Introduction

As part of its pre-budget scrutiny the Committee is looking at four public bodies in the field of education.

- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Funding Council
- Education Scotland
- Scottish Qualifications Authority

Part of the evidence taking included running a short on-line survey during October 2016. This paper summarises the results of the four surveys. It compares the perceived connection between organisation function and National Outcomes before analysing results for each organisation separately.

In addition to this survey the Committee is also collecting evidence in the form of visits, an informal meeting with teachers in the Parliament, written submissions and oral evidence.

In considering the results of the survey it should be noted that it is not based on a random sample, so may not be representative of the general population.

The online survey ran from 2\textsuperscript{nd} October to 1\textsuperscript{st} November. It was disseminated via Twitter and Facebook and promoted to teachers through the Parliament’s Education Service newsletter which goes to several thousand teachers. Parliament staff also asked trade unions, the Scottish Youth Parliament and parent groups to distribute the survey to their members.

The survey was also sent to the political correspondents at BBC, Scotsman, Herald, TESS, Third Force News and Holyrood.

Respondents

A total of 1,171 responses were received across all four surveys. More than half of these (646 responses) were for the SQA survey. A further 340 were for the Education Scotland survey. Most responses were from teachers. Parents made up 7\% (87) of all responses, and pupils/student/trainees, 6\% (74).

**Figure 1: Respondents by type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>SQA</th>
<th>Education Scotland</th>
<th>SDS</th>
<th>SFC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College lecturers/academic staff/training provider</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

- Percentages may not sum to 100\% due to rounding.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil/student/trainee</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All responses</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Contribution to National Outcomes**

All four surveys included questions on the extent to which certain functions of each organisation contributed to the Scottish Government’s National Outcomes.

A weak link with National Outcomes does not necessarily imply a negative view of the organisation’s performance.

It should also be noted that each survey had very different numbers of people responding, from 646 respondents to the SQA survey to 83 respondents on colleges and universities (SFC survey) (see figure 1).

**National Outcome: Our young people are more successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.**

Colleges and Universities were considered to contribute well to this National Outcome. Nearly half of the people responding felt that these institutions contributed ‘a great deal.’ (47% of the 64 responses on universities and 46% of the 57 responses on colleges).

To a slightly lesser degree, the Modern Apprenticeship programme was also perceived as being well-connected to the National Outcome with around a third of the 30 people responding saying it contributed ‘a great deal’.

In contrast, Education Scotland inspections, guidance and support were not perceived to contribute greatly to this National Outcome. For example 63% of the 222 people responding thought that Education Scotland inspections contributed ‘not at all’ or ‘a little.’

SQA qualifications and the SDS career service attracted more mixed opinion. Of the 618 responses to this question on SQA, just over half considered that SQA qualifications contributed ‘somewhat’ or ‘a great deal.’ A similarly even split is seen in the much lower number of people responding on the SDS careers’ service, where 48% of the 65 respondents considered it contributed ‘somewhat’ or ‘a great deal’ to this National Outcome.

**Figure 2: Contribution to National Outcome: “successful learners…”**
National Outcome: We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.

Similarly to the previous question, colleges and universities were considered to have the closest connection to this national outcome. 69% of 64 people responding considered that Universities contributed “a great deal.” Modern Apprenticeships were also perceived to have a strong connection to this National Outcome with almost three quarters of the 30 respondents saying it contributed “somewhat” or “a great deal.”

In contrast, Education Scotland inspections, guidance and support were perceived to make little or no contribution to this National Outcome. 65% of the 222 responses on inspection and 62% of the 238 responses on “support and guidance” considered that these made little or no contribution to “being better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.”

Perceptions of SQA qualifications’ contribution were mixed, with 45% of 618 respondents saying they contributed “not at all” or “a little” and 53% saying they contributed “somewhat” or “a great deal.”
Figure 3: Contribution to National Outcome: “better educated…”

National Outcome: We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.

The survey also asked about a third National Outcome in relation to SDS modern apprenticeships and the employability fund. While 40% of 30 respondents thought that modern apprenticeships contributed ‘a great deal’ to this outcome, the 25 responses for the employability fund were more mixed.

Figure 4: Contribution to National Outcome: “full economic potential…”
Skills Development Scotland

In addition to asking about National Outcomes (reported above), the survey used statements from the SDS Operating Plan 2016-17 to ascertain further views of modern apprenticeships and the employability fund.

**Modern Apprenticeships**

The [SDS Operating Plan 2016/17](#) describes Modern Apprenticeships as:

"a successful approach to work based learning that enables businesses to train new entrants and existing employees to industry-recognised standards"

The 30 respondents were positive about this description with 43% (13 respondents) agreeing “a great deal.”

**The Employability Fund:**

The survey asked to what extent the Employability Fund “secure(s) and sustain(s) employment through the development of employability and vocational skills.” This description was also taken from the SDS Operating Plan 2016/17.

Overall, the 25 respondents were ambivalent about the degree to which the Employability Fund helped to “secure and sustain employment through the development of employability and vocational skills.” Around a third (9 responses) considered the fund contributed ‘a little’ to this and the same number, considered it contributed ‘somewhat.’

**Figure 5: Views on Employability Fund and Modern Apprenticeships**

![Diagram showing views on Employability Fund and Modern Apprenticeships](image-url)
Universities and Colleges (Scottish Funding Council)

In addition to asking about National Outcomes (reported above), the survey asked about the degree to which respondents agreed to statements about universities and colleges. These statements were taken from the most recent Ministerial letter of guidance to the SFC.

It should be noted that the questions were asked about universities and colleges rather than the Scottish Funding Council itself. There were 64 responses on universities and 58 on colleges.

Views of universities were generally positive, although around a third (34%) disagreed or disagreed strongly that “universities offer access to education to people from the widest range of backgrounds.”

Views of colleges were also generally positive, with the notable exception that half of respondents (29) disagreed or disagreed strongly that “colleges are organised in highly efficient and effective regional structures” and a further third were undecided on this issue.

**Figure 6: Views on Universities and Colleges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities deliver internationally competitive and impactful research</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities provide access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities provide students with high quality, effective learning environments</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges provide access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges provide students with high quality, effective learning environments</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges are organised in highly efficient and effective regional structures</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scottish Qualifications Authority

In addition to asking about National Outcomes (reported above), the survey asked about statements taken from the “Values” and “Approach” in the SQA Corporate Plan 2016-19.

646 responses were received, 293 of them from classroom teachers and 169 from teachers in promoted posts, deputes or head teachers. There were not very large differences in responses by respondent type and so separate results have not been reported here. Almost all respondents had experience of National Qualifications (93%) and around a fifth had experience of ‘Skills for Work.’ Other qualifications were less well known although 13% had experience of HNC/HNDs and 10% of SVQs.

Nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that SQA qualifications enable learners to access and progress within further and higher education.

However, survey respondents expressed little trust in the SQA. Around two thirds (67%) disagreed or disagreed strongly that “our customers and users trust us to get it right for them.”

Around half of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly that SQA qualifications “deliver a comprehensive and high quality school qualifications system” (48%) and a further 16% were undecided. Similar opinions were expressed about whether SQA provides qualifications that prepare young people for work.

Figure 7: Views of SQA qualifications

Corporate Plan “Values” include: We seek to be trusted by government and stakeholders to deliver on our statutory responsibilities. Our customers and users trust us to ‘get it right’ for them. We seek to be trusted by partners who know from experience that we deliver.
In addition to asking about National Outcomes (reported above), the survey asked about the degree to which respondents thought inspections, guidance and support contributed to four of Education Scotland’s six strategic goals.

There were 340 responses to this survey, 143 from classroom teachers and 68 from teachers in promoted posts, deputes or head teachers. There were not very large differences in responses by respondent type and so separate results have not been reported here.

Around a third of respondents considered that Education Scotland’s “guidance and support” did not contribute at all to; building a world class curriculum (36%), improving performance (32%) or promoting high quality professional learning (34%). A similar proportion (30%) of respondents did not consider that inspections improved performance.

Views on the independence of inspections were more mixed – with 51% considering they contributed “not at all” or “a little” to providing independent evaluation of the education system, while 47% considered that they contributed “somewhat” or “a great deal.”

**Figure 8: Views of Education Scotland’s inspection, guidance and support**