & Development
CPA	Committee of Public Accounts
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland
DELLS	Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Wales
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Northern Ireland
DENI	Department of Education, Northern Ireland
DfES	Department for Education and Skills, England
DSD	Department for Social Development
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
EGSA	Education Guidance Service for Adults
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education
FENTO	Further Education National Training Organisation
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IA	Information and Advice Service
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
ILT	Information and Learning Technology
isNTO	Information Services National Training Organisation
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LAIS	Libraries, archives and information services
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
LSC	Learning and Skills Council, England
LSDA NI	Learning and Skills Development Agency, Northern Ireland
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action

NISTF	Northern Ireland Skills Task Force
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTO	National Training Organisation
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PAULO	National Training Organisation for Community Based Learning and Development
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PGC(FHE)	Post Graduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education
PRONI	Public Records Office Northern Ireland
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PTLLS	Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QCA NI	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Northern Ireland
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RPA	Review of Public Administration
RTO	Recognised Training Organisations
SfBN	Skills for Business Network
SIR	Staff Individualised Record
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise
SNA	Skills Needs Assessment
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SQS	Sector Qualification Strategy
SSA	Sector Skills Agreement
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SSDA	Sector Skills Development Agency
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VLE	Virtual Learning Environments
WBL	Work Based Learning

Skills for Business is an employer-led network consisting of 25 Sector Skills Councils and the Sector Skills Development Agency. Through its unrivalled labour market intelligence and insights from employers in all sectors of the UK economy, the network identifies change needed in policy and practice relating to education and skills development. With the influence granted by licences from the governments of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and with private and public funding, this independent network engages with the education and training supply-side, such as universities, colleges, funders and qualifications bodies, to increase productivity at all levels in the workforce.

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