



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

10th Meeting, 2016 (Session 5)

Wednesday 9 November 2016

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in the Robert Burns Room (CR1).

1. **Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2017-18 - Skills Development Scotland:** The Committee will take evidence from—

Damien Yeates, Chief Executive, Danny Logue, Operations Director, Gordon McGuinness, Director of Industry & Enterprise Networks, and Katie Hutton, Director of National Training Programmes, Skills Development Scotland.

2. **Review of evidence (in private):** The Committee will discuss the evidence heard earlier in the meeting.

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The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

Agenda item 1

[Submissions received on Skills Development Scotland](#)

SPICe Briefing on Skills Development Scotland

ES/S5/16/10/1

SPICe Briefing - Survey Analysis

ES/S5/16/10/2



Education and Skills Committee

10th Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), Wednesday, 9 November 2016

Budget Scrutiny 2016

Introduction

The session on 9 November 2016 will be an evidence session with Skills Development Scotland (SDS). It will be the first session of the Committee's pre-budget scrutiny of public bodies. The Committee will hear from:

- Damien Yeates (Chief Executive)
- Danny Logue (Operations Director)
- Gordon McGuinness (Director of Industry & Enterprise Networks)
- Katie Hutton (Director of National Training Programmes)

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to brief members in advance of the evidence session. The paper will briefly describe SDS, outline some of the work of the predecessor Committee on the performance of SDS, and then focus on some of its functions and outcomes, describing what they are and drawing from the evidence and opinion the Committee has gathered on the performance of SDS.

The Committee received a [briefing from SDS](#) answering a number of questions the Committee put to it on its performance and strategy in regard to National Outcomes. The Committee also requested a copy of the [letter of guidance](#) SDS receives annually from the Scottish Government which sets out its budget and strategic aims.

The Committee received seven further submissions from [Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce](#) (AGCC), the [Auditor General](#), [SCVO](#), [Colleges Scotland](#), Scottish Branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers ([SOLACE Scotland](#)), [CBI Scotland](#) and the [Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group](#) (SLAED). A pack of all of the submissions is included with Members' papers.

Part of our evidence-taking this year involved running a short on-line survey looking for views on the links between respondents' experiences of

programmes run by Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government's National Outcomes. It received 102 responses. The Committee produced similar surveys for the other three bodies it is scrutinising as part of its pre-budget scrutiny. [A report on the survey in included in Members' papers.](#)

In considering the results of the survey it should be noted that it is not based on a small non-random sample, so may not be representative of the general population. Taken on its own, the survey results should be treated with caution, the Committee is therefore invited to consider the results alongside the other evidence on SDS' performance.

The analysis of the survey results are attached in paper 2, members may wish to pursue the survey results under the themes set out below or during a separate discussion at the meeting specifically on the survey results.

SDS – what it does, how it's funded and how it's run

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is a non-departmental public body and the national skills body for Scotland. Among its functions are:

- the management and administration of Scottish Government-funded training and employability programmes such as the Modern Apprenticeship programme and the Employability Fund;
- the provision of Career Information, Advice and Guidance - for example through the advice in schools and SDS centres and the 'My World of Work' web service – and;
- working with partners to formulate Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments which aim to assess skills demands now and in the future.

For a list of all of SDS services, please [see their website](#).

SDS's total income for 2016/17 is £208m, of which £176m is 'Grant-in Aid'

Income	2016/17
	£'000's
Core Grant-in-Aid (GIA)	176,100
Transfers, ABR & SBR indicative GIA	26,960
European Social Fund income	4,495
Other income	300
Total Income	207,855
Expenditure	2016/17
	£'000's
People Costs	64,506
National Training Programmes, Funds & Initiatives	116,718
Industry and Employer Engagement	8,220
IT/IS Infrastructure	8,786
Estates	7,690
Indirect and Enabling Services	1,935
Total expenditure	207,855

funding from the Scottish Government. Other funding streams and broad expenditure headings are included in the following table, taken from SDS's [2016/17 Operating Plan](#):

Annual plans are informed by the [Letter of Guidance](#) written by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills which includes a range of targets and actions (a copy is included in Member's submission packs for ease of reference), for example (for 2016/17):

- Delivering 26,000 new Modern Apprenticeship starts in 2016/17, with the majority of places allocated to young people aged 16-24;
- The implementation of the [Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships](#) published in December 2015;
- The further roll out of Foundation Apprenticeships and Graduate-level Apprenticeships;
- Continued management of Individual Learning Accounts
- Developing and delivering the Transition Training Fund aimed at helping those who face losing their jobs in the oil and gas industry;
- Providing 11,650 training starts through the Employability Fund;
- Continue to undertake Skills Investment Plans and Regional Skills Assessments;
- Pursuing the best use of data tracking and monitoring mechanisms.

Governance

Created in April 2008, SDS brought together Careers Scotland, Scottish University for Industry (learndirectscotland) and the skills arms of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

SDS is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) operated through a limited company structure. "Skills Development Scotland Co. Limited" is a company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. The sole members of the company are the Scottish Ministers. Scottish Ministers appoint the Chair, Chief Executive and non-executive directors of the board of SDS. The board is responsible for the overall direction and strategy of SDS and for securing optimum performance from company assets. There is a formal policy of delegated authority (e.g. day to day operations being delegated to the executive) with strategic matters reserved to the board for final decision-making.

Theme 1: Last year's scrutiny of SDS spending decisions and outcomes

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-ordination with other agencies • progress in skills planning |
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- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• any evaluation of the SIPs |
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During its session on 3 November 2015, the Education and Culture Committee looked in some detail at SDS's spending decisions and outcomes.

Following the evidence session, the Committee wrote with supplementary questions for SDS. Issues from the SDS [response](#) and the evidence session were then raised with the Scottish Government.

For example, in relation to skills planning the Committee highlighted to the Government "SDS comments that generally workforce planning was not good and contrasted the position in the UK with all other OECD problems (sic) when indicating the UK are alone in not planning ahead and "investing today for the future of tomorrow""

The Scottish Government [responded to the Committee](#) on the 14 January 2016 highlighting issues such as what steps the Government was taking in relation to: skills planning; securing co-investment from industry; requirements from the Government on SDS to evaluate the Skills Investment Plan process.

The response stated, in relation to skills planning that "The development of Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) is a significant step forward in generating a better shared understanding of skills needs across the employer and education communities"... "Labour markets and industry requirements are dynamic, influenced by practical and social developments and the economic cycle, so SIPs must be refreshed to ensure skills and training provision is aligned with forecasted industry requirements."

The Committee had also asked:

- who the Scottish Government considered bears the primary responsibility for ensuring the workforce of the future has the skills required by industry;
- what means and measures does Scottish Government use to assess and evaluate what has been achieved by SDS when working in partnership with other agencies.

The Government response sets out that "Responsibility for ensuring the workforce of the future has the skills required by industry is a shared endeavour. In terms of ensuring that education and training align with future skills needs, both SDS and SFC collaborate closely to ensure that provision is aligned with the best quality labour market information available. The Scottish Qualifications Agency also plays an important role in ensuring that vocational qualifications are aligned with industry needs."

Theme 2: Modern Apprenticeships*Possible themes for discussion*

- SDS costs of increasing the number of foundation and graduate level apprenticeships.
- Any barriers or risks to meeting the target of 30,000 MA starts by 2020.
- Whether the focus on STEM apprenticeships will lead to less funding available for skills provision in service sectors.
- Activities being pursued to engage with employers to identify and respond to specific skills and qualifications needs throughout all ages of worker.
- Whether SDS invests enough on support for all learners, regardless of age, gender and disability.

Overview

The Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme is the Scottish Government's flagship training programme providing opportunities for individuals over the age of 16 to work towards an industry-recognised vocational qualification whilst in paid employment.

The Scottish Government, through SDS, usually part-funds the training and assessment elements of an MA, the degree of funding being determined by the age of the apprentice and the type of skills framework being delivered. For an apprenticeship programme to be a *modern* apprenticeship it must be approved by the [Modern Apprenticeship Group](#).

Administered by SDS, the MA programme delivers around 25,000 new apprenticeship starts each year. The Scottish Government is committed to delivering 30,000 MA starts by 2020, with a focus on increasing the number of highly skilled apprenticeships ([see First Minister's statement, 25 May 2016](#)). Modern Apprenticeship [statistics for 2014/15](#) show the number of starts by framework, level, age-group, gender and local authority area.

During 2015/16 SDS helped fund 25,818 MA starts and spent £76.3 million on the programme.

As highlighted in [Developing Scotland's Young Workforce](#), the Scottish Government is also working to widen the "apprenticeship family" with the delivery of new foundation and graduate level apprenticeships:

- *Foundation Apprenticeships* (FAs) are a work-based learning opportunity for secondary school pupils in S4 and S5. Young people spend time out of school at college or with a local employer, and complete the FA alongside their other subjects like National 5s and

Highers. These were piloted between 2014 and 2016, with over 300 pupils participating. There is an expectation that over 1,000 FA opportunities will be provided in 2016.

- New *graduate-level apprenticeship* which will allow young people to provide work-based learning opportunities up to Master's degree level for employees are also being tested.

Issues highlighted in submissions on Modern Apprenticeships

SLAED:

“Between now and 2020, the review of contribution rates for Modern Apprenticeships is going to become extremely unbalanced, with significant cuts to service sector occupations in favour of STEM occupations.”

“The funding approach has to take better recognition of the needs of the overall economy rather than pooling all funding contributions into (limited) key sectors.”

“The Modern Apprenticeship targets [e.g. 30,000 MA starts by 2020] are wholly dependent on employers as the training contribution is often less than 20% of the costs of employing and supporting Apprentices and this appears to be overlooked when established targets.”

SCVO:

“Despite renewed emphasis on equalities within Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), symbolised by positive developments such as the Equalities Action Plan and partnership-working with Who Cares? Scotland and BEMIS, occupational segregation remains a constant feature of skills intervention programmes. Only 3.9% of apprenticeship starts in Scotland in 2015/6 were disabled and women account for only 5% of engineering apprenticeship starts. In 2015/16, 74% of MA frameworks had a gender balance of 75:25 or worse.”

STUC

During the Committee's overview session on 7th September the STUC raised some concerns over gender segregation between some of the apprenticeship programmes and the number of disabled workers that get access to apprenticeships. Its Disabled Workers Committee had heard one of the main barriers was that some training providers did not have awareness of how to make reasonable adjustments. Supplementary evidence was requested on participation levels in Modern Apprenticeships which reflected that 8.8% of 16-24 year olds up to the end of quarter 1 2016/17 were self-declared as disabled.

Auditor General:

“SDS’s primary focus in 2015-16 was providing funding for national training programmes. The Scottish Government sets targets on the number of new starts and SDS has consistently exceeded the target since incorporation.”

Issues highlighted in submissions on training for all age groups

AGCC:

“There is a need to support people to re-skill, however, support at the moment is focused on the under-25 age group”

“Late-life career changes are increasingly common. Therefore there is a need for Scottish employees of all ages to be nimble and take advantage of re-skilling opportunities.”

SLAED:

“There is particular confusion around SDS priorities and whether the organisation is an “all age” service or focused on young people.”

CBI:

“Giving employers greater flexibility on age of apprentices is one way that apprenticeships can be encouraged more broadly, as businesses have expressed the potential for further expansion of their apprenticeship offer if broader age-ranges are accommodated. This would help develop those returning to work, looking for part-time training opportunities or requiring more experience to progress in their current role.”

Theme 3: Employability Fund

Possible themes for discussion

- The length of contracts for training providers.
- Measurement of outcomes for organisations working with the people furthest from the job market.

Overview

The [Employability Fund](#), established in 2013, is administered and managed by SDS. It is delivered in partnership with ‘local employability partners’, including local authorities. Employability support through the Fund includes:

- core skills development, personal and life skills
- work experience
- vocational training linked to the local labour market

- industry specific qualifications

Broad eligibility is for people who have been unemployed for 13 weeks and those under threat of redundancy. The majority of the Fund, administered by SDS, is delivered by a range of organisations under contract to SDS and payments are made to training providers when a participant starts on a programme and again when participants achieve certain outputs or outcomes

In a [news release from February](#) the Scottish Government announced there would be 11,650 Employability Fund training places supported during 2016/17. In previous years SDS had helped deliver 17,150 training places annually through the Employability Fund.

Issues highlighted in submissions on Employability Fund

SLAED:

“The current principle of co-decision making between SDS and Local Government is welcome around the Employability Fund ... A significant concern around this approach is the large number of providers SDS contract with, and the annual contracting which leads to short termism, lack of stability, lack of competitiveness between providers, and poor performance by some.”

“There is too much short termism with SDS yearly contracting which impacts on the sustainability of local provision when coupled with cuts in the Employability Fund budget.”

Theme 4: Careers, information, advice and guidance (CIAG) service

Possible themes for discussion

- How SDS ensures consistency in careers advice services in secondary school.
- The identification of individuals who have greater need for CIAG services and the measurement of outcomes for those young people.

SDS also spent £37 million on its careers, information, advice and guidance services during 2015/16 (see [SDS submission](#), p.7). These are delivered in schools, by its call centre and in SDS centres across the country.

SDS also provides career management information and guidance through its [My World of Work website](#). According to SDS more than half a million people are registered on My World of Work, which offers information, advice, tools and resources, which supports and complements the work of SDS’s careers advisers.

SDS states that it targets greater provision of CIAG services to those who need it most. A [Education Scotland review](#) found that: “The greatest

proportion of career coach support (in schools) is provided to young people who are deemed to have the greatest need.”

Issues highlighted in submissions on CIAG

AGCC:

“The careers advice and information service delivered in secondary schools [in the AGCC area] is patchy in impact ... Every school should expect to receive the same standard of service from SDS.”

SLAED:

“There is a need to ensure that all young people have access to a career adviser as required and this currently takes some time, therefore greater resource is needed in this area. It is important that resources for front line services are prioritised as the most recent spending and recruitment would appear to be at senior salary levels on centralised and corporate functions.”

Theme 5: Measuring outcomes and quality

Possible themes for discussion

- How outcomes are tracked in the short, medium and long term.
- The progress SDS is making in responding to National Performance Framework outcomes and indicators, including its [new national indicators](#) relating to underemployment, the living wage and reducing the pay gap.
- Scotland’s productivity performance and the view of Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce that: “Our national productivity performance is not satisfactory. As the public body responsible for skills this is what SDS should be held accountable for”.
- How local level targets are agreed.
- Balance between accountability of contractors and employers supporting apprenticeships and bureaucracy.

In its submission, SDS stresses that its budgets “are aligned to strategic priorities and activity that map to the National Outcomes and indicators”. Their [Operating Plan](#) and submission to the Committee map how their five strategic goals relate to the National Outcomes. Furthermore, SDS believes it makes a “major contribution” to the following national indicators:

“Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work”;

“Improving the skills profile of the population”;

“Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations”.

SDS conducts a number of quality assurances and outcome surveys to ensure services are meeting user expectations and contributing to organisational (and national) goals. For example there is a National Training Programmes Quality Assurance Team which ensures providers of MA and EF training comply with quality standards.

Recent outcome and other surveys have found that:

- 67% of Employability Fund leavers had achieved a positive outcome or output
- 92% of MA completers were in work six months later
- 96% of employers report trainees were able to do their job better as a result of their MA
- Head teacher surveys indicate high value placed on SDS contributions.

Issues highlighted in submissions on Measuring Outcomes and Quality

SLAED:

“It would be helpful if SDS adopted the outcome focused performance approach expected of other employability services. Targets should be robust and comparable as local authorities are currently not aware of the targets for SDS staff in terms of providing direct support to young people.”

CBI SCOTLAND:

“Challenges include the potential bureaucratic nature of interactions, opportunities for simplification due to numbers of initiatives and risk of duplication and the need to match international competition by supporting current workforce and the next generation.”

SOLACE:

“A common and shared reporting and evaluation framework should be developed. Common data sets and management reports should be established to assist with a better evidence based approach to initiatives influencing strategies at the different tiers mentioned above.”

AGCC:

“Our national productivity performance is not satisfactory. As the public body responsible for skills this is what SDS should be held accountable for”

“The Chamber believes SDS needs simplified overall Key Performance Indicators. Fundamentally SDS needs to be held accountable to outcomes and not activity measures. These outcomes should include:

1. Economic growth

2. Productivity
3. unemployment”

“If activity measures have to be used the following areas could be used to assess performance of SDS:

- Number of people in employment / training
- Number of young people in employment / training
- Number of people with additional support needs in employment / training.”

Theme 6: Alignment with Christie Principles

Possible themes for discussion:

- The effect on individuals of the “cluttered landscape” of skills provision and the work SDS is undertaking to address the issue.
- SDS’s relationship with local authorities and local business communities and the capacity for bespoke services at a local level.
- SDS’s relationship with Education Authorities, schools and colleges to ensure best use of resource.

The Committee asked SDS how it has taken forward its work on the basis of the four Christie Principles of reform. The Committee asked for examples of programmes or reforms that demonstrate this.

In June 2011, the [Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, chaired by Campbell Christie, published its conclusions](#) stating that the four key objectives of a reform programme must be to ensure that:

- public services are built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience;
- public service organisations work together effectively to achieve outcomes;
- public service organisations prioritise prevention, reducing inequalities and promoting equality; and
- all public services constantly seek to improve performance and reduce costs, and are open, transparent and accountable.

The SDS submission states that the Christie Principles are at the heart of its strategy.

SDS cites its CIAG service as an example of services that are provided in partnership with schools and are “personalised and customer centric”. In

addition, SDS stated that teachers and young people contributed to the design of its expanded CIAG service.

SDS notes that it takes a “systems thinking approach” to strategy – that is, it considers the whole policy area – which ensures strategy reflects “the interactions between different parts of the system and how it could be made to work better and achieve sustainable change and improvement, through more effective partnership working or by reducing friction or duplication in the system (e.g. do qualifications once).”

SDS’s submission says that partnership is fundamental to its work which is at national, sectoral, regional, and local levels. SDS stated that “the ability to shape and deliver services locally ensures we have the flexibility to engage appropriately with partners and customers in response to changing demands.”

CIAG is also mentioned in the context of having a focus on prevention and reducing inequalities. SDS stated that “early targeting of careers advice in schools to maximise the chances of successful transitions and reducing inequalities through our Modern Apprenticeships Equality Action Plan, to improve life chances, social return and productivity”.

SDS also referred to a number of examples where it has reduced costs and become more efficient.

Issues highlighted in submissions on Christie Principles

Duplication/Cluttered landscape:

AGCC:

“SDS has a huge remit on a range of issues and there is a perception that SDS is trying to do too much on the skills agenda. As a result it is unclear what they are really trying to achieve and what the impact of their activity is.”

SLAED:

“SDS is a complex organisation and it can be challenging to understand the roles and responsibilities of staff at a local and national level.”

“There is often very little collaboration with local authorities in the design and delivery of services”

“There must be greater co-ordination and collaboration between local authorities and SDS to ensure a decluttered user experience in order to improve outcomes.”

“SDS actually clutters the operating environment with national parachuted in products and services which often duplicate existing local provision especially around employer engagement.”

SOLACE

“SOLACE would lastly highlight the complex and cluttered nature of the skills landscape. We would wish to see the number of stakeholders involved being rationalised, with clarity on their respective roles and responsibilities. Such streamlining and simplification is essential in order to ensure that young people have a single point of access to tailored support, and employers are clear on how to find those seeking employment, training and modern apprenticeships.”

Local issues:**AGCC:**

“Concern[s] about a perceived lack of knowledge amongst the senior team at SDS about the skills needs of the North East.”

“The local SDS are a hard working team but in our view are very under-resourced and do not have a strategic focus.”

SOLACE:

“SDS regularly use local authorities as delivery partners, working to fair and challenging targets, and having the national agency as a partner has helped councils to raise outcomes for communities and individuals. This engagement is not consistent across Scotland.”

“There are good examples of collaboration between Councils and local partnerships and national agencies in the enterprise and skills arena”

SLAED:

“Some councils feel that SDS is very centralist with rural areas feeling excluded or lagging behind. This is a particular issue for outlying areas where service delivery is quite distinct from other areas. The only contact with SDS is remotely through email and phone, and contract managers are no longer visiting contracted providers. This leads to confusion and a lack of understanding about the issues in remote areas and how providers in these areas operate.”

“A concern regarding SDS is its lack of capacity to tailor national products and services to local circumstances. A ‘one size fits all’ approach lacks the ability to tailor interventions to identified needs.”

“Whilst SDS has a very strong National and Corporate image, this does not appear to translate locally. Many people seeking support from the council are unaware of SDS, especially the more disadvantaged job seekers who are likely to become multiple users of public services such as social work, housing, money advice etc.”

“SDS is a complex organisation with a wide range of staff and it can be challenging to understand the roles and responsibilities of staff at a local and national level.”

Theme 7: Review of the enterprise and skills agencies: Phase 1 findings and recommendations

Possible theme for discussion:

- SDS's response to the key recommendations of Phase 1

SDS is one of the bodies within the remit of the Scottish Government's [Enterprise and Skills review](#). The Scottish Government states that “the aim of the review is to ensure that our businesses, workforce, training providers, colleges and universities and young people all receive the joined-up support they need.” The other bodies considered in the review are Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the Scottish Funding Council.

The review took undertook a consultation over the summer. It was decided that the review would be split into two phases. Phase one review findings were published on the 25th October:

<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Review-of-skills-enterprise-services-2da7.aspx>

Phase 2 recommendations are likely to be published to be published in March or April next year.

Key recommendations relating to skills in Phase 1:

- To bring greater integration and focus to the delivery of our enterprise and skills support to businesses and users of the skills system, we will create a new Scotland wide statutory board to co-ordinate the activities of HIE and SE, including SDI, SDS and the SFC.
- We will create a new vehicle to meet the enterprise and skills needs of the South of Scotland.
- We will align the functions of our learning and skills agencies to better join up how education services and training are planned and provided to learners and employers.
- We will conduct a comprehensive review of the Learning Journey focused on sustained employment, with significantly enhanced use of labour market information in skills planning at its heart.
- We will review the effectiveness of our investment in learning and skills to ensure we have the right balance of provision across age groups and sectors and to maximise our contribution to productivity and inclusive growth.

Theme 8: Apprenticeship Levy

Possible themes for discussion:

- Whether SDS anticipates increased funding as a result of the Apprenticeship Levy and how SDS would like to see Apprenticeship Levy funds used from next year.
- Risks to established skills provision and employer engagement as a result of the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy.
- Details of discussions SDS has had with UK government departments on the implementation of the Apprenticeship Levy.

The UK Government announced the introduction of an Apprenticeship Levy in its 2015 Autumn Statement ([HMRC, 2016](#)). This is intended to provide employer-led funding for the 3 million apprenticeship starts the UK Government hopes to create by 2020 ([BIS, 2015](#)). The Levy will be introduced in April 2017, impacting most companies and public sector organisations with pay bills in excess of £3 million per year. By 2019/20 it is estimated that the Levy will raise around £3 billion per year with the bulk (£2.5 billion) being spent on apprenticeships in England. The rest (£500 million) will be split among the three devolved nations (see [House of Commons Library Briefing](#) for more details).

The Levy will be collected by the UK Government through PAYE and redistributed across the UK. The [UK Government has committed](#) that Scotland will get a “fair share” of the apprenticeship levy. The Scottish Government is working with HM Treasury to finalise the value and method of transferring the Scottish share of the Levy, and with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to identify and resolve cross border issues from the introduction of the levy and reforms to apprenticeship delivery in England.

The UK Government launched a [consultation](#) on the Levy in August (closing on the 5th September). The Scottish Government’s [response](#) highlights concerns that the Levy “undermines the ‘uniquely Scottish’ approach to modern apprentices” and “imposes an unnecessary financial burden on employers”. Launching its own [consultation](#), the Scottish Government is exploring options on the use of the Levy in Scotland, with the help of the recently formed [Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board](#) (SAAB).

Greig Liddell

SPICe Research

04 November 2016

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.

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Education and Skills Committee

10th Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), Wednesday, 9 November 2016

Budget Scrutiny 2016: survey analysis

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 2nd October to 1st 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).

Figure1: Respondents by type

	SQA		Education Scotland		SDS		SFC	
Teachers	462	71%	211	62%	20	20%		
College lecturers/academic staff/training provider	46	7%	38	11%	11	11%	24	30%
Parent	42	6%	31	9%	14	14%	n/a	
Pupil/student/trainee	51	8%	11	3%	12	12%	13	16%
Other	45	7%	49	14%	45	44%	46	55%
All responses	646		340		102		83	

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).

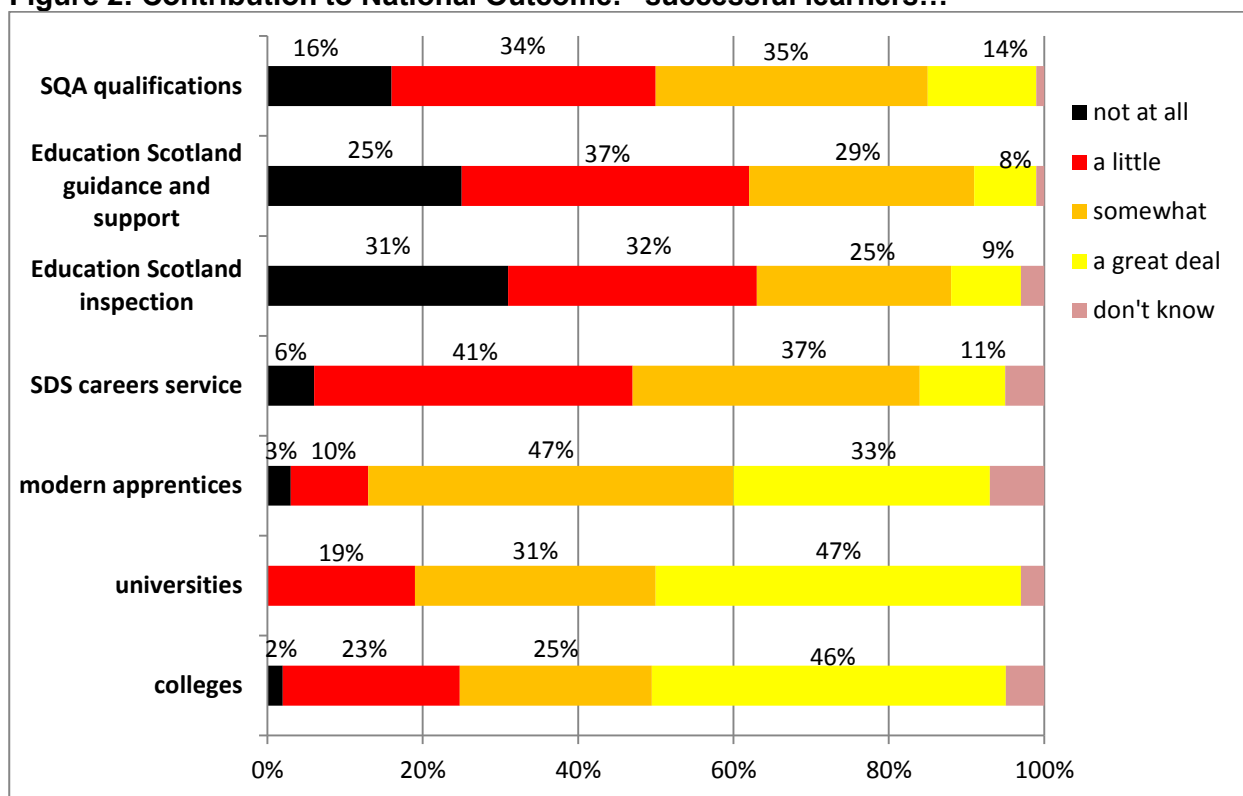
National Outcome: Our young people are more successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

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...”

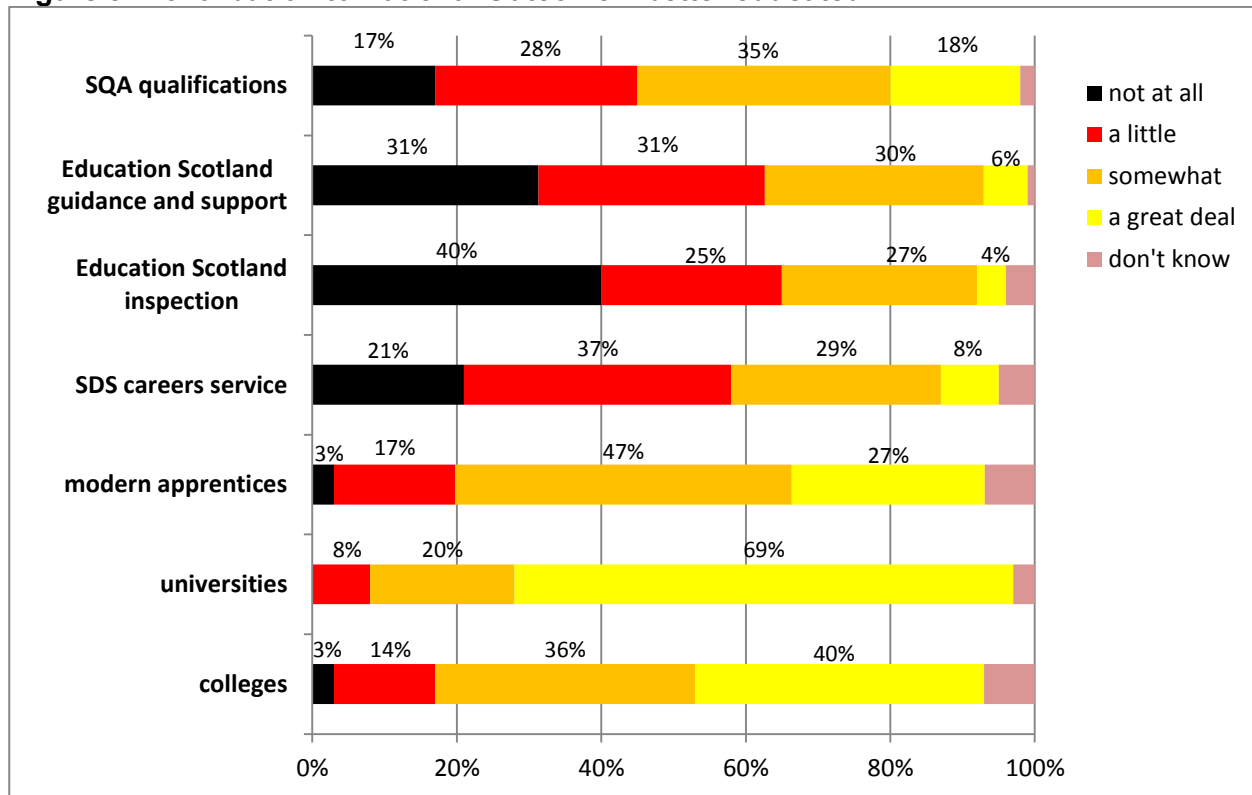
National Outcome: We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.

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.”

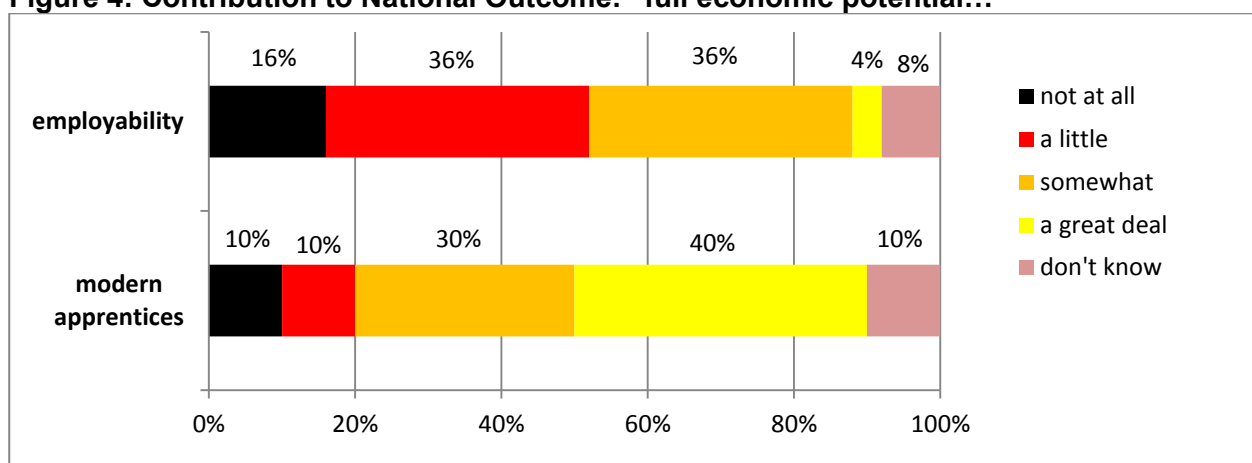
Figure 3: Contribution to National Outcome: “better educated...”



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”

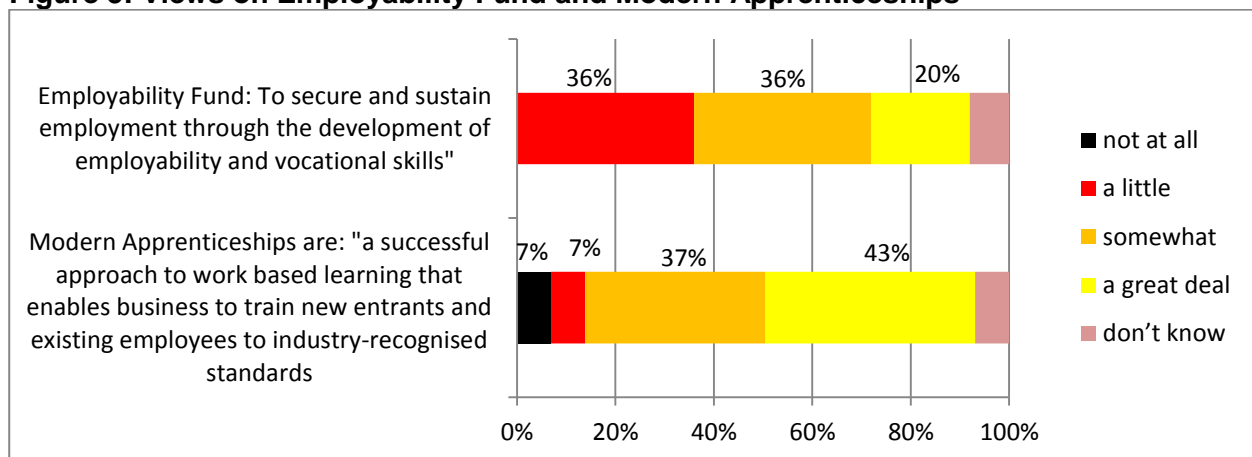
The 30 respondents were positive about this description with 43% (13 respondents) agreeing “a great deal.”

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



Universities and Colleges (Scottish Funding Council)

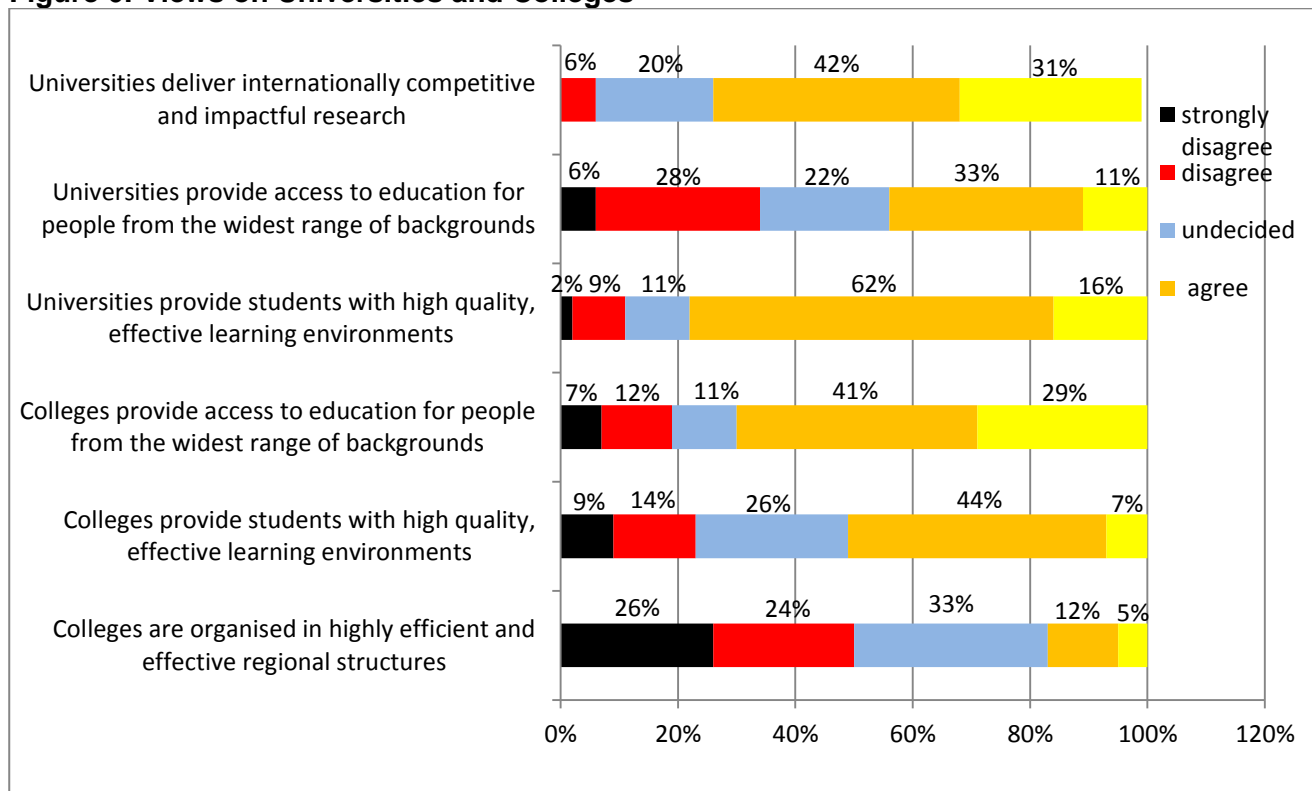
In addition to asking about National Outcomes (reported above), the survey asked about the degree to which respondents agreed to statements about universities and colleges. These statements were taken from the most recent [Ministerial letter of guidance to the SFC](#).

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



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, deputies 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.

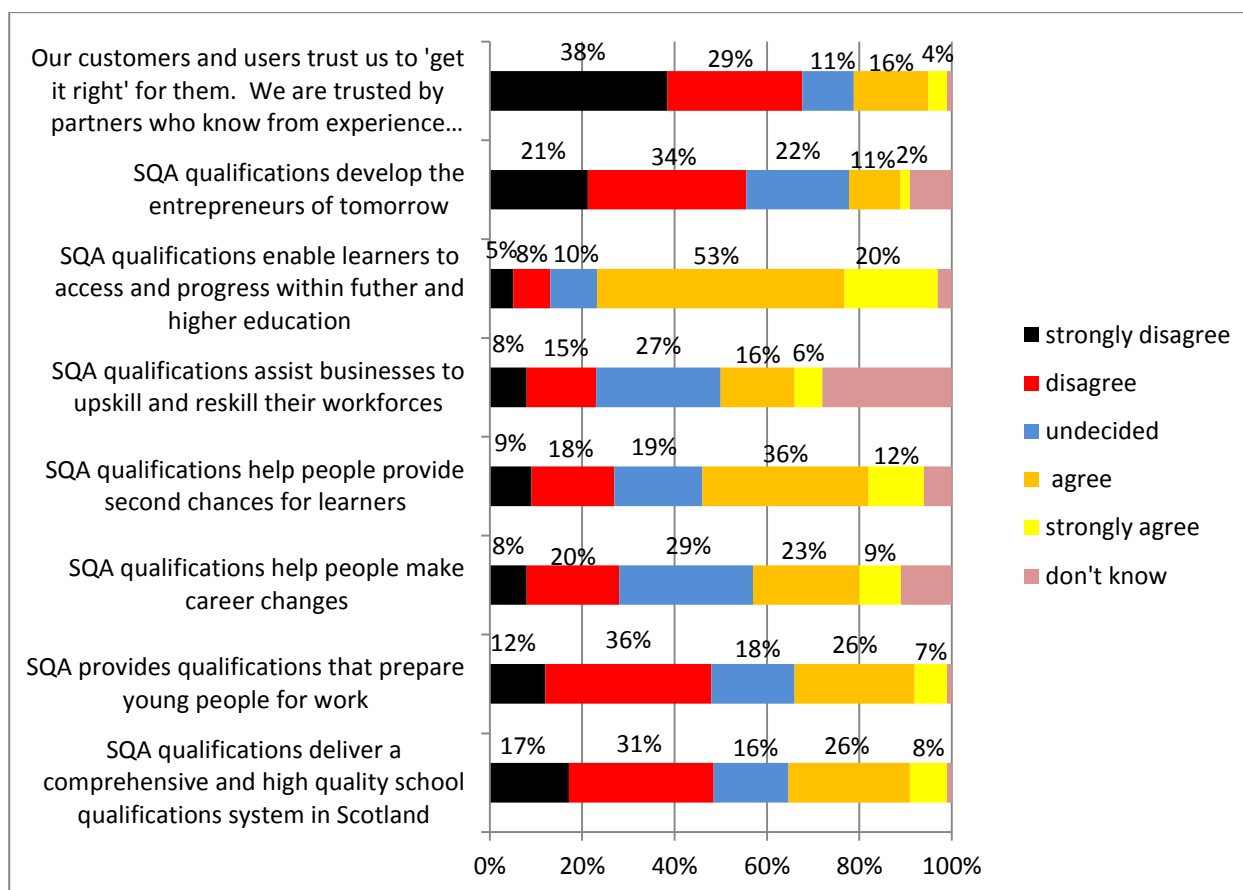
Nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that SQA qualifications enable learners to access and progress within further and higher education.

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 them¹.”

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

¹ 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.



Education Scotland

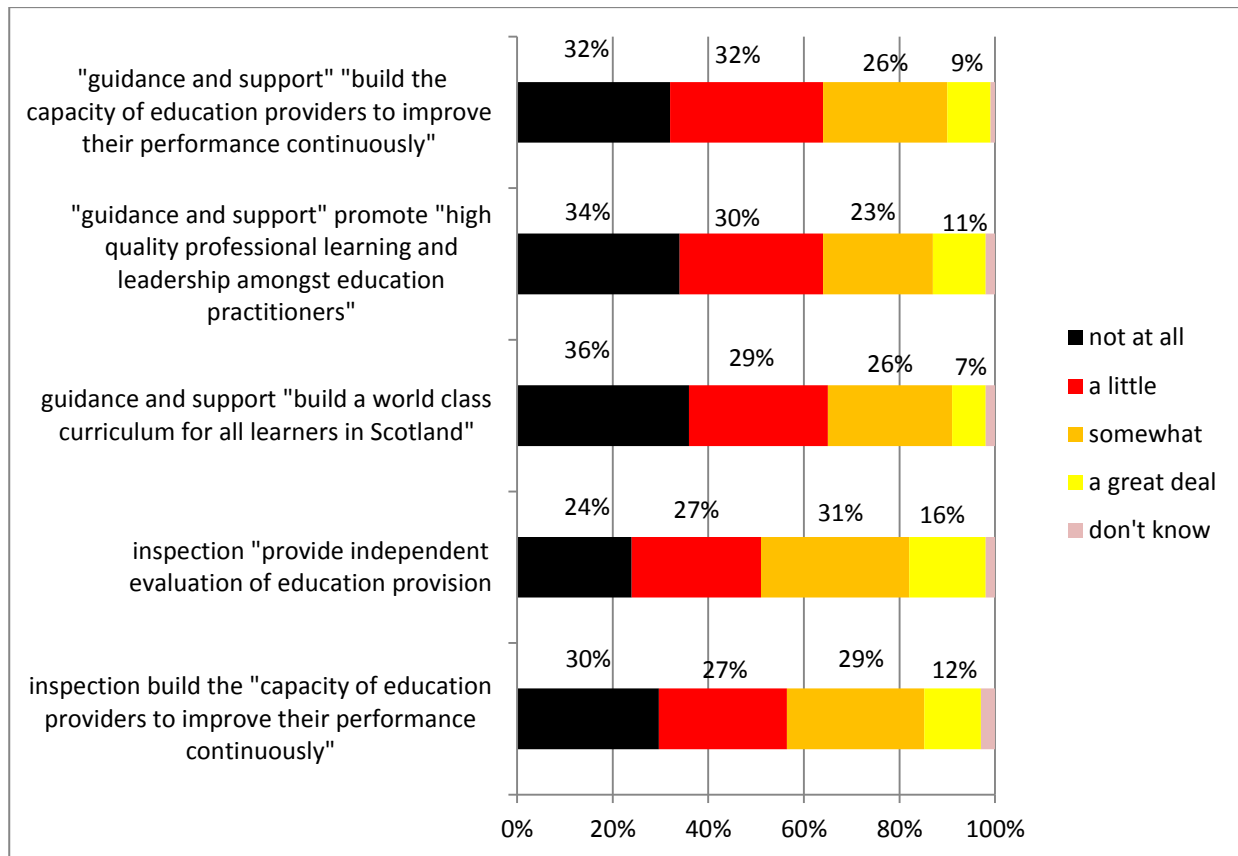
In addition to asking about National Outcomes (reported above), the survey asked about the degree to which respondents thought inspections, guidance and support contributed to four of [Education Scotland's six strategic goals](#).

There were 340 responses to this survey, 143 from classroom teachers and 68 from teachers in promoted posts, deputies 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



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 3rd November 2016