Call for Evidence: Future of the Skills System

12th March

*** DEADLINE: 27TH MAY ***

About the Inquiry

The Skills Commission, Policy Connect and Learning and Work Institute have just launched a new inquiry kindly grant funded by FELT that will investigate the FE provider base, employer needs, and the implementation of national policy at a local level. The inquiry will seek to understand how recent policy changes, such as the expansion of apprenticeships, the introduction of T Levels and the devolution of the Adult Education Budget join up at a local level. By exploring variations across regions the project aims to provide guidance on developing a strategic approach to the nation's skills policy and develop practical recommendations for the policy, commissioning and delivery of FE. The inquiry is sponsored by the Further Education Trust for Leadership and will be co-chaired by the Rt. Hon Sir John Hayes CBE MP (Conservative) and Barry Sheerman MP (Labour).

Definitions

Skills System

As a starting point, we understand a 'system' to signify a coordinated approach to skills policy making and implementation.

Skills Ecosystem

A skills ecosystem goes further, and requires a sustained two way interaction and collaboration within and between stakeholders who provide FE and skills and employers who demand skilled individuals.

About the Skills Commission

The Skills Commission is an independent body made up of leaders from the education sector, the business community, and political parties. The Commission examines FE and skills policy, holds evidence-based inquiries, and produces written reports with recommendations for policymakers.

Previous reports by the Skills Commission looked at women and engineering, apprenticeships and social mobility, and lifelong learning.

About Learning and Work Institute

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches.

Instructions for Submission of Evidence

Please use the questions below to frame your response to the call for evidence, but do not feel restricted by or compelled to answer every question. The Commission welcomes all types of evidence, from data, including analysis or internal studies your organisation has carried out, to personal or organisational views on these issues. Submissions of evidence will not be published or shared with third parties. We will be asking some sensitive questions in the call for evidence and the submissions will remain anonymous unless you give the commission the right to publish your name or organisation in the report. Please provide express permission in your evidence submission below. All copies of the submitted evidence and any contact details will be destroyed within a year of finishing the project.

The deadline for submission of evidence is Monday 27th May. Evidence can be submitted to maja.gustafsson@policyconnect.org.uk. For more information about the Commission or the inquiry visit http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/sc/ or contact Maja Gustafsson, Researcher for Education and Skills on 0207 202 8583.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Respondent Information	
Name	
Role	
Institution	

Permission	
Have you read and understood how we handle your data?	YES / NO
Do you give permission for the Commission to quote your submission?	YES / NO
Can we attribute the submission to the institution?	YES / NO
Can we attribute the submission to you personally?	YES / NO

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

1. What kind of skills system do we want?

To you, what are the key features of a successful skills ecosystem and what role should different organisations play? What principles should be taken into consideration? How should different organisations interact?

Consider the roles of key stakeholders such as learners and employers, ideal levels of geography for decision making, how to take into account a changing digital infrastructure etc. Where possible consider UK and international examples, including related policy fields (such as schools) where appropriate. Perhaps think broadly about points of contact for stakeholders such as colleges and employers– are the structures able to provide sufficient to deliver results and solutions?

What should be an overall vision for learning and skills success and why? What role do you see yourself and your organisation playing?

At a high level consider participation in learning, how the system can mitigate social and regional inequalities, alignment with local and national economic priorities, as well as individual outcomes such as employment, earnings and wellbeing.

2. To what extent is the current system effective?

Does England have a functioning provider base? Why or why not? How are you affected by this?

Considering the role of colleges versus independent providers, partnerships versus competition, large providers versus small, etc., and how this balance should vary by type of provision (for example, T Levels versus apprenticeships).

How appropriate is the current model of commissioning and procurement? What are the implications of this for yourself and your organisation?

Consider how individual procurements fit into a bigger picture, the role of procurement and new market entrants versus stability of institutions and longer-term funding, the range of funding approaches, whether this has implications for innovation, adjustment to digital transformation, competition and collaboration with other stakeholders and employers.

To what extent do institutional and local system priorities align to national government priorities such as those described in the Industrial Strategy, the ambition 'to create a country that works for everyone' and other national policy challenges?

Consider the collective intentions of local stakeholders working together – relationships between providers, LEPs, local government or regional authorities. To what extent is supporting the Industrial Strategy a priority and are skills a feature of local strategic discussions around issues such as housing, demographic changes etc.

Is the current system adjusting and adapting to future needs? Why or why not? What does this mean for you now? What will it mean for you in the future? How does it affect your long and short term planning?

Consider whether the current system allows opportunities for innovation, adaptation to digital transformation and a changing labour market, connections to employers and decision-makers at different levels of government, and the ability to mitigate geographical and socioeconomic disadvantage.

3. What do we need to do?

What needs to change to achieve an effective skills system? What steps can we take to achieve a better system and a vision you agree with?

Consider recommendations for policy makers, different levels of government, commissioners, providers and stakeholders.