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Strategy Update
2006



ministerial foreword

Learning has never been more important in our society than it is now. When *Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life*, the Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland was launched in February 2003, we set out a distinctive and wide-ranging agenda for lifelong learning over a 5 year period. This document, the fourth in our series of updates, gives an indication of the progress that has been made.

What is clear is that Scotland's performance as a learning nation continues to improve. Modern Apprenticeships, targeted business support, Individual Learning Accounts, and offering *More Choices, More Chances* to those young people who are not in education, employment or training, are all helping this improvement.

In some areas we are at the forefront of developments – the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is one of the most advanced frameworks of its type in Europe, and Determined to Succeed, provides a model for others introducing young people to the world of work and enterprise.

While much has been achieved, we also still have challenges to face. That is why we have recently launched a consultation on issues related to lifelong learning in Scotland. The strategy's 5 year lifespan is almost complete. Now is a good time to consider what we want to do next. We do hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to the consultation, and we look forward to your input.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to this document. We believe it provides a strong foundation for future progress.



Nicol Stephen

Nicol Stephen
Deputy First Minister and Minister for
Enterprise and Lifelong Learning



Allan Wilson

Allan Wilson
Deputy Minister for Enterprise and
Lifelong Learning

November 2006

life through learning; learning through life:

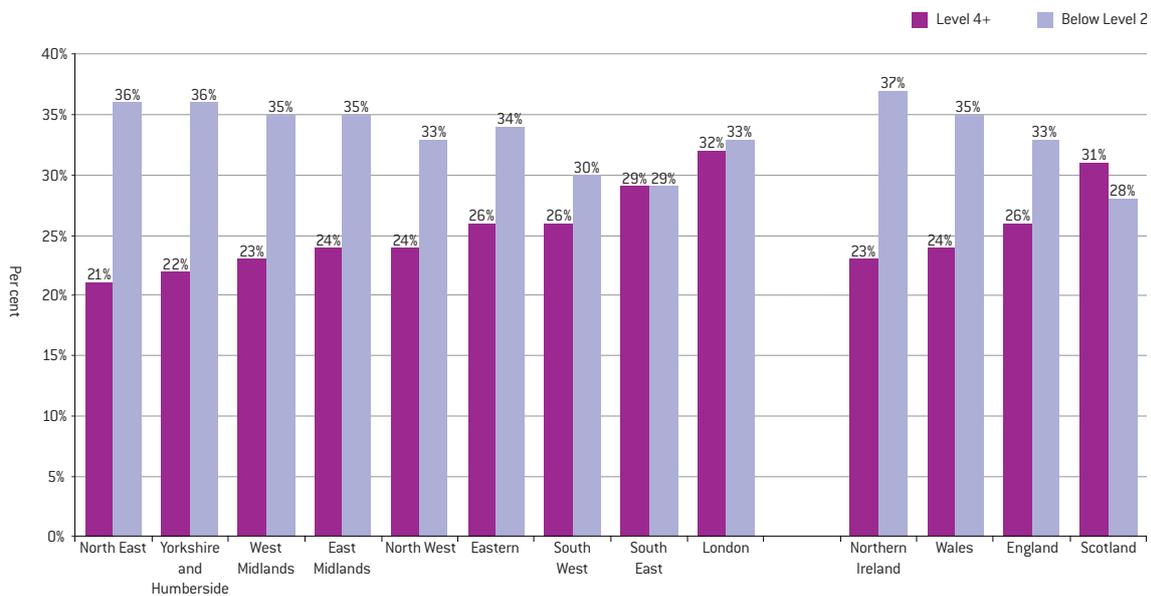
The Facts and Figures

“Just how distinctive is the Scottish education and training system, and how well does it work for the individual and for employers?”

This question has been posed and answered in a variety of ways both prior to and since devolution. What this section aims to do is to set out what the evidence actually tells us; to show how we are doing compared to other UK nations and the rest of the world; to highlight what difference our policies are making to the people of Scotland and, based on current trends, to project forward and look at what the future might hold.

Scotland in context

In a UK context we are more than holding our own when it comes to delivering a skilled and qualified workforce. The Interim Report of the Leitch Review of Skills shows that relative to the rest of the UK we have a well qualified working age population – second only to London (and then by just 1%) in terms of the numbers of the working age population qualified to level 4 (SCQF level 8)¹ and above.



Base: UK working age population
Source: Labour force survey, Winter 2004

Source: Leitch Review of Skills, Interim Report, December 2005

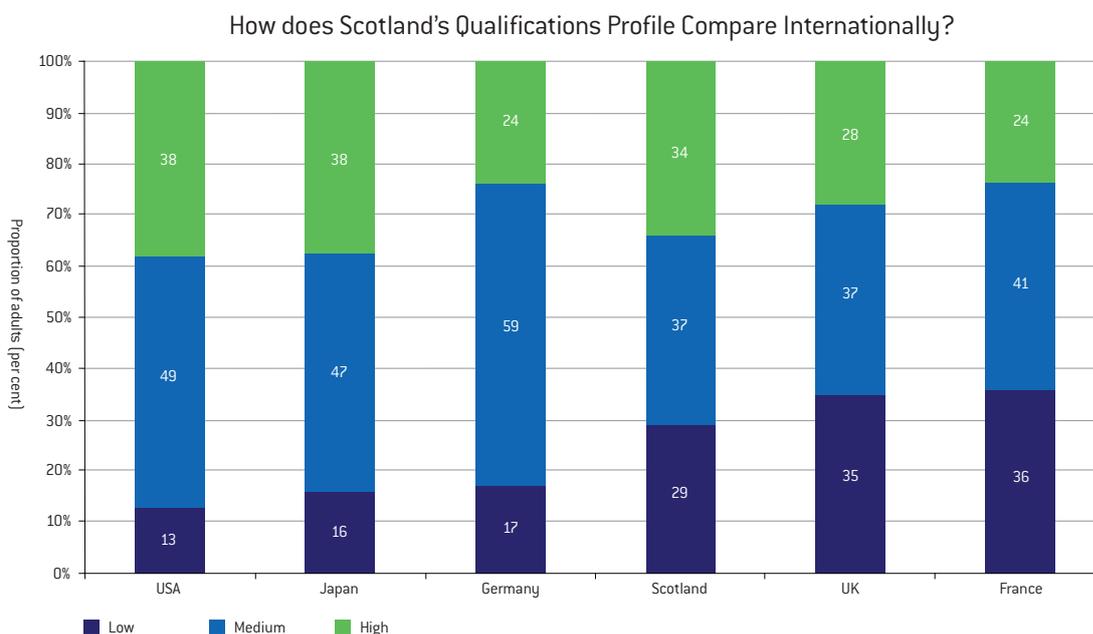
Scotland is the only nation or country in the UK where the proportion of people holding a qualification at level 4 or above is greater than those qualified below level 2 (SCQF level 5)². We also have the lowest proportion of people qualified below level 2. Put simply, with the exception of London at level 4 or above, **Scotland has fewer lower skilled people and more highly skilled people than anywhere else in the UK.**

In addition, **Scotland's qualification profile is improving at a faster rate than for the UK as a whole:** between 1997 and 2004 the proportion of the working age population in Scotland with at least a level 4 qualification increased from 22% to 29%, relative to an increase across the UK as a whole from 21% to 26%.

¹ Broadly equivalent to Higher National Certificate level.

² Broadly equivalent to Credit Standard Grade level.

This strong position is borne out in an international context when Scotland's qualifications profile is compared with other key OECD nations. Looking at the qualifications of the 25 to 64 age group, work done by the Scottish Executive to build on the evidence provided by the interim report of the Leitch Review, shows that in an international context Scotland is starting from a better position than the UK as a whole, with more highly qualified individuals and less people with low qualifications.



Source: Leitch Review and Scottish Executive Calculation

- Low is less than N/SVQ2
- Medium is N/SVQ2 or N/SVQ3
- High is equal or greater than N/SVQ 4

Staying with the international dimension, Futureskills Scotland recently benchmarked the quality of Scotland's workforce alongside that of our OECD counterparts. What this work shows is that on most indicators of labour quality, Scotland sits within the first or second OECD quartiles.

Labour Quality	Quartile
Proportion of Working Age Population (WAP) with low qualifications	1
Proportion of WAP with intermediate qualifications	1
Proportion of WAP with higher level qualifications	1
People with degree qualifications as %age of 25 to 64	2
% of 25 to 64 year olds participating in training in the last 4 weeks	1
Average scores in internationally comparable reading maths and science tests	2
Proportion of students attaining highest level of proficiency in reading maths and science	1

Scotland's labour quality should not be a surprise. Since the 1970s, **Scottish annual public spending per learner on education has been at least 18% higher than in England.**³

So, in terms of right now, we have a good story to tell, but what about the future? The Scottish Executive has recently completed modelling work to give us an idea of what Scotland's qualifications profile may look like in 2020 and, although such projections must always be treated with caution, the results are interesting. This work suggests that **Scotland will perform better than the UK** in terms of tertiary education with around 50% of our workforce qualified to that level. This is comparable with the USA. It also places us ahead of Australia, Finland, Ireland and New Zealand.



Source: *Leitch Review of Skills and Scottish Executive calculations*

³ Bell, D and V Sarajevs (2005), *Scottish education: spending more - earning less?*, Scotecon

Scotland's Employers

Our employers are also telling us that the skills and learning system we have in place is broadly delivering what they need. Since its launch in 2001, Futureskills Scotland has published 3 employer skills surveys that gather in the views of a wide range of Scottish employers from small family run firms to large public sector employers. This work forms the most comprehensive and authoritative source of information available to policymakers, sampling on average over 6,500 Scottish employers each time it is conducted.

What this evidence tells us is that for the majority of employers, Scotland's education and training system is delivering what they need most of the time.

Skills shortages, where an employer cannot fill a vacancy because applicants lack the required skills, qualifications or experience for the job, affect less than 1 in 20 workplaces and are **equivalent to around 1% of jobs**⁴. Skills gaps, which occur when someone who is in a job is judged by his or her employer to be not fully proficient, are more commonly reported but generally arise because employees have recently started a job or have not yet completed their training. More a natural result of recruitment then and an issue which Scottish employers are serious about addressing. Interestingly, half of employers with skills gaps report that they arise because of innovation or other, growth-enhancing activity in the organisation.

Deep-rooted, longer-term skill gaps are uncommon.

The results for the 2004 Scottish Employers Skills Survey show that some 87% of establishments address skills gaps by providing further training for staff, whilst 53% expand their trainee programmes.

Perhaps the most encouraging evidence is that **63% of Scottish employers invest in training for their staff.**

The Scottish Employers Skill Survey also has some very positive messages regarding our training and education system. A large percentage of employers report that they are very satisfied with how prepared for work our FE and HE graduates are (81% and 82% respectively), whilst levels of satisfaction with courses and training provided by private providers and our colleges is also very high at 88% and 82% respectively.

Scotland's Learners

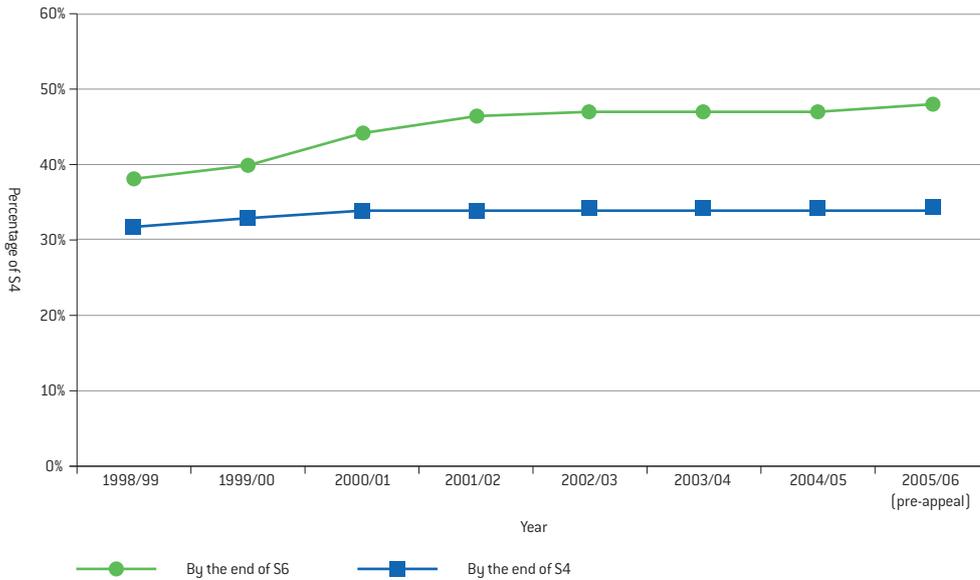
Participation rates in learning in Scotland have historically been at good levels. Maria Slowey, in work commissioned for the Scottish Executive, *The Elusive Nature of the Learning Society*⁵ found that 65% of respondents had undertaken some kind of learning since leaving full-time education. This fits with work done for the Labour Force Survey which shows that the proportion of people aged 16 to 69 who are no longer in continuous full-time education but participated in some type of adult learning (taught or non-taught) was estimated to be 68.6 per cent between March 2004 and February 2005, an increase of 2.4 percentage points on 2003⁶.

⁴ Futureskills Scotland "Scottish Employers Skills Survey 2004"

⁵ "The elusive nature of the learning society: a profile of adult participation in education and training in Scotland" - Slowey, Scottish Executive 2004

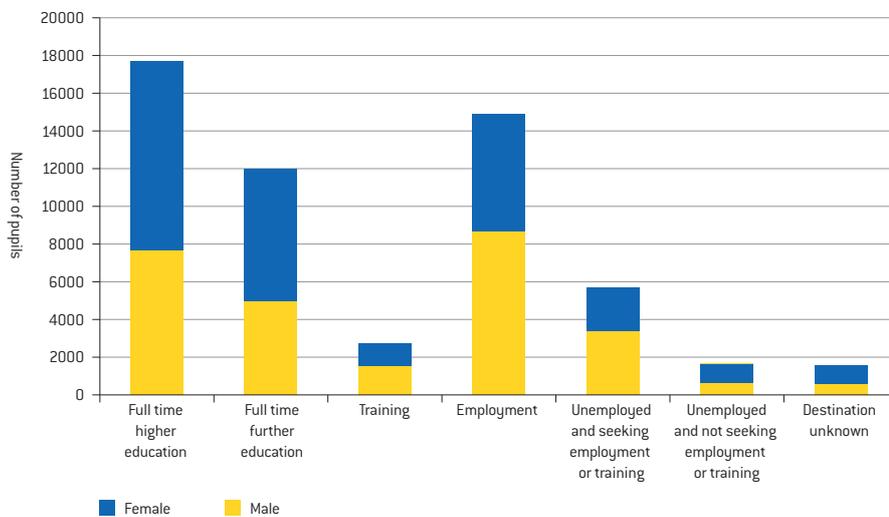
⁶ Annual Scottish Labour Force Survey 2004/2005

Attainment amongst school children is also rising. The percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more Standard Grades at credit level (or equivalent) by the end of S6 increased from 38% in 1998/99 to 48% in 2005/06⁷.
 Pupils gaining 5+awards at SCQF Level 5



And routes from school into further and higher education and work are being used and developed by our young people from all social backgrounds. In 2004/05 half of school leavers went on to study at one of Scotland's colleges or universities. There was a 2 percentage point rise in the proportion of leavers going into higher education in 2004/05, whilst the proportion going into further education remained stable. The proportion of leavers entering employment also increased by 2 percentage points to 27%, while the proportion who are unemployed and seeking employment or training has fallen from 13% to 10%.⁸

Destinations of school leavers



⁷ Scottish Executive School Education Statistics, 2006

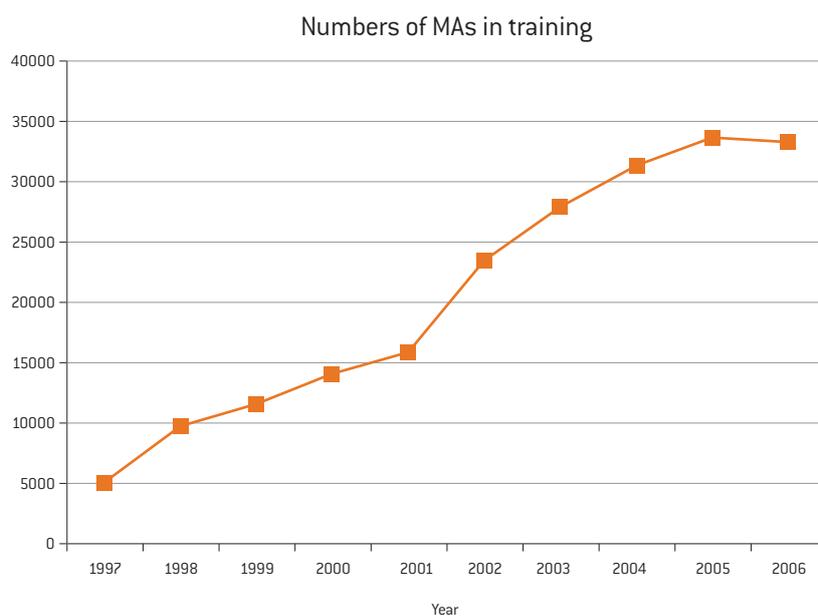
⁸ Op. cit

Participation in higher education in Scotland remains high – it has been running at or around 50% since 1999.

There have been some concerns expressed that this will result in an over supply of people with higher level skills in the market place, thereby devaluing the traditional wage premium that graduates have enjoyed. **Research has shown that this is not the case** – indeed employment rates for those with degrees have risen slightly from 88% in 1993-1995 to 89% in 2001-2003. The increase in graduate numbers over this period appears to have been “fully absorbed by a corresponding increase in demand. There are not too many graduates and no evidence of too many of the wrong type.”⁹ Graduates continue to enjoy an average wage premium of some 50% over those in the workforce who do not have a degree level qualification.

On the vocational side, the Modern Apprenticeship programme which has been running since the late 1990s has performed very well and, as the graph below shows, has helped thousands of young people and adults to build rewarding careers and gain valuable qualifications. A recent evaluation of the programme has shown that:

- 70% of businesses employing MAs saw improvements in their productivity which they could attribute directly to the training provided under the MA programme;
- 90% of MAs and Skillseekers felt that they had made the right choice of training;
- 75% were satisfied with their training calling it “good” or “very good”;
- more than 80% of apprentices said that their ability to do their job had improved as a result of the MA programme and 70% said they would be more likely to undertake future training;
- At 60%, completion rates for the MA programme in Scotland are the highest of any UK nation. The most common reasons why apprentices do not complete their training are positive ones – they move on to a higher paid job, change employer or move into further and higher education.



⁹ “The Labour Market for Graduates in Scotland” Futureskills Scotland 2006

So what does this tell us?

The evidence summarised above tells us that:

- the skills of Scotland's people is one of our key economic strengths;
- in general, our working age population is motivated, technically competent and willing to learn and develop new skills;
- on the whole we have an education and training system which is producing the right people at the right time for the right jobs;
- our policy environment is working for Scotland – putting in place programmes and initiatives that every day are making a difference to Scotland's society and economy; and
- as demand for more highly skilled individuals increases, on current projections, we appear to be on track to meet those needs.

But we also know that we have a lot of challenges facing us.

Participation in learning needs to be deeper and wider – at the moment, the more qualifications you have the more likely you are to be receiving training or participating in learning more generally. This needs to change and we are taking steps to make sure that those who have low levels of qualifications can and do take up further learning opportunities.

The Individual Learning Account (ILA) programme is making important inroads to this issue already – almost 44,000 learning accounts have been opened with around 50% of account holders either having booked or having undertaken learning. **Most importantly, 63% of learners who have few or no qualifications tell us that they would have been unlikely to have undertaken their course had it not been for ILA funding.** And Workforce Plus, our employability strategy launched this year, is putting in place stronger partnerships between key stakeholders to make sure that all of Scotland's population can take advantage of the opportunities available to them both for their own benefit and for the benefit of Scotland as a whole.

Equally we have a responsibility to our young people to make sure that none of them are left behind. More Choices, More Chances, our NEET strategy launched alongside Workforce Plus, has been put in place to help us to do this. Evidence shows that the best way to prevent young people from becoming NEET is to intervene when they are young. That is why we have a curriculum spanning ages 3-18 – we want to ensure that children and young people can acquire the full range of skills and abilities relevant to growing, living and working in the contemporary world. That is also why we have Determined to Succeed, a programme which seeks to ensure that all children of school age develop positive attitudes towards work and learning, which has been very successful.

We also need to be alive to the skills and learning needs of adults in the workforce, especially those who have poor literacy and numeracy and/or few qualifications. It is these people who are most at risk of missing out on the benefits that learning can bring and who risk becoming trapped in a cycle of low skills and low pay. Workforce Plus outlines the scale of this issue and sets out practical steps that we should take to help solve it.

And as our demography changes, through the ageing of the population or the influx of migrant workers, we need to ensure that Scotland's education and training system is flexible enough to respond to the opportunities and challenges that these changes will bring.

The next section outlines in greater detail the main policies and strategies that we have been pursuing over the last few years that have helped us to reach our current position.

A small, square portrait of Frank Pignatelli, showing his face and shoulders against a dark background. The text 'Frank Pignatelli' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Frank Pignatelli

learndirect scotland

Reflections

It is difficult to believe that the Scottish Executive's Lifelong Learning Strategy is just 3 years old. Such is the universal support for lifelong learning across all sectors of Scotland today that the strategy is now seen as one of the most important policy commitments of the Scottish Executive.

The strategy is central to the ambition of ensuring that everyone in Scotland will have the opportunity to acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours which will bring significant improvements to their own lives while strengthening Scotland as an economy and as a society.

The ambitions for the strategy were clearly signalled in the focus and remit of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee's inquiry into lifelong learning, which indicated "the need for a long-term, comprehensive strategy for continuing post-compulsory education and training in Scotland which meets the needs and aspirations of individuals and society as a whole in respect of quality, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, accountability, funding levels and structures and delivery mechanisms". What a relief to find that the strategy which emerged from such a complex and uninspiring remit was such an exciting and challenging document which immediately captured the imagination of partners across Scotland.

Never before has a policy document encapsulated in such passionate language the aspirations of the people of Scotland. The Minister's foreword talked about encouraging people to be eager, curious, inspired and passionate about learning. And so it has come to pass.

It has been said that policies and strategies are only as good as the outcomes they achieve. If this is the test of success, the Lifelong Learning Strategy passes with flying colours.

Our own organisation, learndirect scotland, has seen a huge surge of interest in lifelong learning from across the whole of Scotland. Our engagement with our target groups is very strong indeed as evidenced by the fact that every minute of every hour of every working day we receive four contacts from individuals and businesses seeking our support. Our annual performance indicators confirm that since our inception we have received just under 2 million individual enquiries about education and training and 56,000 business enquiries.

I know that other partners across Scotland are experiencing similar success, much of which is due to the fact that the Lifelong Learning Strategy has achieved its key aim of creating a climate in Scotland which promotes and sustains lifelong learning.

Dr Janet Lowe

Chair, Skills Committee
Scottish Funding Council

“There is a very close match between the overall vision of lifelong learning as set out in the strategy and the specific role of the Skills Committee...”

Scotland's colleges and universities have a major role to play in developing the economy by ensuring that students are equipped with the skills they need in the workplace.

Dr Lowe has taken on a role which is designed to strengthen the contribution that colleges and universities make to the economy while, at the same time, achieving some of the key objectives of the Lifelong Learning Strategy.

She chairs the Skills Committee of the Scottish Funding Council. This Committee was established in 2005 to advise the Council on how it can work with colleges and universities to ensure there is a skilled workforce in Scotland which is vital for economic development.

The creation of the Skills Committee has grown directly from the recommendations within the strategy to create a joined up and coherent system and one in which learning providers plan and adapt provision that is relevant to Scotland's economic and social needs.

“There is a very close match between the overall vision of lifelong learning as set out in the strategy and the specific role of the Skills Committee and I think that, in our first year we have already begun to make a contribution,” said Dr Lowe.

Employers report few significant skills gaps or shortages at a Scotland-wide level, which shows that colleges and universities are doing a good job in meeting the demands of the labour market. However Dr Lowe said it would be complacent to leave the matter there. Instead, the Skills Committee has decided to examine specific sectors of the economy to determine if there is more that colleges and universities could be doing.

It is looking first at health, financial services, energy and textiles. These areas have been chosen because there is some evidence of skills shortages and recruitment problems. In addition, the Scottish Funding Council is already supporting projects that address skills issues in the tourism, fishing and construction industries.

“What we are trying to do is look below the national level to see if on a sector or geographical or an occupational basis there are areas where skills could be improved and could contribute to economic growth and development more effectively,” said Dr Lowe.

Two other areas of direct relevance to the Lifelong Learning Strategy have been identified by the Skills Committee for attention:

- Assisting colleges and universities in helping students develop employability skills. There are core skills such as project management, team building, working with others and enterprise which employers value highly. This work will focus on how students can be helped to develop those skills to a greater extent.
- Supporting colleges and universities to work with people who are unemployed but who could become economically active if they were given the right support.

The Skills Committee is working with a range of partners in addressing these issues. They include Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Sector Skills Councils and the Skills for Business Network. Regular meetings are also held with the STUC and with industry representatives including the CBI, Federation of Small Businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and the Institute of Directors to ensure that employers' and employees' views are influential. The Committee is also keen to work with the Scottish Parliament's Enterprise and Culture Committee to pursue common priorities.

Dr Lowe, a former Principal of Lauder College in Dunfermline said: “Having a Lifelong Learning strategy that we are all working towards has really focused people's minds on where we can work together to meet aims and objectives in lifelong learning. We are beginning to understand more clearly the relationship between supply and demand. It is about students choosing the right courses, it is about employers getting the skills they need and colleges and universities responding to demand from both learners and employers. Collaboration will help all of us achieve the objectives of this strategy more effectively.”

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Robert Pollock

Director of Skills and Enterprise
Scottish Enterprise

The many organisations with an interest in lifelong learning are now working more collaboratively in pursuit of the common vision created by the strategy.

This is one of the main benefits that has emerged from the strategy according to Robert Pollock, Director of Skills and Enterprise at Scottish Enterprise. "It has brought a common vision of skills and learning to a wide range of stakeholders and allowed us to head in the same direction towards the objectives."

This is no simple achievement given the complexity of lifelong learning which involves individuals, communities, the wider society and the economy. "There are issues about reconciling the interests of all the groups involved in these areas. The strategy, with its convincing vision, does that very well," said Robert.

The responsibilities of individual organisations are now seen within the wider context of the overall objectives of the strategy. As a result Scottish Enterprise, for example, is involved in discussions with the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Qualifications Authority on how education can help deliver the skills Scotland needs. "Of course, we met before there was a strategy but it has explicitly stated the linkages and, most importantly, the expectations on different organisations. As new partners emerge, such as the Skills for Business Network, the strategy provides a platform for discussion and partnership working."

“The strategy has brought coherence around discussions on specific programmes delivered by one agency while allowing many organisations to contribute to the redesign of these programmes.”

Similarly, Scottish Enterprise is working with other organisations to address the issues of NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) young people. Robert said it has become clear that early intervention is the key here. Consequently Careers Scotland is working with schools to identify young people likely to fall into this group and Scottish Enterprise is reviewing its Get Ready for Work Programmes to maximise opportunities for these young people.

“The strategy has brought coherence around discussions on specific programmes delivered by one agency while allowing many organisations to contribute to the redesign of these programmes. Because we are working towards this common vision, we do review our own individual programmes in a more collegiate manner,” he added.

It is about sharing responsibility for issues that cannot be solved by one agency alone. Skill shortages exist in certain sections of the Scottish economy such as tourism, construction and in some engineering areas. The strategy allows organisations to focus on how best to address these issues.

Modern apprenticeships, for instance, have been a big success. A recent evaluation of 3000 employers found that nearly 80% considered they had contributed to improved productivity and company performance. “The issue now is how do we improve this further – how do we align it better to address skills issues in the economy?” said Robert.

The strategy will need to continually evolve in order to take account of changes in the labour market such as the recent addition of people from Central and Eastern Europe into the Scottish economy.

There is also the need to address the issue of productivity. “Scotland has invested more in skills and learning than the rest of the UK over a sustained period of time yet our productivity does not appear to have had the associated boost that one would have anticipated from this increased spending,” said Robert. “We need to look at the relationship of skills and learning with other drivers of productivity such as enterprise, innovation and investment. “

He believes the next phase of the Lifelong Learning strategy will offer the way forward in addressing this vital issue. “As we work with the Scottish Executive to build and develop the strategy, it will give us the vehicle to have a meaningful dialogue with all the partners to ensure we collectively address the productivity challenge.”

Joyce Connon

Scottish Secretary
Workers' Educational Association

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OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

“I don't think we would have been developing workforce learning to the extent that we have if it had not been for the strategy.”

Scotland's leading voluntary sector provider of adult education, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) has used the strategy to help guide some of its key development work.

The WEA has extended its role in providing workplace-based learning in direct response to the strategy. This is helping to fulfil the strategy commitment to create a Scotland where people have the chance to learn irrespective of their background or current personal circumstances. One important example of strategic vision and leadership, backed up by new resources, is the successful national initiative to improve adult literacy in Scotland.

The WEA's Scottish Secretary Joyce Connon said: “I don't think we would have been developing workforce learning to the extent that we have if it had not been for the strategy, and its influence on the partners who fund our work. We could all identify the goals that were set and see how our work fits in with that.”

The WEA has a range of programmes that are bringing educational opportunities to people in their own workplace. “Giving people time in their working day to study is important. If you are a working family with care responsibilities it can be difficult getting time to study at home. This can often be a barrier for poorer paid people that can be really hard to overcome,” said Joyce.

She also welcomed the clear focus of the strategy on learning that is more than just vocational. “It is not just about learning for earning but learning for life.” She hopes to see a greater focus on these broader purposes of learning in the next phase of the strategy.

One of the WEA's programmes that has expanded in recent years meets two of the key objectives of the strategy in improving the skills of people at work while, at the same

time, helping those not in work. The Job Rotation programme focuses on small companies that often find it difficult to release staff for training. The solution, imported from Europe by the WEA has been to train unemployed people to take on the work of staff released for training. The companies benefit from having better trained staff, the staff benefit by improving their own skills and the unemployed workers gain from valuable work experience paid at the rate for the job. The majority are either retained by the companies concerned or find jobs elsewhere thanks to the experience they have gained. Over 80% have a positive outcome.

“The strategy recognises that small companies are a vital part of the Scottish economy but it can be very difficult to engage with them. We have been very successful in doing that,” said Joyce.

She highlighted the process that led to the development of the strategy as being extremely important in shaping what has followed. “There was a lot of consultation with stakeholders who were given a say in what should be in there. That made it easier to share the goals and objectives.”

Looking to the future, she said now is the time to review what has worked well and reap the benefits of the development work that has taken place. “We need to take stock, be proud of what has been achieved and maximise the benefit of that.” That should include considering how best to sustain projects that have proved themselves to be effective and recognition of and support for the valuable role played by the non-statutory providers in Scotland,” she added.

Meanwhile, Joyce said the strategy has made a difference in prompting organisations like her own, to look at their own provision and tailor it in line with national objectives. “It has helped us have a focus and see where connections can be made to be most effective.”

Professor Seamus McDaid

Principal
University of Paisley

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“We are attempting to engage as many of the population as possible in the learning process within a quality framework.”

Universities are often seen as catering almost exclusively for young people, many of whom come from privileged backgrounds.

However, Scotland cannot recruit from such a narrow base if it is to meet the challenges posed by an increasingly ageing population. It needs to offer opportunities to people of all ages and backgrounds to help them realise their full potential.

The University of Paisley is doing just that. It is fulfilling the Lifelong Learning Strategy's aims of increasing participation in learning by widening access in a wide variety of different ways. Professor Seamus McDaid, the University Principal said: “Our broad strategy and mission fits very well with the key goals of the Lifelong Learning Strategy. There are a whole series of things we do that tie into the Lifelong Learning Strategy.”

The university already has campuses at Paisley, Ayr and Dumfries which provide geographical access to learning for local people. It offers flexible learning with more than 70 courses run on a part-time basis or through distance learning to make it easier for people to gain new qualifications by studying in the evening or at weekends. It runs its own Centre for Lifelong Learning which is a dedicated resource to support learners.

The result is a student body that is older than most other universities, attracts more students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and has more than half of all students studying on a part-time basis.

There are plans to merge with Bell College in Hamilton and to rename the university as the University of the West of Scotland. Professor McDaid said the goal is to develop a university for the region with the aim of increasing accessibility to university education across the west and south-west of Scotland. That, in turn, will benefit the local economy.

Partnerships are crucial in achieving this objective. The university already works closely with further education colleges, NHS Boards, local enterprise companies, local authorities and major employer organisations. “These partnerships help ensure that what we are delivering is high quality higher education that meets the needs of the area,” said Professor McDaid. One example of this partnership approach is the establishment of a Centre for Engineering with major employers aimed at improving the skills in that sector.

Specific programmes are also offered to students to provide them with a step on the ladder to a better future. One of these called Winning Women is designed to bring women into higher education to develop skills that are needed in the workplace. It has proved so successful that the university is offering a similar programme for men, called Motivated Men. These courses are run in addition to more traditional university-based education.

“We are putting down a structure that will support the delivery of higher education to meet the incredibly challenging time that is facing us as demographic changes kick in. All of the work we have done has shown that if you don't have accessible higher education, then big chunks of the population are going to miss out,” said Professor McDaid. “We are attempting to engage as many of the population as possible in the learning process within a quality framework. There are huge benefits that can accrue to them as individuals and to society as a whole.”

more choices, more chances

Scotland has one of the highest rates of youth employment in the OECD and a world-class education system which serves most young people very well, but, despite this, there are around 35,000 16-19 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Evidence suggests that the actual numbers requiring support to access and sustain employment, education or training opportunities will be less than this, but the numbers are still too high.

The headline figure of 35,000 represents young people in a wide variety of different circumstances. For some young people being NEET is a finite, transitional phase, ending in a positive outcome. For others, NEET is both a symptom of disadvantage and disengagement in earlier years and an indicator of lifelong disengagement from actively participating in and benefiting from a prosperous society.

Recognising this, in June 2006 the Executive published a 39-point action plan, *More Choices, More Chances*: a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people NEET in Scotland. This was supported by a package of almost £10m over the next 2 years for delivering the strategy to kick start a redoubled effort to tackle this at the local level. *More Choices, More Chances* was published alongside *Workforce Plus* - an employability framework for Scotland.

During the development of the strategy and since, work has gone in to understanding the make-up of the group. We know that while the NEET group is a dynamic one, with young people moving in and out of the group (and back in to it again) over time, the overall numbers of young people who are NEET remains broadly static and there is a core cohort who do not change.

The Executive recognises that this is a national problem which requires a coordinated national effort from national and local government, schools, further and higher education, the voluntary sector, health, and business and all the other people and services young people come into contact with. This is a nationwide issue, but there is a particularly strong initial focus on 7 target areas where the challenge of eradicating NEET is greatest (Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, Dundee and Inverclyde).

Local authorities are taking ownership of this issue and leading on it at a local level. Working with their local partners and government, they are being asked to ensure that there is in their own area, a coordinated, young person-centred approach which focuses on the individual needs and aspirations of individual young people and targets the right services at the right people at the right time. We must recognise that young people are not simply "homeless" or "young carers" or "drug users" but are complex individuals with a wide and varied range of circumstances. Policies and services in health, housing, education, justice, regeneration, the voluntary sector and others must join-up and see each young person and his/her needs as a whole.

For the 35,000 young people who are currently NEET, there needs to be a responsive system post-16 with plenty of choices and appropriate support for young people and to ensure that no one is written off as a failure because they don't succeed at first.

But, as well as addressing the current NEET problem, focus must be given to the group of children pre-16 who, without the appropriate support, will be likely to become NEET in the future. A great deal of work is going into that. For example, Careers Scotland is deploying additional resources to 13 selected schools in our NEET target areas which have too many young people leaving school and not entering education, employment or training. Choice for work relating vocational training is being expanded and we are working with Scotland's employers to improve the work related and job opportunities on offer to young people. We need to know where our school leavers go, with sustainable, positive school leaver destinations for young people as a key indicator of the success of the pre-16 education system. To know if this is being achieved, we are working to develop better tracking of young people's progress beyond school.

The Scottish Executive is committed to continue working with local partnerships to eradicate the problem of NEET in Scotland. This commitment is reinforced by our work with the Smith Group – a partnership of business and education leaders who are helping us get to the heart of the challenge.

NEET means that individuals and society are not fulfilling their potential. We have set ourselves an ambitious challenge. But the economic, human and social cost of NEET is simply too great to ignore.

Determined to Succeed

In *Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life*, the lifelong learning strategy for Scotland, we recognised the need to ensure young people were better supported to make effective transitions from the classroom to life beyond the school gates. We said that implementation of our enterprise in education strategy, *Determined to Succeed* – or DtS – was a key mechanism through which we would do so. DtS would aim to develop in all our young people, from the first year of Primary 1 to the last year of secondary, the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for them to become successful employees, employers, and entrepreneurs.

Our strategy goes well beyond straightforward “entrepreneurship education”; instead, it brings together, under a coherent framework, enterprise and entrepreneurial experiences, work-based and related vocational learning and appropriately focused career information, advice and guidance. Crucially, each of these strands is underpinned by a pedagogy which is in itself focused on enterprising teaching – and learning. So DtS does not see enterprise or entrepreneurship taught as subjects. Rather, teachers deliver their subjects in an enterprising way that contextualises the learning.

Working hand in hand with all our local authorities, and backed by £86m of Scottish Executive funding from 2003-2008, we began to implement DtS in school session 2003/04 in 10 pathfinder local authorities, with full roll-out across the remaining 22 authorities the next session. And, some three years on, much has been achieved.

All local authorities are ensuring young people in their schools (primary, secondary and special) are experiencing entrepreneurial activities appropriate to their age and stage of learning: some activities are delivered by teachers within the curriculum; others take place as stand-alone activities delivered by external providers. Meanwhile, all authorities feature DtS in their education improvement plans and the overwhelming majority of schools make the strategy a component of their school

development plan – so we are making excellent progress in embedding a culture of enterprise in our schools. And by way of support, a dedicated network of Enterprise Development Officers is coordinating DtS activity at local authority level.

Central to the success so far of DtS are partnerships between schools and employers. We are delighted – and grateful – that Scotland's business community has so far risen to this challenge: our target, due to be reached this year, of 2,000 school/employer partnerships was met over a year early, and the early indications are that the number of partnerships in place at the end of the last school session will be well in excess of that target.

Supporting teachers is self-evidently crucial as we expand provision of enterprise education and we have increased significantly the opportunities for training as part of continuing professional development. Some 22,000 teachers have received training specific to enterprise in education, for example, on experiential entrepreneurial programmes, leadership, and subject-specific enterprising teaching and learning. We are also piloting the introduction of enterprise education in Initial Teacher Education programmes; and the Excellence in Education Through Business Links programme run on our behalf by Careers Scotland, through which teachers enjoy placements in business, has helped over 600 teachers to take experience from a different workplace back to their classrooms.

So we have put in place a strong base on which to build. But build we must: the new Curriculum for Excellence identifies the outcomes we need from our young people as Scotland moves into the 21st century: they must be successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals. To help achieve these aims, DtS will continue to promote learning opportunities that are relevant, exciting and inspirational – and linked to the world of work.

John-Robert Eunson

Modern Apprentice of the Year

“I look forward to going to work every morning and I have a range of skills that I can now build on.”

Apprenticeships were once seen as the route into work for people who had few other options.

John-Robert Eunson is one of a new breed of modern apprentices who is changing that perception. Having completed his four-year apprenticeship training as a mechanical technician in the oil and gas industry in August, he is now studying for an engineering degree through the Open University and his goal is to qualify as chartered engineer.

John-Robert was named as Scotland's Modern Apprentice of the Year for 2006 and he believes strongly in the apprentice route into a career. He is also fully supportive of the commitment in the strategy to increase the total number of modern apprenticeships as part of the objective to improve the skills base, employability and enterprise of the people of Scotland.

It all started with an advert in his local newspaper in Shetland looking for apprentices. John-Robert was 16 at the time and he admitted that becoming an apprentice was not part of his initial plans. “At that time apprenticeships were not high on the list of recommended things when it came to careers advice – everyone said you had to go to university.”

John-Robert already had two Highers and could have studied for more but a work experience placement from school with an engineering firm had convinced him that he wanted to be in that line of work. He applied and got the apprenticeship with the oil firm BP.

He has never looked back. "I have no regrets at all, none at all. I could have had the opportunity to go to university but I chose to do the apprenticeship instead and it's been great."

Far from being an end in itself, the apprenticeship has opened the way to new opportunities for John-Robert to advance in his chosen career. Halfway through the apprenticeship, he approached BP to ask for support in studying for an Open University Bachelors degree in engineering. They were only too pleased to help and now pay for all John-Robert's courses, books and associated travel.

He believes it has given him the best of both worlds. He is benefiting from the practical experience of working as a mechanical technician while supplementing that with the knowledge gained from his studies. He is also getting paid for doing a job he loves.

He has also been grateful for the support of his local training provider, Train Shetland which visited John-Robert every three months throughout the apprenticeship to check on his progress. They arranged supplementary training when that was seen to be needed.

Now aged 20, John-Robert is a time-served apprentice with a promising career ahead of him. "If I had gone to university, I would be competing with other graduates for jobs and could have a student loan to pay back after graduation. I don't have any of that." He expects to have around 10 years of study ahead of him to achieve the goal of becoming a chartered engineer but at the end of that period he will have a qualification plus years of valuable experience.

"The apprenticeship has just been great. I look forward to going to work every morning and I have a range of skills that I can now build on. The biggest thing for me is that I have a job and a career," he said.

“The funding from ILA Scotland helped a lot. I just fitted the course around my work schedule...”

Coach is managing well

Rugby player Paul Hunter is enjoying a run of success at the moment – off the pitch.

The 23-year-old has just completed a managerial skills course at Dunfermline High's Community Use learning centre and got his first managerial position at Beath High School.

This talented athlete was promoted to assistant head of centre at Beath High but also works with many educational and sporting organisations across the Dunfermline area.

Paul used his ILA Scotland to help pay for the online course. He studied at home, after work, at lunch times or during breaks from his job as a sports coach.

“I work with children aged 4 to 18 on various projects involving a lot of different sports and it is very rewarding. The best bit of my job is when you see a child progressing and really getting something out of their involvement in an activity or sport,” explained Paul, who wanted to do more sports development work.

He added: “I got a lot out of sport over the years and really felt that I should put something back. I did my HNC and HND in sports coaching at Telford College and I am now in my final year of a degree at the University of Abertay.”

Paul wanted to progress in his career but didn't have any managerial experience.

“I work at Dunfermline High quite often and the Community Use learning centre team there are great. It is a learndirect scotland branded learning centre, and the staff encouraged me to do the managerial skills course. The funding from ILA Scotland helped a lot. I just fitted the course around my work schedule, getting on to the laptop when I could and doing it where and when I could fit it in,” he said.

Paul said he would recommend online learning for anyone who doesn't work 9 to 5, as it lets people learn wherever and whenever suits them.

A short time after he completed the course he was given the post as assistant head of centre. He is able to set up his own classes thanks to the

project skills he learned on the course. “There are parts of the course I use constantly. It has been great. I would recommend it to anyone” he added.

The Rosyth man also spent some time at McMaster University during a rugby tour of Canada. He saw a different approach to sport there. “I learned a lot about developing sport for young people when I was there. So, I have incorporated some of that in my approach. If it gets more children interested and playing sport, developing their talents, then I'll use it and the managerial course has helped me to develop my skills to put it all together.”

Paul, who plays for Alloa Rugby Club, said: “What I would say to anyone thinking about doing a course is to go for it. The people at the learning centre were so enthusiastic and they kept encouraging me and supporting me. It gave me the confidence to sign up for the course and doing it has already made a big difference to me.”

Malcolm Murray-Smith

Senior Care Worker
Viewpoint Housing Association

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“This process made me realise that I had more skills than I thought. There are all these bits of experience that actually make up to quite a lot. It certainly helped my confidence.”

Malcolm Murray-Smith has accumulated a vast array of skills, knowledge and experience from a varied career that has included being a warrant officer in the Army to working in the South African mining industry.

It's not the kind of background that would appear to be directly relevant to working in a care home in Edinburgh. However, thanks to a pilot project that recognises the informal learning that has taken place throughout an individual's lifetime, Murray (as he prefers to be known) has successfully applied for a promotion. He is now planning to build on this further to take a formal Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) at Level Three.

Murray is now leading a team of care workers at Viewpoint Housing Association in Edinburgh, providing support to older people in residential care. He – and the many older people he cares for – are benefiting today from the recognition of the importance of lifelong learning.

“This process made me realise that I had more skills than I thought. There are all these bits of experience that actually make up to quite a lot. It certainly helped my confidence,” said Murray.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pilot aims to develop a Scotland-wide scheme to take account of all prior learning that has not been assessed and credit rated. It can be used to gain entry to programmes of study and to gain credits towards such programmes. It can also be linked to the development of learning at both personal and professional levels. In social services, it is part of the implementation of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework which is managed by the Scottish Social Services Council.

The RPL process involved Murray reflecting on the skills he had gained throughout his life, with the support and guidance of his mentor, Care Home Manager Julie McNaughton. Although the care sector is very different from the Army, he found there are core skills that apply to both, including team working, problem solving, prioritising, discipline, diplomacy, adaptability and communication.

Murray put together a portfolio of his previous learning and how it can impact on his present role. It includes painful experiences such as dealing with death in a bush war against terrorists in South Africa and how that has helped him

comfort the bereaved in his new role. It also includes how his chess hobby can help in his work by thinking things through and planning ahead. The portfolio has helped him gain the confidence to develop his skills and gain the recent promotion from a care worker to a senior care worker. “It shows that you never stop learning and there are all sorts of experiences that can help in everyday situations,” said Murray.

He never expected to be working in the care sector and admitted that it was a “sheer fluke” that he has ended up doing so. He was on a Job Restart programme when he found he was under-qualified for some vacancies and over-qualified for others. He was given a placement in a day centre which, at the time, he thought was just another job. However, he became hooked and the job has now become a career, thanks, in part, to the RPL project.

Pat Sinclair, HR Manager at Viewpoint hopes that Murray's experience will encourage more staff to use their past experience to develop skills for the future. “It is great that we are recognising prior learning and using it to help people build career pathways. That has got to be the way ahead.”

Lifelong Learning: Progress and Plans

The table below sets out key areas of progress and plans for the future across the spectrum of lifelong learning activity in Scotland.

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 137,000 literacies learners have been helped since the launch of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in 2001. Following the launch of the Big Plus awareness raising campaign in January 2004 almost 13,500 calls were received by the national helpline and referred on to ALN partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will refresh the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland report. Stakeholder and learner events have already been held and a consultation on the strategy framework is to be launched early next year. 		■	■	
<p>Careers Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 30 March 2006 the Deputy First Minister announced to Parliament the intention to de-merge Careers Scotland from Scottish Enterprise (not Highlands and Islands Enterprise) following a detailed consultation process. The consultation process ended on 10 September 2006 and the responses have been published on the Scottish Executive website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are analysing responses and plan to have a report of the analysis published by the end of the year. 	■	■	■	■

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Community Learning and Development (CLD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We have provided support for the successful development of 32 multi-agency CLD Partnerships in each local authority area, delivering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ opportunities to people most excluded from institutional learning and active involvement as citizens. ■ high quality adult learning; ■ high quality informal learning for young people; ■ and many examples of more confident and organised communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continued support for enhanced delivery of adult learning, youth work and community capacity building in response to local needs and opportunities by CLD Partnerships. ■ We will provide support to key networks for development of the CLD field and its practice. ■ We will develop, promote and support the use of the SCQF in CLD contexts. ■ We will undertake joint work with HMIE to develop resources for self evaluation and quality improvement. 	■	■	■	■
<p>Determined to Succeed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We have achieved over 7000 school/business partnerships, far in excess of our target of 2000. ■ Working with Young Enterprise Scotland, we've seen a jump of nearly 60% in the time young people have spent on entrepreneurial activities in the classroom. ■ Determined to Succeed has drawn interest and recognition as a leader in enterprise in education from the USA, Germany and Australia; and has been showcased to the EU in Brussels and Norway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will continue to work to embed Determined to Succeed within the curriculum. ■ We will support the Executive's NEET strategy by continuing to develop work-related vocational learning and other appropriate provision for young people at risk of disengaging. ■ We are continuing to support Local Authority delivery through a team that works bilaterally and collectively with authorities. ■ We are delivering national strategies (e.g., on communications; learning and development; and employer engagement) that add value to local delivery. 	■		■	

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 2004-05 (the first year of national roll-out to 16 year olds only), over 23,000 students received an EMA. Around 80% received the highest payment of £30 a week. ■ By full roll out, we expect around 40,000 16-19 year olds to receive EMAs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We are continuing to roll out EMAs to all 16-19 year olds to help young people from low-income backgrounds, who may not otherwise be able to stay in post-compulsory education. ■ National roll-out should be complete in 2007-08. 	■			
<p>Employability Framework for Scotland – Workforce Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workforce Plus: an Employability Framework for Scotland was launched on 12 June 2006 and has been developed from the work of the Cabinet Delivery Group on Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG) which aims to tackle poverty and disadvantage in Scotland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Now that Workforce Plus has been launched, we have set up the National Workforce Plus Partnership which consists of the National Workforce Plus Partnership Board, a National Delivery Group and a Stakeholders Group. ■ In its first year, the National Workforce Plus Partnership will work to engage more employers both public and private in Workforce Plus. ■ The National Partnership will also conduct a review of education and skills programmes related to employment available in Scotland to check that they are well aligned and meet the needs of individuals and employers. ■ We are working closely with the local partnerships in 7 target areas to support the development of their action plans to improve employability services in their area. 		■	■	■

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We undertook research and a consultation leading to the development of an Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland which is currently with Cabinet Ministers for approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We hope to launch the strategy by the end of the year. Its 2 key aims are to improve the quality and quantity of ESOL provision across Scotland. The growth in migrant workers since EU enlargement has emphasised the importance of high quality ESOL provision as a means of aiding integration and ultimately economic growth. 		■	■	
<p>Further Education – Review of Scotland’s Colleges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Scotland’s Colleges: one of the Review’s working groups, the Difference Colleges Make, launched its report ‘Unlocking Opportunity’, at a conference on 3 October 2006. ‘Unlocking Opportunity’ demonstrates that for every £1 invested in Scotland’s colleges our economy benefits by at least £3.20. The report describes colleges’ role in tackling poverty and disadvantage, improving health, reducing crime and in strengthening communities. Other review workstreams are examining accountability and governance; staffing, learners and learning environments; and colleges long-term strategic future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will publish the recommendations from the Review of Scotland’s Colleges when the Review concludes in Spring 2007. 	■	■	■	■
<p>FE Bursary support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We continue to offer non-repayable bursary support to students on non-advanced courses in colleges. In 2006-07, the Scottish Funding Council will allocate over £67m to colleges (including hardship and childcare) to support students on non-advanced courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are continuing to work closely with stakeholders to implement the recommendations of our funding for learners review. We are taking forward a number of projects which are looking to align support, where possible, between HE and FE and target support at those who need it most. 	■	■		

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Further Education - Professional Standards for lecturers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New professional standards were published in June 2006 for lecturers in Scotland's Colleges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenders are under consideration for the preparation of teaching materials for new Professional Development Awards for lecturers. We plan to develop a range of further Professional Development Units and Awards to aid the continuing professional development of staff in Scotland's Colleges. Most of these qualifications will be aimed principally, but by no means exclusively, at lecturers. 		■		■
<p>Futureskills Scotland (FSS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Futureskills Scotland was launched in 2002 as Scotland's Labour Market Intelligence unit, and plays a key role in ensuring that the provision of skills training in Scotland is linked to employer demand. FSS see their main functions as: to offer access to accurate labour market information; to work with Careers Scotland; and, to provide analysis of labour market information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key targets for Futureskills Scotland this year include: publication of the results of the Scottish Employer's Skills Survey 2006; updating labour market profiles, for both industries and areas; an increased focus on dissemination and a refreshing of key indicators and research online to make information more relevant to a wider audience; and, implementation of a customer satisfaction and monitoring survey. 	■	■	■	■
<p>Higher Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have provided tuition fee support for eligible Scots domiciled students. While top-up fees in the rest of the UK have been introduced and will require students to pay fees of up to £3,000, our students studying in Scotland have their fees paid by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no plans to introduce variable fees in Scotland. In the coming year we will be investing a record £1billion in HE. This is the culmination of a programme of investment which has seen real terms funding for HE rise by 23% in the spending review period. We are undertaking a HE futures exercise, continuing a dialogue with HE principals and stakeholders, considering challenges which may emerge in the sector and working towards the continued strength of HE in Scotland. 	■	■	■	■

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Almost 44,000 learning accounts have been opened with around 50% of account holders either having booked or having undertaken learning. ■ 90% of learners are on low incomes and over 50% of courses undertaken are for ICT. ■ 63% of low level qualification learners would have been unlikely to have undertaken their course without ILA funding ■ There has been very positive feedback from learners, with an 89% satisfaction rating with learning and over 80% choosing courses leading to qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evaluation reports (Phase 1) will be published by the end of 2006. Further evaluation and research will be carried out over the next 18 months. ■ A number of scheme enhancements are planned or in progress. The aim of future development is to continue to improve service delivery, widen learner choice and improve access to ILA support, especially for harder-to-reach learners. 		■		
<p>learndirect scotland (lds) / Scottish University for Industry (SUfi)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 2005 -06 the work of learndirect scotland resulted in 560,573 learners being engaged in learning (some 117% of its annual target). ■ Also in 2005-06 the learndirect scotland phone line and website generated 139,159 individual enquiries (116% of the annual target). ■ SUfi became an Executive NDPB with private limited company status on 1 April 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We commissioned an evaluation, which has assessed the impact of SUfi's services on learners and its key stakeholders. Its messages are encouraging – it has shown that SUfi delivers benefits in excess of its costs and is adding value to the work of others. ■ The challenge now is to find new ways to make use of the National Learning Opportunities Database and branded learning centre network. A good example is the work that lds is doing to distribute Microsoft learning content across the learning centre network. 	■	■	■	■

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>learndirect scotland (lds) for business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ learndirect scotland for business generated 20,066 enquiries from SMEs during 2005-06 (172% of its annual target) resulting in 5,475 SMEs engaged in learning (148% of the annual target set). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lds is continuing to mainstream support for SMEs following the evaluation of the pilot of Business Learning Accounts. lds is considering what the best mix of support to SMEs might consist of. ■ lds is working with partners including Sector Skills Councils, to enable them to make full use of the lds assets e.g. SSCs use the National Learning Opportunities Database, rather than create their own. lds is keen to develop as an enabler for others who support SMEs in learning. ■ lds continues to create demand for learning by promoting learning tasters through ILAS and area based activities. 		■	■	
<p>Modern Apprenticeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recent evaluation has shown that 70% of businesses employing MAs saw improvements in their productivity. ■ This year in Scotland we have 17,532 employers involved in the MA programme – a record number since the programme began and an increase of 36% in the last 2 years alone. ■ Completion rates are also improving and we compare very well with other parts of the UK. For example, the current completion rate in Scotland is 60% compared to the latest published figures in England of 46%. ■ 32,000 MAs are currently in training in Scotland (7,000 aged 25+). More than 49,000 have completed their training in Scotland since MAS were introduced in 1994. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We launched a consultation on the future of the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme in August 2006. This covers a range of issues, including proposals to extend MAs to level 2 and introduce a minimum wage for MAs of £80 a week. ■ This is not a fundamental review of MA policy but rather an opportunity to build on the success of the programme by responding to the needs of stakeholders. This also builds on the work to re-engineer the Skillseekers programme over the past few years. ■ We will publish an analysis of the consultation responses in early December and following this will make recommendations to Ministers on the future of the MA programme. 	■	■	■	

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

In June 2006 the Executive published a 39 point action plan, More Choices, More Chances: a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people NEET in Scotland. This was supported by a package of almost £10m over the next 2 years for delivering the strategy at a local level.

- This is a national problem which requires a coordinated effort from national and local government, schools, further and higher education, the voluntary sector, health, business and all the other people and services young people come into contact with.
- There is a particularly strong initial focus on 7 target areas where the challenge of eradicating NEET is greatest: Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire, Dundee and Inverclyde.
- We are also focusing on the group of children pre-16 who are at risk of becoming NEET in the future: e.g. Careers Scotland is deploying additional resources to 13 selected schools in our NEET target areas.



Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Schools and College Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Lifelong Partners’, the Executive’s strategy to develop appropriate, meaningful and effective school and college partnership was published in May 2005. Delivery of the commitments contained in the strategy is on track. Colleges have an important role in helping schools develop the capacities of pupils as outlined in A Curriculum for Excellence: to enable them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Skills for Work courses – delivered through school and college partnerships – are designed to be an equivalent option to an existing qualification. These new qualifications encourage young people to become familiar with the world of work. They provide a variety of practical experiences that are linked to particular careers. The courses help young people to develop knowledge and skills that will be important for employment and for life in general. Skills for Work courses are being piloted between 2005/07 and 2006/07. Early evidence from the pilots shows that pupils of all abilities are participating in the new courses, in general their experiences have been positive and that there is a genuine commitment to developing vocational provision within the pre-16, and in some cases, the post-16, curriculum. From August 2007, a new range of Skills for Work Courses will be available. They are mainly for pupils in third and fourth year of secondary school, and they focus on the world of work. 	<p style="text-align: center;">■</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">■</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">■</p>

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SCQF is an international leader, one of only a handful of frameworks across the world to embrace both academic and vocational qualifications. The SCQF is our language of learning. It is widely used in education and training sector – in policy documents, in award certificates, in prospectuses, on websites, by guidance staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the end of the year, an SCQF company will be established between the 5 partners (Scottish Executive, SQA, Association of Scotland's Colleges, Universities Scotland and the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland). This new company will ensure the potential of the SCQF is unleashed as we develop it further and faster, particularly in relation to engagement across the UK and Europe. Scottish Executive funding has resulted in a number of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and the mandatory elements of the top 9 MA frameworks being placed into the SCQF, opening up the potential for more progression routes across sectors. 	■	■	■	■
<p>Scottish Funding Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent on 1 June 2005 establishing the new Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council on 3 October 2005. The legislation creating the new Council requires them to have regard to the skills needs of Scotland and issues affecting the economy of Scotland. They are also required to establish a skills committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scottish Funding Council's Skills Committee has been established. Its remit is to support and advise the Council in its consideration of the skills needs in Scotland by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collecting, monitoring and evaluating the evidence on the skills needs in Scotland and the supply of and demand for further and higher education; and advising on how improvements in meeting skills needs can be made through the Council's funding, regulation and support for colleges and universities. Following the publication of the report of its Widening Participation Review Group entitled "Learning for All", the Scottish Funding Council has put in place a number of measures designed to increase participation in learning in Scotland. The Scottish Funding Council is working with Futureskills Scotland to continue to provide robust evidence about the learning and skills sector. 	■	■		■

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There have been six rounds of SULF funding committing £4.9m to 69 projects from 25 separate unions. ■ In 2005 Ministers announced that they would commit funding of £1.4m across 2005-2008 to establish the STUC Skills and Lifelong Learning Team (SALLT). This funding will allow the STUC to build capacity within their organisation to give additional support to individual unions to develop their learning agendas as well as developing strategic policy in partnership with the Executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Currently there are 15 projects funded under Round 6 of SULF and they are due to finish on 31 March 2008. ■ An independent evaluation of SULF Rounds 1 to 5 was published on 31 May 2006. This shows that people who undertake learning through SULF are largely first time learners. SULF has also generated other benefits for learners, unions and employers around improved organisational performance, social inclusion and employability. ■ SALLT now administers SULF on behalf of the Scottish Executive. ■ We are currently considering how best to take union-led learning in Scotland forward and working with the STUC as they develop proposals for a Scottish Union Learning Academy. Any final model will work in collaboration with unionlearn in England. 		■	■	
<p>The Skills for Business Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The UK-wide Skills for Business network is complete with 25 Sector Skills Councils now licensed. ■ We are well advanced in the Sector Skills Agreement process with the 4 "Pathfinder" Sector Skills Councils now progressing their action plans one year on. ■ We have just celebrated the progress made by the next tranche of SSCs towards completing their Agreements. Next year will see all SSCs complete their Agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We are currently considering the recommendations of the recent independent review of the Skills for Business network in Scotland. How these are taken forward is, in part, dependent on the role which the Leitch Review of UK Skills envisages for the network in helping to realise the Review's long term UK ambitions for skills. ■ We will work with and support the Skills for Business network as they develop a "core offer" for Scotland. 		■	■	

Initiative	Current activity and next steps	Young People	Individual Learners	Business & Employers	Providers & Intermediaries
<p>Voluntary Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have continued to provide grants to national voluntary organisations engaged in community learning and development for adults to assist them in maintaining a Scottish Headquarters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have received applications for the next round of grant funding (2007-08) and these are being processed. 		■		■
<p>WorldSkills 2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May 2006 it was announced that the UK had won the bid to host WorldSkills 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Co-ordinating Group has been established to look at skills competition activity in Scotland and to ensure that a suitable network of competitions is in place prior to 2011. WorldSkills competitions will take place in Japan in 2007 and Canada in 2009. EuroSkills is another emerging competition due to take place in 2008 in Rotterdam. 	■		■	
<p>Young Students Bursary (YSB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around 73,000 students from low-income backgrounds have benefited from the YSB since its introduction in 2001. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to use the YSB to support young students in higher education. 	■			

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