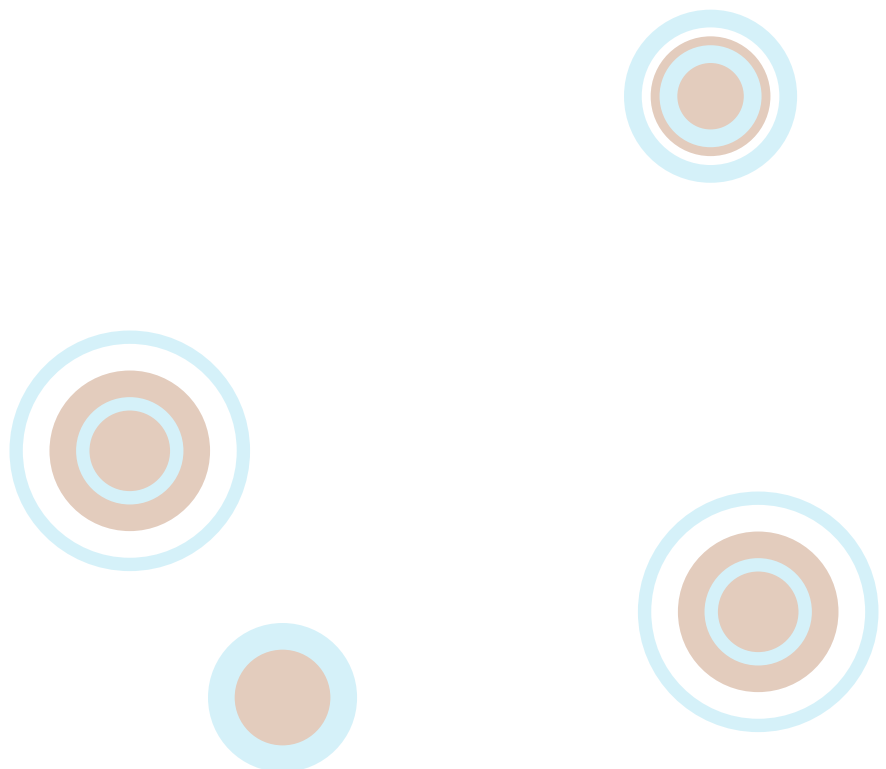


# **Skills Development Scotland Corporate Plan 'Putting Strengths to Work'**

**A summary by the Workforce Unit**



## Skills Development Scotland

### First Corporate Plan '*Putting Strengths to Work*'

Published January 2010

[Skills Development Scotland](#) is the national skills body created in 2008 from a merger of Careers Scotland, the skills and learning function of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish University for Industry.

Skills Development Scotland has published its first Corporate Plan, covering the three financial years from 2009/10 to 2011/12. Skills Development Scotland has over 1,400 staff and a budget of nearly £204 million for delivery of this plan in 2009/10. This article provides a brief summary of the Corporate Plan and highlights the major points of interest for voluntary sector social service organisations.

This plan will have to be implemented in the context of challenging economic and social conditions, with unemployment rising and recovery from the global recession likely to be gradual at best. Scotland also has to contend with, what is described as, 'the paradox of our current skills performance'. Scots are well qualified but this does not translate into anticipated levels of business productivity. Skills Development Scotland considers it vital to focus energies not just on skills development but on how skills are utilised in workplaces.

Hence, Skills Development Scotland's overall purpose is *to maximise its contribution to sustainable economic growth by unlocking the potential in Scotland's greatest asset – our people*. Its' vision is to be a catalyst for positive change in Scotland's skills performance.

The organisation's three goals are to:

- enable people to fulfil their potential
- make skills work for employers, and
- be a catalyst for positive change.

Under the first goal, key career management, employability and skills services of interest to the voluntary sector, include:

**Career Management Skills** - a continuing career information, advice and guidance service, delivered through the existing network of careers offices, aimed at supporting customers to develop career self-management skills. Billed as a transformational milestone, there will be a shift from delivering career guidance to people to equipping them with career management skills through a strengths-based approach to career information and guidance by Summer 2010.

**My Learning Space** - a web-based skills and learning information resource aimed at providing a route into self-management of lifelong learning. Ultimately this will provide a single contact point for all Skills Development

Scotland services, an Enhanced [National Learning Opportunities Database](#) (NLOD), an e-portfolio and record of learning opportunities, access to [My Learning Account](#) (this will ultimately provide a single entry point to funding across the skills and learning system), as well as a suite of tools and easier access to partners' web based resources.

**My Coach** – will complement **My Learning Space** and will provide live access to information, advice and guidance through a contact centre, live internet, a network of branded learning centres and a network of careers centres.

**My Learning Space** and **My Coach** will be delivered with key partners including [Scottish Funding Council](#), [Scottish Qualifications Authority](#), [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\)](#), [Job Centre Plus](#), local authorities, schools and colleges. As a transformational milestone, **My Learning Space** and **My Coach** are to be available by Summer 2010.

The future vision is that individuals will own their personal information on **My Learning Space** and decide if and how they will give access to Skills Development Scotland and their partners. Individuals will help Skills Development Scotland design future services based on evidence of their needs.

**Integrated Employment and Skills service (IES)** is a partnership project with Job Centre Plus aimed at ensuring the right mix of support on skills, vacancies and benefits is available for adults seeking work, where and when it is needed. This is to be available throughout Scotland by Summer 2010 (a roll out milestone). It will deliver a simplified approach to skills, benefits and employment services, Recognition of Prior Learning services, a refreshed [Training for Work](#) programme and various tools and information sharing with partners. Literacy and numeracy skills will continue to be supported through [The Big Plus](#). The intention is to work with community planning partners to widen the scope of **IES** to support [Workforce Plus](#) aspirations to create integrated local solutions to worklessness.

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (**PACE**) is a service within **IES** that provides help for individuals when an organisation is facing redundancy, including early access to Training for Work and Modern Apprenticeships.

There is an intention to review existing funding streams such as Individual Learning Accounts and national training programmes, including Modern Apprenticeships, Get Ready for Work and Training for Work to improve their effectiveness.

Under the second goal of making skills work for employers, **Skills Gateways** are to enable the creation of partnerships with Sector Skills Councils and Government Economic Strategy (GES) key sector employers. Unfortunately the social services sector is not a GES key sector. The **Scottish Employer Service (SES)** will be delivered by account management teams. By Summer

2010, provide a single contact point for employers seeking to improve skills utilisation by raising the uptake of skills and learning within the workforce.

Skills Development Scotland, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, will lead a research programme, commissioned by the [Skills Utilisation Leadership Group](#). The Third sector representative on this group is Martin Sime, CEO of Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. This research programme will examine how to optimise skills in the workplace, identify good practice and make recommendations for further action.

Under the final goal of being a catalyst for change, the intention is to work with partners to expand collective capabilities to solve the challenges of sustainable economic growth, the economic downturn and the skills conundrum. The intention is to mainstream the skills agenda in the work of all partners. Examples include; Skills Development Scotland support for the implementation of the [Curriculum for Excellence](#), including Curriculum 4 – Developing the Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work and a role within the forthcoming [Offender Learning Strategy](#), an employability programme for short-term offenders.

The intention is to generate new approaches to entrenched problems through the [Skills Committee](#) and the Skills Utilisation Leadership Group. This will include the joint generation of locally focussed economic and social solutions with community planning partners. Community planning partnerships could potentially offer access to voluntary sector organisations to influence this agenda.

An initial set of seven outcomes have been developed, which Skills Development Scotland intends to map onto the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework in order to demonstrate their contribution.

The outcomes are:

1. More people progress, achieve and sustain positive destinations.
2. Employers are more productive as a result of the skills and development of their employees.
3. More effective labour supply.
4. Equalities in learning and employment are improved across Scotland.
5. Skills Development Scotland is valued by, and has a strong reputation with, customers and key stakeholders.
6. Skills Development Scotland influences and stimulates a high performing skills system.
7. Skills Development Scotland achieves its goals and delivers its services in ways that minimise environmental impacts.

The vision is that, by 2012, Skills Development Scotland will have transformed itself and its services into an organisation unique in the scope and range of skills and learning services it offers to individuals and businesses. The challenge to partners is to join it in bringing this about and ensuring Scotland grasps the opportunity to make a clear transformation in how it develops skills and learning.