Building on our Success: Improving Modern Apprenticeships

Consultation Paper

August 2006

Contents

1. Aim of the Consultation

1.1 The aim of this consultation is to gather views to inform Ministers on how we propose to improve the current Modern Apprenticeship Programme (MAs). Since its introduction in the mid 1990s the programme has gone from strength to strength. Originally designed as a tool to support a valid and structured mechanism for developing young people's skills and competence in the workplace, it has evolved into a far broader programme. Employers quickly identified the benefits of this approach and have enthusiastically used MAs as an integral component of their workforce development strategies, so much so that there are now around 16,000 employers actively engaged in the MA programme. We have been committed to increasing our support for the MA programme and this has been matched by substantial investment. The number of individuals participating in the MA programme has grown from a handful in 1995 to around 32,000 and in the last 5 years the number of participants has more than doubled.

1.2 But MAs have been a success for people of all ages, given that we lifted the age limit of 25 in 2001. There are now around 8,000 MAs who are over 25 years old and many of these are individuals who are retraining in support of a career change or are being provided the opportunity for their skills to be recognised and developed within their current workplace. Although the youngest MA is 16 we now have many who are in their 40s and 50s. Our oldest MA so far has been 62, so the programme truly reflects the diverse nature of Scotland's workforce.

1.3 Since the introduction of MAs more than 49,000 individuals have successfully completed the programme. Due to the range of specific and transferable skills gained through the programme, Scotland's MAs are well placed to respond to the emerging challenges ahead of them. Around 60% of all MAs successfully complete the programme in Scotland and this represents a significant increase in recent years, from 48% in 2002/03. But we know that the vast majority of those who do not complete leave their training to enter higher or further education, or into another job. This is one of the strengths of the programme as they leave with skills and confidence which cannot be viewed as anything other than a positive outcome.

1.4 Against this background, our aim is to refine the current MA programme and ensure it is fit for the needs of the 21st century. This paper proposes that MAs are extended to level 2. It also seeks your views on some specific aspects of the existing MA programme as well as setting out the proposed next steps in the process. In addition to this written consultation, we intend to hold meetings and workshops where you will be able to present your comments in person.

1.5 We do not believe that delivery and funding issues should overly influence the design of the MA policy framework and have therefore not dwelt on these issues in this paper. It will be for others - specifically the Enterprise Networks, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and the Skills for Business Network (SfBN) - to determine how best to revise their delivery to fit with the future policy direction.

2.   Background

<u>Modern Apprenticeships</u>

2.1   MAs were introduced in Scotland (and elsewhere in the UK) in 1995 to raise the number of young adults with skills at intermediate level – the equivalent of at least upper secondary education. The MA programme is delivered by Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE). Since then MAs have undergone a number of changes both in terms of policy and delivery. They have evolved to provide quality training opportunities for people of all ages, helping to ensure that both new recruits and existing employees have the right skills required to tackle real jobs, and that employers have committed, highly trained, employees. An MA aims to provide employees with the knowledge, understanding and competence required to work at a high skills level in their chosen occupation. At the same time, MAs are recognised as an important tool for developing skills and raising competitiveness in all sectors of the Scottish economy.

<u>Skillseekers</u>

2.2   Skillseekers is a vocational training programme which is open to young people aged between 16 and 25. The Skillseekers programme is delivered by the Enterprise Networks and is available across a range of sectors and occupations. The outcome is achievement of a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 2. There are currently just under 8,000 young people undertaking training through the Skillseekers programme, 80% of which have employed status.

2.3   Skillseekers was introduced in the early nineties and although it continues to provide a valid route to work-based training and employment for young people, negative perceptions of the programme have driven a desire to re-focus the programme, building on the good practice established in MAs.

<u>Re-engineering Skillseekers</u>

2.4   The Scottish Executive committed itself within the Lifelong Learning Strategy, '*Life through learning, learning through life',* to work with the Enterprise Networks to re-engineer current Skillseekers provision. This exercise was to recognise the aspects of Skillseekers that worked well, address some of the perceived problems associated with the traditional Skillseekers programme and better reflect the training needs of both employers and young people.

2.5   Work to re-engineer the Skillseekers programme has been underway for almost three years. In this time we have sought a range of views and collected evidence from a number of stakeholders including training providers, Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), employer representative groups and employers. We have gathered this information via informal consultation exercises, presentations and seminars held during the last few years. In parallel to this activity SEn and HIE have undertaken a number of pilots testing new approaches and developing innovative sectoral solutions addressing low take up and poor completion rates. From this work we have gathered evidence to support the extension of the

MA programme to level 2. This work has also raised some interesting points relating to the current MA programme and we feel there would be merit in seeking views on these too.

Driver for Change

2.6   The MA programme has grown in popularity since its introduction and remains highly valued by both employers and individuals. Although originally designed to support intermediate and managerial level occupations, there is some evidence that MAs attract more funding than other interventions. This has led to a situation where sectors have developed and implemented an MA at level 3 when arguably a level 2 intervention would have been more appropriate. This may explain why some sectors experience poor take up of their MA frameworks and a higher drop out rate.

2.7   SSCs – formerly the National Training Organisations (NTOs) – have made representations to the Modern Apprenticeship Implementation Group (MAIG) and Ministers on numerous occasions seeking the introduction of a level 2 MA. They have also raised a number of related policy matters associated with level 2 and level 3 vocational training provision including the use of alternative qualifications in MA frameworks and the setting of a minimum wage for apprentices. We feel that we could be missing an opportunity if we do not investigate these further.

3.   Aim of the MA Programme

3.1   The aim of the MA programme is currently stated as… *"to grow Scotland's economy and tackle skills shortages through work-based training combined with study for an appropriate S/NVQ at level 3 or above and 5 core skills"*. However, we recognise that MAs currently fulfil two complementary but often conflicting purposes. The first is about providing individuals with the opportunity to develop skills at intermediate level while they work. The second is about assisting employers in workforce development and up-skilling the workforce.

3.2   Although the MA programme is about both of these things, the current balance of priorities lies with the employers, with the ultimate focus on workforce development and economic development. We are currently working on a form of words for the aim of the programme which captures the need for MAs to deliver a competitive impact of businesses whilst ensuring the needs of the individual are protected. We also feel that the objective of the programme needs to recognise that MAs must address both current and future skills needs to ensure the programme continues to support the wider economic development agenda.

3.3   We believe a revised aim may look something like this:

> *"MAs are a key training programme aimed at growing Scotland's economy and tackling skills shortages. They involve work-based training combined with study for an appropriate Vocational Qualification or equivalent and relevant core skills in order to prove competence in a particular job/role"*

This reflects that the primary driver behind MAs remains economic development, although there is a recognition that there are also benefits to individuals and the wider society.

Proposal
The aim of the MA programme will be :-

> ***"MAs are a key training programme aimed at growing Scotland's economy and tackling skills shortages. They involve work-based training combined with study for an appropriate Vocational Qualification or equivalent and relevant core skills in order to prove competence in a particular job/role"***

Specific Questions

1.   What is your view on the proposed aim of the MA programme outlined above?

2.   Do you think the proposed aim achieves the necessary balance between economic development and social inclusion? YES/NO

3.   If no, please provide suggestions for improvement.

4.   Extension of MAs to Level 2 (SCQF level 5)

4.1   The re-engineering pilot activity has enabled us to gather a wealth of evidence to support the notion that MAs should be extended to all S/NVQ levels, other than level 1 (as level 2 is considered the minimum required for work). In particular SSCs have been calling for MAs to be extended to level 2 and that the Skillseekers programme is phased out.

4.2   There is much evidence to suggest that the Skillseekers brand has become tarnished and many individuals and employers associate this brand with negative connotations. In contrast, research conducted by MRUK found that the MA brand is highly regarded by employers and young people. We believe it would make sense to extend MAs to level 2 in recognition of the fact that for many jobs, this is the correct level for an MA.

Would this devalue the MA?

4.3   One of the key arguments used by opponents to extending the MA programme to level 2 is that it would devalue and undermine the existing, established brand. Evidence from MRUK research on MA and Skillseekers brand perceptions commissioned by Scottish Enterprise in 2003 lends some weight to this argument. It states that "*blurring the distinction between Skillseekers and MAs is likely to undermine the value of MAs, rather than enhance the value of Skillseekers (or any other named scheme which fulfils the same role)*".

4.4   However we believe that not all current MAs are viewed as having equal value and it is very difficult to compare MAs across different sectors or industries. This is particularly relevant when we consider that the time it takes to complete an MA can vary from framework to framework. For example, a customer service MA can take less than 18 months while a construction MA can take around 4 years. We believe that sectors and industries are adept at recognising the skills needed and placing appropriate value on them. With the establishment of SSCs there is a good starting point for the sector to be able to evidence the skills needed in order to be competent within a job. Although progression may be possible, we believe it is unlikely that comparisons would be drawn between MA frameworks.

Proposal
The MA programme will be extended to enable the use of S/NVQs at levels 2, 3, 4 or 5. The Enterprise Networks will phase out the existing Skillseekers programme to reflect this change.

Specific Questions

4.   Should MAs be extended to level 2? YES/NO

5.   Please explain the reason for your answer, if necessary.

6.   What impact do you think the extension of MAs to level 2 would have on the MA programme or other associated programmes?

5.   Qualifications

5.1   One of the criticisms we sought to address within the re-engineering of Skillseekers was the use of alternative qualifications as a means of increasing the programme's flexibility. Although there is not strong evidence from our informal consultation with stakeholders to support this, this was something we committed to looking at in 2003 as it was recommended by the Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Committee. We have therefore included this in the draft policy framework developed for a future level 2 vocational training programme and this idea has not met with much disagreement. Indeed at the conference held at Stirling Management Centre last year, many delegates agreed that this was a sensible idea for a future level 2 programme. Several SSCs, including the Financial Services SSC and Skillset, have made a case for alternative qualifications replacing the VQ for current or new MA frameworks at level 3.

5.2   We believe that Scottish or National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs) should remain central to the MA. We also believe the starting point should be to encourage SSCs to amend the existing S/NVQ if they feel it is not fit for purpose. That said, our view is that the approval group (MAIG) should be open to considering robust evidence from an SSC if they wished to use some other competency based qualification within their framework. As part of that evidence, however, it would have to be clearly demonstrated why the current or amended S/NVQ is no longer appropriate.

5.3   When we use the term 'competency' based qualification we mean where the individual demonstrates their ability to undertake practical tasks, as well as having an academic understanding. By contrast, an individual undertaking a 'capability' based qualification would be required to demonstrate that they knew how to do a task, in academic terms, rather than actually doing it.

Proposal
A relevant S/NVQ will remain central to the MA programme, although there will be the potential for the SSC to utilise an alternative competency based qualification provided that robust evidence to support this is presented to and approved by the approvals group (MAIG). That evidence must specifically demonstrate why the current or amended S/NVQ is no longer appropriate to the needs of that sector.

Specific Questions

7.   Do you feel that the VQ is the right qualification for proving competence in a job? YES/NO

8.   Should we allow the possibility of using equivalent competency based qualifications to VQs in MA frameworks? YES/NO

9.   Please explain further the reason for your answer, if necessary.

6. **Use of Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF)**

6.1   We have begun some work with the SQA to credit rate the mandatory elements of the top 10 MA frameworks on the Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The framework allows employers and learners to understand more accurately and compare different MA frameworks. We are also keen to explore and encourage the transfer of credit into and out of an MA, ensuring learners are not repeating learning already achieved and providing opportunities for them to progress into Further and Higher Education.

6.2   Our work is running in parallel with work to credit rate and level SVQs on the SCQF, although many MA frameworks contain far more than just a S/NVQ. This raises an interesting question as the sum total of the individual components within an MA framework is likely to be greater than the individual parts. Rather than becoming fixated on the level of any Vocational Qualification, perhaps we should wait until a framework is developed by a sector (and potentially approved) and at this point credit rate the whole MA. It is likely that individual MA frameworks (which currently contain an S/NVQ 3) will be found at different levels of the SCQF.

6.3   We are keen to see the SCQF being used to determine the level and credit value of each MA framework. We believe that determining the level of an MA using only the S/NVQ is doing a disservice to the candidate. Although this approach would help to determine the value of an MA we would encourage the sector to contextualise the MA within their industry.

Proposal

The SCQF will be used as the mechanism to credit rate and level all future MAs.

Specific Questions

10.   What are your views on using the SCQF to credit and level MA frameworks?

7.   Core Skills

7.1   Futureskills Scotland data tells us that, what employers value most in young people entering the workplace, is core skills. The recent evaluation of MAs and Skillseekers, commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, shows that MA trainees perceive that participation in the MA programme has developed their core skills – communication (84%), working with others (80%), problem solving (64%), IT (54%) and numeracy (47%). However anecdotal evidence indicates that, when it comes to delivery of MA frameworks, employers are more concerned with the delivery of the technical elements of the framework, often considering core skills as an after thought.

7.2   We have been considering whether all core skills are necessary for all frameworks as part of the work on the future of level 2 vocational training. This is also an issue which SSCs and SSBs have raised in relation to the current MA programme. Some sectors argue that all core skills are not relevant to their sector. We therefore believe that there should be some flexibility for SSCs to make a case for not including a core skill, or including it at a lower level, if they feel there is enough evidence to support this. The Education Department will be undertaking a core skills review at some point in the future so we will feed into this to ensure the needs of the MA programme are taken into account.

7.3   We have been encouraging SSC/Bs to undertake core skills mapping to establish where core skills are (or are not) embedded in MA frameworks. This is to give employers a choice whether to decide if they would prefer separate certification or are happy to accept core skills being embedded. The mapping exercise is checked by MAIG, to a limited degree, to ensure that it is in sufficient depth and covers all the relevant units. However, neither MAIG nor the SQA check the content of the mapping for accuracy. It may be desirable to have some kind of check which promotes consistency between mappings.

Proposal
All 5 core skills will be required to be included within all MA frameworks, although there will be the ability for the SSC to seek an exemption to this via the MA approvals group. They must support this with a robust evidence base.

Specific Questions

11.   What are your views on the use of core skills in MA frameworks?

12.   Are there any cases where you feel a particular core skill should not be included or included at a lower level, within an MA framework, than currently mandated?

13.   What are your views on embedding delivery and assessment of core skills within VQs?

14.   Do you think core skills mapping should be audited or checked? YES/NO

15.   If you answered yes to the above question please give suggestions on which organisation might undertake this activity.

8. Employed Status

8.1 The MA programme is entirely employed status. Of the 40,000 MAs and Skillseekers - 38,400 currently have employed status (this is 96% of all trainees). Although we recognise that around 20% of all current Skillseekers are not employed, evidence from a recent Scottish Enterprise MA and Skillseekers evaluation indicates that one of the main reasons for this appears to be employers delaying employment to test a candidate's suitability. Although the use of a probationary period can be useful we do not believe that this requires a non employed status model.

8.2 We believe that the MA programme should retain employed status. A key element of the success of the MA programme with employers and individuals alike has been the use of this component. For individuals it provides an opportunity to earn while you learn and ensures that the employer is committed to the embedding of the training into the organisation. For employers it ensures freedom to recruit suitable candidates as well as allowing a degree of control over the applicability of the skills being developed.

What happens to those not yet ready for employment?

8.3 The MA programme provides an opportunity for all to gain the skills needed to prove competence in an occupation. We recognise that other interventions are needed in order to help an individual reach a point where they are ready to secure employment. We have learnt many lessons from the re-engineering Skillseekers pilots and these are starting to be embedded into the Get Ready for Work programme. This work is set to continue with the development of an improved vocational option. This is expected to further enhance the work component of the programme improving the prospects and job outcomes for young people. This new training model will be aimed at young people NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and will be initially targeted at 7 pilot areas (East Ayrshire, Dundee, Glasgow, Clackmannanshire, North Ayrshire, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire).

Proposal

All MAs will be employed for the duration of their training.

Specific Questions

16. Should all MAs have employed status? YES/NO

17. Please explain further the reasons for your answer, if necessary.

9. Setting a Minimum Wage for MAs

9.1   The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is a reserved matter. Under current legislation, <u>all</u> apprentices who are under 19 are exempt from NMW. As are those aged 19 to 25 who are in the first year of their training.

9.2   However, as all MAs are employed from the start of their training, their rate of pay often reflects that they are in training and will likely only be a proportion of the wage they would receive if they were qualified. Certainly in the early days of their training, MAs are unlikely to be productive members of the workforce. In addition it should also be borne in mind that subsidised training is also being provided for that individual.

9.3   We believe that employed status trainees (which includes MAs) should be no worse off financially than if they were receiving their training allowance and travel contributions. In England, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) stipulates that employers must pay apprentices a minimum of £80 per week as this is considered the minimum household income (based on an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and other passport benefits) anyone would likely receive if they were undertaking any other form of learning.

9.4   We would propose to encourage employers to pay MAs a minimum £80 per week. This would ensure there is an element of parity between MAs in Scotland and apprentices elsewhere in the UK. Evidence suggests that the vast amount of employers already pay apprentices over £80 per week and would therefore not be affected by this change.

<u>Proposal</u>
We will encourage employers to pay MAs a minimum of £80 per week.

<u>Specific Questions</u>

18.   Do you think that MAs should be paid a minimum of £80 per week? YES/NO

19.   Please explain the reasons for your answer to this question, if necessary

20.   Please provide any suggestions about how a minimum wage for apprentices could be policed?

10. Quality

10.1   The Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) was introduced by the Enterprise Networks to help deliverers of training programmes better manage quality. SQMS is based on ten standards covering various areas relating to education and training provision. These standards have been developed over time and are intended to be used to provide guidelines for measuring and improving the quality of training provision and associated activities and can be used as a tool to develop organisations through structured self-assessment. The development, maintenance and third part audit function of the standards was delivered by Babcock Support Services. The Enterprise Networks require all training providers who receive support for delivering training programmes to have SQMS in place. Babcock Support Services recently took the decision to wind up their operations and offered the staff employed in these services redundancy. This was not an outcome that SEn solicited but has had the impact of removing any capacity to either review the existing standards or deliver a third party audit function.

10.2   The Enterprise Networks are reviewing the current position with regards to quality assurance and improvement, particularly as SQMS in its current format is so heavily reliant on systems and procedures. We would welcome your views on how best quality should be embedded and managed within the MA programme.

Proposal
We will work with the Enterprise Network to review the current position regarding SQMS and quality of Government training programmes.

Specific Questions

21.   What are your views on the current arrangements for quality management of the MA programme?

22.   Please provide any suggestions for how quality management of MAs might be improved?

11.   Age

11.1   Most of the improvement in the skills of the working age population over the past 20 years has resulted from the 'flow' of increasing the skills level of young people entering the labour market, not from improvements in the skills of the 'stock' of the existing labour force. Although the 'flow' is improving slowly, it is doing so from a low starting point. The clear message from OECD data is that the 'flow' isn't improving fast enough to solve the UK's 'stock' problem; and the message from the demographic data is that the 'flow' will be decreasing in the coming decade (the number of people of working age in Scotland is projected to fall by 7% from 3.18 million in 2004 to 2.96 million in 2031), making the potential 'stock' issue – the need to upskill the existing working age population – even more essential. OECD data is presented on a UK basis but in fact the problem is magnified in Scotland. While the population of Scotland is projected to rise, peaking in 2019 and then slowly decline, the population of the rest of the UK is projected to rise to 2031.

11.2   As part of the Pre Budget Report 2004, HM Treasury announced that there would be a UK review of skills led by Lord Leitch. The subsequent Leitch Review is an independent review which aims to examine the nature of the UK's long-term skills needs and priorities of business and the economy. The Leitch Review's interim report was published on 5th December 2005 and although the focus was on English policy issues, the report does highlight the need to consider changing demography across the UK. The report states that the skills of young people alone will not improve the UK's overall skills profile significantly enough by 2020 because:-

   ▪ 70% of the working age population in 2020 have already completed their compulsory education; and

   ▪ Half of the working age population in 2020 is already over 25 years old. This is beyond the age when people are likely to participate in the traditional education route from school through to university.

11.3   We also need to consider the impact of the forthcoming Age Discrimination Legislation. It is likely that this will make it more difficult to prioritise particular age groups within policies and for funding without objective justification.

Proposal
We believe that the MA programme should remain an all-age programme to reflect the changing needs of demography and the changing landscape of skills that a workforce needs to deliver economic prosperity.

Specific Questions

23.   Do you think MAs should remain an all age programme? YES/NO

24.   Please explain the reasons for your answer, if necessary.

12.   Ancillary Matters

Fit with Other Policies

12.1   We believe that MA frameworks should make clear which programmes and initiatives feed into and out of the programme. The current MA guidance already states that it is important for SSCs to articulate routes to other qualifications including Further and Higher Education in Scotland, clearly defining how the framework can be used to secure employment in specific positions. However we would like to get agreement for SSCs to go further, recognising that there is an expectation that MAs should play their part in supporting wider Ministerial priorities such as reducing the NEET population.

12.2   It will be important for the MA programme to support wider policies across the Executive such as the NEET strategy, employability framework, and show how interlinked policies provide opportunities for progression and reduce the potential for repeated learning. Therefore we would wish to dovetail, where appropriate, with Skills for Work courses, Determined to Succeed, School/College partnerships and Further and Higher education.

Specific Questions

25.   How could we better ensure adequate progression routes between school, vocational training, and further and higher education?

Under-represented Groups

12.3   The MA programme does not specifically target any group of individuals, but rather seeks to encourage employers recruit from as wide a base as possible. For example, due to recent efforts to encourage females into the MA programme, the female participation rate has risen to around 35%, compared to 19% in 2001. However we are keen to further increase the percentage of under-represented groups participating in the MA programme.

12.4   We are working with stakeholders to develop appropriate actions to address any systematic barriers preventing atypical candidates entering a sector or industry of their choice. In addition all MAs supported by the Enterprise Networks must conform to the Local Enterprise Company's contractual requirements on equal opportunities and all employers of MAs should have and equal opportunities policy statement.

Specific Questions

26.   How can we increase participation in MAs by under-represented groups?

Guidance Materials

12.5   We believe that there would be merit in developing a Blueprint document, similar to that used in England, which clearly sets out the policy rationale for MAs and as well as setting out the various elements which make up an MA framework. There are currently several documents which do this in Scotland but it would seem sensible to wrap these up in one Blueprint document.

<u>Proposal</u>
We will develop a policy Blueprint document which clearly sets out the policy rationale for MAs and as well as setting out the various elements which make up an MA framework.

<u>Specific Questions</u>

27.   Do you think a Blueprint document on MAs should be developed? YES/NO

28.   What do you think would be the benefits and disadvantages of having a Blueprint document for MAs?

Employer Involvement

12.6   The MA completions research (2004) and the recent MA and Skillseekers evaluation exercise both point to issues around the importance of employer involvement in the programme to trainee success.   The MA and Skillseekers evaluation study, for instance, highlights that a significant number of trainees never had a review with their employer and 12% of MAs who failed to complete in the 16-24 age group would have been persuaded to stay with more support from their employer.

<u>Specific Questions</u>

29.   How can we achieve greater employer commitment to the MA programme?

Additional Views

12.7   We are keen to hear your views on improving MAs. So, if in answering the questions posed thus far you feel that you have not expressed your view fully, please ensure that you do so.

<u>Specific Questions</u>

30.   Please provide any additional comments on the review of MAs.

Information about this Consultation Paper and Consultation Process

This consultation seeks the views of all those with an interest in MAs. We have set out, in the Annex, a list of all the organisations we shall send the consultation directly. But all views from whatever source will be considered and evaluated. Please feel free to forward this paper to other people who you believe would have views on improving the Modern Apprenticeship programme, but who are not included in the list in the Annex.

In addition to this written consultation, we shall hold meetings and workshops to allow stakeholders to express their views. If you wish you or your organisation to attend a meeting please contact Joanne McKinnon (contact details are given below).

This consultation, and all other Scottish Executive consultation exercises, can be viewed online on the consultation web pages of the Scottish Executive website at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations. You can view this consultation at a Public Internet Access Point - telephone Freephone 0800 77 1234 to find your nearest Public Internet Access Point.

The Scottish Executive now has an email alert system for consultations (SEconsult: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/seConsult). This system allows stakeholder individuals and organisations to register and receive a weekly email containing details of all new consultations (including web links). SEconsult complements, but in no way replaces Scottish Executive distribution lists, and is designed to allow stakeholders to keep up to date with all Scottish Executive consultation activity, and therefore be alerted at the earliest opportunity to those of most interest. We would encourage you to register.

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please also complete and return the Respondent Information Form as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Executive is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

Next Steps in the Process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public (see the attached Respondent Information Form), these will be made available to the public in the Scottish Executive Library by 21st November 2006 and on the Scottish Executive consultation web pages by the same date. We will check all responses where agreement to publish has been given for any potentially defamatory material before logging them in the library or placing them on the website. You can make arrangements to view responses by contacting the Scottish Executive Library on 0131 244 4565. Responses can be copied and sent to you, but a charge may be made for this service.

Contact

If you have any questions or complaints about this consultation exercise please contact Joanne McKinnon on 0141 242 0119 or contact her using the contact information below. Please also contact Joanne McKinnon using the same contact details if you require this consultation paper in an alternative format, translated into a community language or if you wish to speak further about your views.

How to Make a Response to this Consultation

There is a specific form to complete on-line to assist you in responding to this consultation. The on-line form contains the links to allow you to send the completed form directly.

If you are not able or do not wish to respond on-line, please simply get in touch with Joanne McKinnon (contact details are given below). When sending an e-mail please indicate clearly which questions or parts of the consultation paper to which you are responding. This will aid our analysis of the responses received. In all cases please complete the Respondent Information Form and include this with your response.

Please send your response and the completed Respondent Information Form by letter or e-mail to:

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Closing Date for this Consultation

The closing date for this consultation will be 7th November 2006. Please ensure that you submit comments by this date.

What Happens Next?

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help Ministers reach a decision. We aim to issue a report on this consultation process by 5th December 2006.

The Place of Consultation in the Scottish Executive's Policy Process

Consultation is an essential and important aspect of Scottish Executive working methods. Given the wide-ranging areas of work of the Scottish Executive, there are many varied types of consultation. However, in general, Scottish Executive consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

The Scottish Executive encourages consultation that is thorough, effective and appropriate to the issue under consideration and the nature of the target audience. Consultation exercises take account of a wide range of factors, and no two exercises are likely to be the same.

Typically Scottish Executive consultations involve a written paper inviting answers to specific questions or more general views about the material presented. Written papers are distributed to organisations and individuals with an interest in the issue, and they are also placed on the Scottish Executive web site enabling a wider audience to access the paper and submit their responses - http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations. Consultation exercises may also involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as through public meetings, focus groups or questionnaire exercises. Copies of all the written responses received to a consultation exercise (except those where the individual or organisation requested confidentiality) are placed in the Scottish Executive Library at Saughton House, Edinburgh (K Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD, telephone 0131 244 4565).

All Scottish Executive consultation papers and related publications (e.g. analysis of response reports) can be accessed at: Scottish Executive consultations

(http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations)

The views and suggestions detailed in consultation responses are analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

Final decisions on the issues under consideration will also take account of a range of other factors, including other available information and research evidence.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

Respondent Information Form for Consultation on Improving the Modern Apprenticeship Programme

Please complete the details below and return it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately. Thank you for your help.

Name:

Postal Address:

1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)
   (a) as an individual ☐ go to Q2a/b and then Q4
   (b) **on behalf of** a group/organisation ☐ go to Q3 and then Q4

INDIVIDUALS

2a. Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website)?

   Yes (go to 2b below) ☐

   No, not at all ☐ We will treat your response as confidential

2b. **Where *confidentiality is not requested*,** we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

   Yes, make my response, name and address all available ☐

   Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address ☐

   Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address ☐

ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3 The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

   Yes ☐

   No ☐ We will treat your response as confidential

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4 We will share your response internally with other Scottish Executive policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

ANNEX: List of Consultees

Age Concern Scotland
Asset Skills
Association of Accounting Technicians
Association of Scotland's Colleges
Automotive Skills
Careers Scotland
CBI Scotland
Chamber of Commerce
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Awarding Body
Chartered Management Institute
CITB Construction Skills
City & Guilds
Cogent
Commission for Racial Equality
COSLA
Council for Administration
Creative & Cultural Skills
Disability Rights Commission
ECITB
Education Development International
EMP Awarding Bodies Ltd
EMTA Awards Limited
Energy & Utility Skills
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
ENTO
Equal Opportunities Commission
e-skills UK
Federation of Awarding Bodies
Federation of Small Businesses
Financial Services Sector Skills Council
Food & Drink Qualifications
Forum of Private Businesses
Furniture, Furnishing and Interiors NTO
Glass Qualification Authority
GoSkills
Government Skills
HABIA
Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Improve
Institute of Customer Service
Institute of Directors
Institute of Leadership & Management

Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation
Institute of the Motor Industry
Job Centre Plus
Lantra
Lantra Awards Ltd
Lifelong Learning UK
Management Standards Centre
MetSkill
NPTC
Pensions Management Institute
People 1st
Process Awards Authority Ltd
Proskills
SAMB
Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation
Scottish Bakery Training Council
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Further Education Unit
Scottish Meat Training
Scottish Qualifications Authority - Regulator
Scottish Qualifications Authority – Awarding Body
Scottish Social Services Council
Scottish Trades Union Congress
Scottish Training Federation
Scottish University for Industry/learndirect Scotland
Seafish Industry Authority
Sector Skills Alliance Scotland
Sector Skills Development Agency
SEMTA
Skillfast-UK
Skills Assurance Services Ltd
Skills for Care & Development
Skills for Health
Skills for Justice
Skills for Logistics
Skills for Security
SkillsActive
Skillset
Skillsmart
SummitSkills

The British Horse Society
The Scottish Youth Parliament
Universities Scotland
Vocational Training Charitable Trust
Youth Enterprise Scotland
Youth link Scotland