



# Asset Skills

SECTOR QUALIFICATIONS STRATEGY

## ASSET SKILLS SECTOR QUALIFICATIONS STRATEGY

### CONTENTS

Section	Page
<b>1: Executive Summary</b>	2
<b>Note on Data Sources Informing the Strategy</b>	3
<b>2: Scope of the SQS</b>	4
<b>3: Sector Working Environment</b>	13
<b>4: Current Qualifications and other Learning Provision</b>	19
<b>5. Other Sector uses of Qualifications</b>	28
<b>6. How the SSC will help Realise the Future</b>	30
<b>Annexes</b>	36

## 1: Executive Summary

The Asset Skills sector covers four industries in the UK; property, housing, cleaning services and facilities management. Some 681,500 people are employed in the sector the majority in England followed by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Parking and land charges have recently joined the footprint. The sector is diverse but can be characterised by strong competition, relatively low profit margins and persistent recruitment shortages. While growth is predicted in property, housing and facilities management, there is expected to be a drop in the numbers employed in cleaning.

Learners are drawn from a wide spectrum including young people in compulsory education to those following vocationally related qualifications in Further and Higher Education as well as those following programmes leading to professional body qualifications. Much learning takes place during short training courses many of which are unaccredited. Whilst a large percentage of the workforce in housing, property and facilities management has qualifications, a large number of people in elementary level jobs in cleaning do not. Adult literacy, numeracy, language and employability skills are of particular importance in this latter group.

The major challenges facing Asset Skills in relation to standards and qualifications centre on:

- the large number of small companies in the footprint who have little commitment to or experience of qualifications
- an ageing workforce with a lack of recruitment of young people into the footprint due to no clear career pathways
- a changing skill mix as job roles are broadened and redefined
- gaps in existing qualifications provision to cover certain job roles
- the need for recognised qualifications structure covering all levels of competence
- limited commitment from employers to engage in the assessment of competence
- a low skill base in certain parts of the footprint on which to build
- limited uptake and completion of apprenticeships
- an employer wish to see qualifications match job roles more precisely

Asset Skills will respond to the changing working environment and the strategic priorities for skill development across the 4 Home Nations by:

- extending our provision to cover all levels and occupational groupings
- grouping National Occupational Standards into suites to create fit for purpose qualifications which can reflect changing work roles
- ensuring that Asset Skills standards conform to national framework requirements across the four Home Nations
- creating qualification frameworks which enhance career progression
- supporting enhanced modes of training delivery to permit greater freedom of access, location and mode of learning to better suit learners and take full account of the work environment
- working with Awarding Bodies to ensure non-bureaucratic methods of assessment
- engaging employers more effectively in the standards and qualification process
- achieving greater integration and synergy between different types of qualifications across the footprint
- engaging with higher education to ensure employer needs are met

### **Note on Data Sources informing the Strategy**

The data sources used to develop this draft Strategy are identified in Annex 5. Individual sources are referenced in the body of the document where relevant. It must be recognised that several data sources, both quantitative and qualitative, are often used in relation to many statements within the Strategy and it would be cumbersome to identify on every occasion.

## **2: Scope of the SQS**

### **2.1. Overall Scope of the SQS**

#### **The Asset Skills Sector**

Asset Skills represents four industries in the UK; property, housing, cleaning services and facilities management. In addition, parking and land charges have recently been added to the Asset Skills footprint which covers private, public, voluntary sector and not-for-profit organisations.

It employs approximately 681,500 personnel in the UK: 55% in property and housing; 38% in cleaning; and 7% in facilities management. 87% of the workforce are employed in England, 8% in Scotland, 4% in Wales and 1% in Northern Ireland. The Asset Skills footprint experienced steady growth from 1998 to 2004, concentrated in property and housing (51%) and facilities management (42%). However, the number of workplaces in cleaning services fell by 10% during the same period. The sector is characterised by strong competition, but suffers from relatively low profit margins and persistent recruitment shortages.

#### **Occupations covered**

The Asset Skills footprint is diverse covering a wide range of occupations, from highly qualified professional personnel such as surveyors to elementary level occupations such as cleaning operatives.

The sectors within the Asset Skills footprint include the following occupations:

#### **Property**

This involves the sale and letting of residential and commercial property. Occupations include: the auction of goods and chattels; energy assessment; home inspection; the management of property including block management; building and property surveying; valuation of property and goods and chattels; architecture; and town planning.

#### **Housing**

Activities include: the management and letting of residential properties in both public and private sectors; the management and provision of supported housing, maintenance and caretaking, and supporting tenants and communities.

#### **Cleaning**

The sector covers all forms of contract cleaning including; building interiors; transport vehicles; food premises; window and facade cleaning; highways and land; and specialist cleaning such as carpets and upholstery.

## Facilities Management

This involves the management of services which support the core activities of an organisation in terms of both “hard” FM services such as property and estates management, building maintenance, energy management and environmental protection, and “soft” services such as cleaning, security, reception, and customer care.

## Parking and Local Land Charges

Asset Skills has recently taken over responsibility for the parking sector both on street and off street, including traffic enforcement. Local land charges covers the function of conducting land searches in England and Wales.

## National Differences

Some differences occur within the sectors across the four nations, in particular within some areas of property and housing in Scotland and Northern Ireland where both the law and the structure of provision varies considerably to that in England and Wales.

In **Scotland** there are 54,0520 people employed which is 8% of the total workforce in the Asset Skills footprint. 90% of cleaning jobs in Scotland are at elementary level with relatively few job holders having a qualification. Scotland also has more part-time working and a larger proportion of women in the workforce. The productivity of the Asset Skills workforce in Scotland (as measured by GVA) is considerably lower than the average for Scotland as a whole. Asset Skills jobs in Scotland are set to decline by about 3% by 2014 mainly in industrial cleaning.

In **Wales** there are 27,260 people employed which is 4% of the total workforce in the Asset Skills footprint. 78% of cleaning jobs in Wales are at elementary level which is higher than the average for Wales as a whole. 85% of those in the cleaning sector in elementary job roles have no qualification. Significant growth is expected within the property sector but there will be a substantial reduction in jobs in the cleaning sector. The productivity of the Asset Skills workforce in Wales (as measured by GVA) is lower than for Wales as a whole.

In **Northern Ireland** there are 6,817 people employed which is 1% of the total workforce in the Asset Skills footprint. Some 90% of cleaning jobs in Northern Ireland are at elementary level with more full time working and a larger proportion of men than in the UK workforce as a whole. 47% of those in the cleaning industry have no qualifications and these are the best figures for the whole of the UK. The productivity of the Asset Skills workforce in Northern Ireland (as measured by GVA) is considerably lower than the UK average in the cleaning sector, but well above the UK average in property and housing.

In **England** there are 592,911 people employed which is 87% of the total workforce in the Asset Skills footprint. There is a heavy concentration (53% of the total workforce) in London, the South East, the East of England and the North West. Some 82% of cleaning jobs in England are at elementary level which is lower than the rest of the UK wide Asset Skills workforce. The productivity of the Asset Skills workforce in England (as measured by GVA) is marginally higher than the UK average. There is expected to be a 1% increase in future employment in England across the Asset Skills footprint but this figure masks an expected loss of jobs of -2% in the cleaning sector and a growth in jobs of +3.5% in the property sector.

The following tables provide details of the occupations within each part of the sector and the relative size of the workforce in each occupation from the available data sources.

**Table 1: Occupations within the housing sector**

Housing: Occupations	Principal	Number in job role	Adults qualified to less than level 2	
			Number	Percent
Property, Housing and Land managers (soc 1231)		107,461	14,560	14

**Table 2: Occupations within the property sector**

Property: Occupations	Principal	Number in job role	Adults qualified to less than level 2	
			Number	Percent
Town Planners		23,640	554	2
Chartered Surveyors		52,337	1,645	3
Architects and town planning technicians		18,129	500	3
Estimators, valuers and assessors		55,498	5,966	11
Estate Agents / Auctioneers		28,937	4,941	17
Property negotiators		110,221	27,320	25
Domestic Energy Assessor		4,000*		
Non Domestic Energy Assessor		2,500?? needed by 01/10/08		

Source: Annual Population Survey 2006

parking: principal occupations	Number in job role
Park Attendant	60,000

**Table 3: Occupations within the cleaning sector**

Cleaning : Occupations	Principal	Number in job role	Adults qualified to less than level 2	
			Number	Percent
Cleaners		553,458	336,696	61
Refuse and salvage occupations		33,138	17,708	53
Window cleaners		30,500	18,471	61
Road sweepers		15,613	17,838	69
Elementary cleaners		12,633	7,703	61

Source: Annual Population Survey 2006

**Table 4: Occupations within the Facilities Management sector**

Cleaning : Principal Occupations	Number in job role	Adults qualified to less than level 2	
		Number	Percent
Caretakers	72,657	26,994	37
Pest control officers	2,691	942	35

Source: Annual Population Survey 2006

### Population of learners

Learners within the Asset Skills footprint include anyone working towards qualifying for employment, or participating in training in any of the sectors covered by Asset Skills including those in further and higher education. There are also some learners who fall within the 14-19 age group in compulsory education.

There is a substantial variation in the uptake of training (and the methods of recording such training) within the Asset Skills footprint in each of the four Home Nations and between different sectors. This means that directly comparable figures are difficult to obtain. Variation in learning uptake is summarised below by sector industry and each UK Nation using three main categories of training: Higher Education (HE); Further Education (FE) and Work Based Learning (WBL).

The following information is drawn largely from the Sector Skills Agreement Data relating primarily to 2004-2005. The conclusions drawn from this data are still broadly applicable.

#### *Property*

:

- There were 14,632 learners in 2004-5 on HE courses in either housing or property. 82% of them were in England, 8% in Scotland, 6% in Northern Ireland and 4% in Wales.
- There were around 1,200 UK enrolments in the property sector within FE training in 2004-5 in the United Kingdom as a whole, 1086 of them in England.
- In the work-based learning sector there were 971 enrolments in England comprising: 885 in estate agency, 84 in surveying general practice and only 2 in property management in 2004-5. In Wales there were 94 enrolments for property comprising: 47 in residential property and 47 in surveying support in 2004-5. In Scotland there has been a general decline in learners in 2004-5 within the Asset Skills footprint alongside a decline in the numbers of training courses. No data is available for WBL in the Asset Skills footprint in Northern Ireland for 2004-5.

#### *Housing:*

- In 2004-5 there were 1800 learners on HE courses in housing in England across 10 HEIs. In Scotland in 2004-5 there were 238 learners comprising: 118 for surveying and 120 for planning across 3 HEIs. In Northern Ireland there were 148 learners in 2 HEIs in 2004-5.
- The Housing industry had the second highest number of Asset Skills learners within FE (after Cleaning Services) in the UK, with approximately 1,600 enrolments in 2004-5.

- Housing accounted for 2% of WBL enrolments in England (35 enrolments) and 3% (3 enrolments) in Wales in 2004-5.

#### *Cleaning Services:*

- Cleaning Services training accounts for a high proportion of Asset Skills FE course uptake, with 21,254 learners in England in 2004-5. There were an additional 548 enrolments in Cleaning NVQs in Wales, and 160 in Cleaning SVQs in Scotland in the same period. The data for Ireland detailed just 4 enrolments in the same period.
- Cleaning Services accounted for some 1002 learners in WBL in England in 2004-5 with 16 learners in Wales. Data for Scotland and Northern Ireland allow very little insight into the learner population.

#### *Facilities Management*

:

- In 2004-5 there were 7 HE providers of facilities management programmes in England with over 200 learners between them. It is estimated that there are almost 1000 previous graduates from these institutions.
- Data detailing the learning population in Facilities Management is extremely limited. Just 0.4% (107 people) of Asset Skills FE training took place in the Facilities Management industry in 2004-5, all in England.
- No enrolments were recorded for Work Based learning in England in 2004-5, and no reliable data was available for Scotland or Northern Ireland for the same period.

### **Range of provision**

The main formal qualification types used within the Asset Skills sector are:

- National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (NVQs/SVQs)
- Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs)
- Higher Education qualifications (Foundation Degree (England only); Degree; Post-graduate qualifications and in Scotland Higher National Certificates and Diplomas)
- Non-accredited qualifications, which are often awarded through professional bodies or trade associations.
- Pre-vocational provision including the 14-19 Diplomas, Welsh Baccalaureate and the Job Skill Training programme and Skill Build+ in Northern Ireland.
- Vocational GCSE
- Scottish ordinary and higher awards
- Foundation and Advanced Apprenticeships in England and Wales
- Traineeships and Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland

In addition to formal qualifications, there is a wide range of other provision including:

- Continuing professional development courses
- Non-accredited training by employers and private training providers
- Informal and semi-structured work-based learning including induction training
- Job skills programmes

The only information currently available in relation to this other provision comes from the National Employers Skills Survey of 2007 published in March 2008. Table 12 Training activity and expenditure by Sector indicates that:

- 71% of our employers train at all
- 61% of the current workforce undergo some form of training
- 7 days training per capita is provided
- 12% of the training is via an FE college
- The total expenditure on training is £2,003m
- The spend per employee is £2,500 which compare favourably with other sector (5<sup>th</sup> highest)

The following table provides a profile of the qualifications held by the workforce by each sub-sector:

		Level of highest qualification held						Total	
		NVQ Level 4 and above	NVQ Level 3	Trade Apprenticeships	NVQ Level 2	Below NVQ Level 2	Other qualifications	No qualifications	
Occupation (main job)	1231 Property, housing and land managers	52951	14716	5047	12610	9726	7577	4834	107461
	2431 Architects	38278	1930	0	1070	0	2822	0	44100
	2432 Town planners	20463	584	0	1502	554	537	0	23640
	2434 Chartrd surveyors (not qntity surv)	39490	5326	1507	1151	921	3218	724	52337
	3121 Archt technols & town plan technics	10586	3295	382	969	0	2397	500	18129
	3531 Estimators, valuers and assessors	24217	11929	4411	7986	4459	989	1507	55498
	3544 Estate agents, auctioneers	9207	6268	548	5799	3309	2174	1632	28937
	6232 Caretakers	4951	10151	9159	6956	9737	14446	17257	72657
	6292 Pest control officers	499	0	0	587	454	663	488	2691
	7129 Sales related occupations n.e.c.	28583	14856	5901	25211	17776	8350	9544	110221
	9231 Window cleaners	490	2578	1298	4413	9687	3250	8784	30500
	9232 Road sweepers	0	1636	415	530	3182	2225	7625	15613
	9233 Cleaners, domestics	15879	33412	16359	72193	107373	78919	229323	553458

9235 Refuse and salvage occupations	1462	1003	4041	3506	8729	5418	8979	33138
9239 Elementary cleaning occupns nec.	0	1094	427	0	1983	3409	5720	12633
Total	247056	108778	49495	144483	177890	136394	296917	1161013

Annexes 1-4 provide full details of qualification provision as outlined above.

### Overlaps with other Sectors

Asset Skills has overlaps with a number of other Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) including:

*ConstructionSkills* in the areas of surveying, architecture, town planning, the sale of residential property (particularly new build), building maintenance and property management

*SummitSkills* in the areas of “hard” facilities management such as heating and ventilation maintenance and energy assessment

*LANTRA* in the area of pest control

*Skills for Health* in the area of cleaning and infection control

*Skills for Care* in the areas of cleaning, infection control and supporting people

*GoSkills* in the area of the cleaning of passenger vehicles

*People 1<sup>st</sup>* in the area if cleaning staff progressing into hospitality job roles and hospitality staff moving into facilities management

There is also overlap with a large number of other SSCs as they will have facilities management functions within their sectors

Joint work on surveying, valuation and property management has been completed with Construction Skills and with SummitSkills on energy assessment.

### 2: 2 Priorities within the overall scope

The priorities shown below are identified against the backdrop of the following key issues which are expanded upon in Section 3 of this document:

- an high rate of labour turnover requiring a heavy emphasis on literacy, numeracy and employability skills within the cleaning industry.
- an estimated 17% of the Asset Skills workforce has no qualifications.
- elementary occupations account for about 34% of all employment in the sector. 42% of elementary occupation personnel have no qualifications largely within the cleaning sector

- the sector is dominated by small companies employing between 1-10 people
- with an ageing workforce there is a need to attract young people into the sector and provide clear career pathways for them
- the skill mix within the sector is widening with more hybrid work roles

### *Strategic Priorities for Qualifications Reform*

The strategic priorities for qualifications reform in the Asset Skills sector are to:

- develop more attractive qualifications for elementary occupations within relevant parts of the sector
- develop HE and FE qualifications so that they are more closely aligned with employers' skills needs and career pathways
- make the Asset Skills sector more attractive as a career option through promoting qualifications linked to training
- address identified skills shortages and gaps and respond to industry needs for new skills mixes.
- gain increased industry/employer recognition of qualifications
- identify and address the issues behind low take-up and low completion rates for qualifications
- identify and strengthen links with other related sectors
- develop flexible arrangements for recognising achievement
- ensure a full range of qualifications including 14-19 provision and apprenticeships/traineeships which will provide suitable provision for all age ranges

### **Responding to Strategic priorities in the Home Nations**

Within the four nations a number of government policies and strategies impact upon education, training and development which have been considered in developing this strategy.

Annex 6 provides an overview of the key strategies and policies. These have a direct impact in how Asset Skills will develop its suite of standards and qualifications.

### **England**

Asset Skills will continue to promote adult literacy and numeracy achievement alongside employability skills to ensure entry into employments and the development of the skills base at elementary job role level. We will also continue to develop and promote access to the 14-19 Diplomas in Construction and the Built Environment and Public services. We will re-develop existing standards and qualifications to meet the

increased demands of full Level 2 qualifications. We will redevelop and relaunch our apprenticeship programmes in order to meet the enhanced role and requirements of the apprenticeship programme under the National Apprenticeship service. We will contribute to the development of Foundation Learning Tier provision which will enable young people and others to re-engage with the educational system. We will ensure that Asset Skills standards and qualifications reflect changes in legislation in relation to housing, energy and planning.

### **Scotland**

Asset Skills will continue to promote skills development through its qualifications in order to raise the productivity level of the workforce, in particular those in elementary job roles in the cleaning sector within Scotland where many have no qualifications. We will carry out the key roles envisaged for SSCs within the various strategies in terms of providing high quality LMI, close partnership working with key skills development agencies and providing employer feedback. Asset Skills will continue to support the Adult Literacies in Scotland in order to raise the skills levels in elementary job roles within our footprint. We will also ensure that standards and qualifications reflect the different legislation and working practices in key areas of our footprint including housing and property.

### **Wales**

Asset Skills will continue to support the development of Basic Skills within the elementary job workforce in Wales many of whom have no qualifications within our sector. We will also be supporting the introduction of the Principal Learning from the 14-19 Diplomas into the Welsh Baccalaureate. The Wales Spatial Plan will also have an influence on the introduction of the new standards and qualifications for housing as well as future Foundation Degree provision. The new skills and employment strategy (still in consultation) will influence our contribution to skills delivery in Wales. In particular, there is a clear role given to SSCs in terms of strengthening our employers' voice in the skills and qualifications system. We will continue to work closely with the Welsh Assembly Government in relation to increasing the number of apprenticeships and encouraging adult learners back into the job market.

### **Northern Ireland**

Despite the fact that Northern Ireland has the best figures for employees in our sector with a qualification in the elementary job sector, much remains to be done to develop the skill base within the cleaning sector. We will continue to support the development of Essential Skills within our workforce as a crucial first step to progression on the skills ladder. This will include the encouragement of employability skills to overcome barriers to gaining elementary jobs within the cleaning industry. We will also ensure that we contribute to the vocationally related 14-19 curriculum in order to enhance the image of the sector with young people in Northern Ireland. We will also ensure that our standards and qualifications in housing reflect and support the Northern Ireland housing strategy.

### 3. Sector Working Environment

#### 3:1 Special Features or Characteristics

The main factors which impact on qualifications and assessment are as follows:

##### *General*

- the sector is overwhelmingly dominated (93%) by small companies employing between 1-10 people which makes work-based assessment of competence difficult as well as limiting the uptake of training and qualifications generally
- work often takes place in varied locations with little opportunity for direct line management and hence assessment of competence
- commitment to and experience of qualifications varies greatly across the sector and an estimated 17% of the Asset Skills workforce have no qualifications, particularly those in elementary occupations
- there is a predominantly ageing workforce which tends to discourage job holders from seeking recognition through qualifications
- there is no strong culture of long-term investment in staff and their training partly due to the market operating environment but also due to a lack of clear career and qualification pathways in sectors such as facilities management, property and cleaning
- with the potential exception of estate agency, there are no licence to practice or work permit requirements in the sector which has operated under a relaxed “laissez faire” system which provides few levers for engagement with qualifications
- the skills mix across the sector is widening with a growing emphasis on the generic skills relating to customer service, communication, team working and management and leadership which need to be better reflected in the content of qualifications and their assessment
- there are few clear career pathways and structured skills “escalators” to motivate job holders to plan their development linked to the achievement of qualifications

##### *Cleaning*

- 82% of job roles are at elementary level with over 84% of the workforce with a Level 2 qualification or below indicating a culture where qualifications are of low priority
- companies are operating in highly competitive markets with low profit margins and short term contracts which militates against release for training and access to qualifications
- the duration and timing of courses often require time away from the workplace which is problematic for the above reasons
- there are increasing numbers of migrant workers who have English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) needs before they can access technical qualifications
- there is a strong Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALLaN) skills need which is acting as a serious barrier to progression to Full Level 2 (FL2) qualifications
- the turnover of staff per year can be as high as 70% with an average length of stay in the industry as low as three months which makes registration and completion of formal qualifications difficult
- induction and training programmes tend to be brief and limited to narrow skills acquisition rather than the broader skills contained within qualifications
- work shift patterns vary as can location of work which are major disruptions to skills development and assessment
- there is a move towards more full-time day working which requires a broader mix of customer care skills among front-line cleaning staff as well as hybrid

skills eg street cleansing with planting and community safety within local environmental management

- there is a perceived negative image of the cleaning sector as low skilled, poorly paid and with limited career prospects
- training is usually short, focused on immediate needs and not linked to long term skill development and is largely unaccredited
- many staff are nervous about training because of poor literacy and numeracy
- there is a need for a strong emphasis on employability skills for those entering elementary job roles either within existing qualifications or as discrete awards

### *Property*

- there is a general public perception that estate agency has a limited structured skill base and lacks the formal qualifications needed to protect the public
- there is little tradition of developing internal staff within estate agency with many entering the sector later in life and from another industry which affects their willingness to seek formal recognition through qualifications
- negotiators and sales staff in estate agency operate autonomously and are peripatetic with little opportunity for structured management support, training and access to assessment in the workplace
- there is increasing emphasis on ICT skills across all job roles and this is the single most important perceived skills need in the sector alongside the soft communication and customer service skills
- negotiators are frequently promoted up to management posts but lack the necessary management and leadership skills to lead teams
- the legislative impact on the sector has increased including Home Inspection Packs and energy certification which is requiring a new skills mix and new qualifications linked to professional recognition and accreditation schemes. Similarly the proposal to introduce Property Enquiry Certificates (PECs) in Scotland will also affect the skill mix
- there is a need to keep up with constantly changing legislation
- employers find it difficult to release staff for external training. E-learning and distance learning is helping to overcome this barrier
- there is a concern about the relevance of some chartered surveying training in higher education qualifications
- there is a high level of consumer dissatisfaction with estate agents.
- qualifications and law in relation to estate agency is different in Scotland to the rest of the UK
- it is increasingly difficult to recruit town planners and attract young people into the sector
- employers are taking graduates who have had experience from elsewhere into surveying roles which creates the need for top up/bridging training and qualifications
- the property sector is highly susceptible to market forces and surveying and estate agencies will shed staff quickly and easily and not look to career development

### *Housing*

- the move from Local Authority based social housing to Housing Associations has changed the skill mix needed within the housing sector with a broader range of generic management skills needed including strategic, financial and team management

- the sector is increasingly driven by the need for higher quality performance at competitive costs
- there has been a culture change towards a customer service approach to the delivery of housing services to tenants which needs to be reflected in qualifications
- housing services are increasingly seen in the broader context of regeneration and sustainable communities which is demanding a different skill mix among those in tenant participation, community engagement and supporting individuals. In Scotland supporting people within the housing context is linked to social service provision with specific qualifications in this area
- there is a structured working environment within the housing sector with a stronger tradition of HR structures and training which encourages the recognition of achievement and access to assessment and qualifications
- housing is highly reactive to government policy which means that there are changes in the skills requirements across the 4 Home Nations
- housing managers have to take on increasingly specialist roles which needs to be reflected in the qualifications framework
- there is a growing tendency for larger housing organisations to develop their own bespoke training programmes to meet business needs
- there is a poor image of the sector with little understanding of the functions performed
- there is a high proportion of employees in managerial and associated professional and technical occupations
- there are recruitment difficulties particularly for housing managers and housing development staff

### *Facilities Management*

- there is a lack of a clear definition of the role of facilities management which makes the creation of career pathways and qualification structures difficult linked to a lack of “professional status”
- the management of discrete services (catering, security, building maintenance etc) is giving way to a broader set of generic management skills linked to customer service and relationship management which changes the grouping of work roles significantly
- there is no tradition of direct recruitment into FM with many entrants coming in from other sectors or from specialist services which results in the need for discrete modules of learning and assessment in order to ensure new staff have the necessary skills
- sustainability in its broadest definition is taking on increased significance within the sector and has not been adequately reflected in the required skills mix
- the sector tends to have a more structured approach to training and career development which has led to relatively low levels of turnover and a more positive approach to qualifications and progression
- fewer but larger companies are being formed to meet the growing demand for services which will improve training and assessment opportunities in the future
- the growth of intelligent buildings linked to the design of energy efficient systems will increase the demand for enhanced IT skills
- FM is a relatively immature industry undergoing a period of rapid expansion which requires a firm career structure

- some HE providers believe FM courses are not sustainable given low levels of enrolment

There are variations in the workplace environment across the four Home Nations:

- there has been a large reduction in the number of cleaning workplaces in Scotland and Wales
- there has been a large increase in the number of facilities management and property and housing workplaces in Scotland compared with the rest of the UK
- the numbers employed in property and housing services, facilities management and cleaning are very small in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland in comparison with England

### **3.2: Future Trends**

The main predicted changes in the workforce and to the working environment which impact on qualifications and assessment are as follows:

#### **Generic Trends**

##### *Growth and Decline*

The number of workplaces is set to grow although not evenly across the footprint with employment anticipated to increase by 13% within the footprint between 2004 and 2014. Taking this growth together with the replacement demand (new entrants needed to replace those leaving), it is estimated that 500,000 new entrants will be required. The biggest growth to date has been in property and housing (51% between 1998 and 2004) and facilities management (42% during the same period). There has been a 10% reduction in workplaces however in cleaning between 1998 and 2004. This should be reflected in the relative numbers of candidates for qualifications (although fewer workplaces does not necessarily mean fewer candidates). The sector and its employment prospects are favourable to a growth in those seeking recognition of their skills through formal qualifications. It is also worth noting that the property sector in particular is highly susceptible to changes in market forces which militates against long-term commitment to skills development and recognition through qualifications.

##### *Increased Legislation and Policy Intervention*

There have been considerable changes in relation to environmental protection, sustainability and energy conservation will require both a new mix of skills but also new types of qualifications which can act as guarantors of competence, such as the energy and home inspectors. There are also skill implications arising from the new legislation on climate change, housing and regeneration and planning reform which will require a flexible qualifications structure to ensure new skill mixes can be easily accommodated.

##### *Demographics*

44% of the Asset Skills workforce is aged 45 and over and only 10% are aged between 16-24. This has major implications for the creation of appropriate entry provision for young people to the sector both within the Foundation Tier of education and within the 14-19 Diploma provision in England and within 14-19 provision in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, the "supply" of young people will

start to decline with the result that a larger proportion of the upskilling will have to come from those already in the workforce or from migrant labour. This will require flexible qualifications structures which can be used to identify skill needs, provide career pathways and progression routes. This also has implications for how qualifications are funded and will require funding bodies to respond to this increased flexibility.

### *Skills Mix*

There is a consistent message from all the skills needs analysis in each part of the footprint that the future skills needs will consist of a mixture of “hard” technical skills and “soft” skills such as communication, inter-personal and customer service skills. Communication, team participation, employability and customer service competences must be merged with a more varied set of technical skills in new combinations to reflect this change.

### *Competition and Efficiency*

As competition grows there will be a need for more efficient and multi-skilled working practices to ensure “added value” and quality of service which will act increasingly as the key differentiators between companies. This will mean new hybrid work roles bringing together skill areas with a broader focus in such areas as local environmental management, integrated facilities management and community support. The components of qualifications must be able to accommodate such hybrid roles as well as integrate the soft skills components.

## **Sectoral Trends**

### *Facilities Management*

- the sector is showing strong growth which is likely to continue
- increasing recruitment problems as a result of the FM industry’s ageing workforce.
- an increase in workforce mobility, which will reduce the need for individual sites to employ their own FM personnel.
- increasing demand for more technical workforce skills.

### *Cleaning*

- trend towards daytime cleaning requiring a broader mix of customer service skills
- need for continued and increasing provision of in-house management / supervisory training linked to external qualifications
- there is a predicted and ongoing increase in the number of migrant workers employed in cleaning leading to a major ESOL need

### *Property*

- there will be an increase in the number of people employed in the letting of their own property
- there will be increased workforce mobility, primarily as a result of ICT.
- there will be an increasing demand for graduates in the workforce
- there remains the possibility that estate agents may fall within a licensing system as proof of competence and probity

- a new European draft standard for estate agents is under consultation and there are likely to be far reaching changes to the management of residential property arising from the forthcoming Carsberg Report

### *Housing*

- there will be an ongoing recruitment demand mainly due to the need to replace an ageing workforce
- there will be demand for more specialised qualifications to reflect changing and broadening job roles

## **4: Current Qualifications and Learning Provision**

### **4:1 Main Types of Qualifications**

Within the National Qualifications Framework, applicable for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and in Scotland the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, there are a range of types of qualifications including National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQs) and Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) across levels 1-5 covering the main areas of the Asset Skills footprint in housing, property, property management, cleaning, building maintenance, surveying, town planning, valuation and pest control. Annex 1 provides further details.

Outside the National Qualifications Framework there are a range of awards delivered by professional bodies and institutes in the areas of local environmental management, town planning, surveying, facilities management and estate agency. Annexes 2 and 3 provide further details

There are a range of apprenticeship frameworks in housing, cleaning and property which operate across the four Home Nations as well as a newly developed integrated Foundation Degree Framework in housing, property, facilities management and cleaning in England and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas in Scotland .

There are a range of first and higher degrees providing progression within the Asset Skills footprint covering a diverse range of provision including community and social studies, building and property, environmental studies, architecture, housing, social policy, facilities management town planning and urban design. Annex 4 provides further details.

In addition there are a number of skills-based qualifications not accredited on the national framework such as the Cleaning Operators Proficiency Certificate Scheme from the British Institute of Cleaning Science.

### **Qualifications Provision**

Major points of note concerning the range of qualifications provision for each industry are as follows:

#### *Property*

Levels 4 and 5 provision are adequate to good across the UK, particularly so in Scotland where a wide spectrum of courses are provided. This is also the case in Northern Ireland where there are two main HE providers but who only offer full-time provision. Provision in Wales is centred in Cardiff and the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education. Provision varies greatly in England with limited provision at Levels 4 and 5 in the North East. There is very little provision at Level 2 generally and Level 3 provision is limited in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and in the East of England.

#### *Housing*

The Housing sub-sector is well catered for at all levels with Levels 4 and 5 being particularly strong across the UK. In Scotland there are 12 providers in further and higher education, with one major provider in Northern Ireland and a number of providers in Wales. However, lower level provision (S/NVQ levels 1 and 2) was limited in Northern Ireland and Scotland but better in Wales where there is a range of training companies and colleges providing programmes at Levels 2, 3 and 4. Provision in England varied greatly by region with good provision at level 4 and 5 but slightly less provision in areas such as Yorkshire and Humberside and the East of England.

### *Cleaning*

- The Cleaning Services sector is very well catered for by NVQs/SVQs at Levels 1 and 2 offered through FE across the four Home Nations. Scotland, for example has ten colleges offering provision at Levels 1 and 2 on a part-time and customised basis and similar picture emerges in Northern Ireland where there are eight providers. However, Level 3 provision is weak and there are no qualifications at Levels 4 and 5, except for a Foundation Degree in Environmental Cleaning Management in the East Midlands.

### *Facilities Management*

Provision is extremely variable across the UK. There is no provision at Levels 1 and 2 given the nature of the industry. There is limited provision at Level 3 in Scotland with most courses being at Levels 4 and 5 through three major HE centres. There is limited provision even at Levels 4 and 5 in Northern Ireland but a reasonable mix of provision in Wales. Provision is particularly weak in FE, with relatively little or no provision below Level 4. Qualitative accounts suggest that there is a good range of facilities management qualifications available through HE accredited through professional bodies and/or trade organisations. Private provision plays a large role in the facilities management industry, and evidence suggests that in-house employers training is common. The issue of provision below Level 4 is being addressed through the creation of a suite of NOS and the creation of a Level 3 N/SVQ.

## **4:2 Current Volumes**

### **Accredited qualifications**

#### *Cleaning*

#### NVQs/SVQs

No current NVQ exists at Level 3 but take up of the Levels 1 and 2 Cleaning and Support Services NVQs/SVQs is as follows:-

<b>Registrations</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Level 1	12254	6656	3237
Level 2	5815	4013	9931
<b>Completions</b>			
Level 1	10396	7046	3202
Level 2	4357	2972	4482

These NVQs/SVQs are Levels 1 and 2 Cleaning and support services covering building interiors, food premises, highways and land, passenger transport vehicles and caretaking (C+G, HAB and FDQ)

VRQs

Level	Registrations	Completions
Level 2	8	20
Level 3	15	0

These VRQs are the Certificate in Cleaning Science and the Diploma in Cleaning Services Supervision (C+G)

*Housing*

NVQs/SVQs

These figures are for 2007. The completions are only from March 2007 to November 2007

Level	Registrations	Completions
Level 2	87	51
Level 3	86	80
Level 4	12	11

These NVQs/SVQs are in housing at Levels 2,3 and 4 (C+G)

VRQs

Level	Registrations	Completions
Level 2	353	294
Level 3	570	360
Level 4	378	203

These VRQs are housing certificates and awards at Levels 2 and 3; a Level 3 in Tenant Participation and Neighbourhood Renewal; housing certificates and diploma at Level 4; and a Level 4 Housing Access qualification (CIOH)

*Property*

NVQs/SVQs

These figures are for 2007. The completions are only from March 2007 to November 2007

Level	Registrations	Completions
Level 2	202	54
Level 3	174	74
Level 4	10	2

These NVQs/SVQs are in the Sale of Residential Property at Levels 2 and 3; Building Maintenance and Estates Services at Levels 3 and 4 (C+G, OCR and ABBE)

VRQs

Level	Registrations	Completions
Level 3	3071	1663
Level 4	4	0

These VRQs are a Level 3 Diploma in Domestic Energy Assessment/Home Inspection and a Level 4 Diploma for Home Inspectors (C+G) and a Level 2 Certificate in the Sale of Residential Property (NAEA)

### Apprenticeships

The figures below are for 2005/6 and 2006/7 and are for England only

	2005/6 starts	2005/6 completions	2006/7 starts	2006/7 completions
Cleaning Services	19	1	15	3
Cleaning Services Advanced	2	0	0	0
Property Services	143	76	126	69
Property Services Advanced	56	45	111	41
Housing	11	3	2	2
Housing Advanced	0	0	2	0

In Wales 9 Apprenticeships have been certificated in the last 12 months for the Sale of Residential Property

In Scotland there are 3 Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks in Cleaning Management, Housing Management and Residential Estate Agency. Returns from Highlands and Islands Enterprise for the period April 2006 – March 2007 indicates that there have been no registrations for any of these programmes.

### Foundation Degrees (England and Wales only)

Annex 4 provides details of the full range of Foundation Degree provision within the Asset Skills footprint. Provision varies considerably across England and Wales. In Wales for example Foundation Degrees are offered in Estate Agency, Housing Management, Facilities Management, Community Regeneration, Home Inspection and Surveying across 3 institutions.

### Professional Bodies

In addition there are a number of qualifications outside the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) offered by professional bodies including the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIOH), the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM), the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA – now NFOPP) and the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc).

*British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM)*

The information provided by BIFM details the number of candidates who have completed Part 1 examinations (which involves 3 modules) and Part 2 (which involves 4 modules and a portfolio of professional experience). This does not correlate exactly with the number of candidates, as many candidates only sit one of two of the modules.

	Part 1 2006	Part 2 2006	Part 1 2007	Part 2 2007
BIFM	341	111	418	104

*British Institute of Cleaning Services (BICSSs)*

The figures for the cleaning qualifications for 2007 are as follows:

Title	Level	Number of candidates
Cleaning Operators Proficiency Certificate (COPC)	1	12000
Cleaning Operators Proficiency Certificate (COPC)	2	4800
Cleaning Operators Proficiency Certificate (COPC)	3	1200
Prelim COPC		3000
Food Premises Cleaning Certificate		1320
Supervisors		150

*Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV)*

Title	Level	Type	Registrations	Certifications
<b>2006</b>				
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	3	NVQ	64	4
Local Taxation	3	NVQ	14	1
<b>2007</b>				
Certificate in Local Taxation and Benefits	3	NVQ		20
Housing and Council Tax Benefits	3	NVQ	57	47
Local Taxation	3	NVQ	20	6

*National Federation of Property Professionals (NFOPP – amalgamation of NAEA, ARLA, NAVA and ICBA)*

	01 Jan - 31 Dec 2006	01 Jan - 30 Nov 2007
3 Award Domestic Energy Assessment	0	1479
3 Award Real Property Auctioneering	0	0
3 Award Residential Letting and Property Management	250	322

3 Award Sale of Residential Property	845	1605
3 Award Sale of Residential Property (Scotland)	0	7
3 Award Commercial Property Agency	0	3
5 Diploma Commercial Property Agency	0	0
5 Diploma Residential Estate Agency	0	2
5 Diploma Residential Letting and Management	0	1

The Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) had a new qualification accredited in October 2007 – Level 2 Housing Concierge Duties and the first cohorts are expected to be registered from January 2008.

### 4.3 Match to Employers Needs

#### Current use of qualifications

This section considers the qualifications and other learning provision currently used/valued and accepted by employers for pre-entry and entry to the sector at all levels and for the existing workforce at all levels, including professional development at higher levels

#### *Cleaning*

Commitment to training in the cleaning industry is quite low and the majority of training is undertaken on-the-job and in the workplace. This has a knock on effect on qualifications linked to training. Whilst the NVQs/SVQs appear to be more readily accepted by the industry, accreditation is generally only important when it is linked to selling a service or is a contract requirement. The BICSc Certificate of Professional Competency is considered to be an effective way of providing initial training for staff through the provision of short, sharp skills training and in general, employers feel that this training meets their needs. There is demand for a bespoke Level 3 supervisory qualification to meet the needs of team leaders which is being developed by BICSc.

In terms of professional development, management training is not being widely undertaken within the cleaning industry and there is a level of uncertainty about what supervisory qualifications are currently available.

#### *Housing*

Employers in this sector have well-developed HR procedures and strategies and are highly committed to training and development. Organisations tend to place more emphasis on developing existing staff, rather than attracting higher qualified external recruits. There is a general preference to flexible part-time provision which involves less time away from the workplace e.g. day release. The lack of qualified assessors and trainers to deliver NVQs/SVQs and VRQs has resulted in employers developing their own in-house provision.

Housing organisations no longer look automatically to the FE sector for provision. Where FE/HE is not meeting the needs of the organisation, they are generally quick to organise appropriate provision elsewhere. Indeed a growing trend in the industry is for larger housing organisations to develop their own bespoke training programmes to meet business needs, and match nationally available recognised qualifications. This is an emerging pattern across the industry with many organisations becoming

accredited centres with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIOH) so that they can deliver qualifications. This indicates a clear mismatch between existing training provision and the skills mix needed in housing.

### *Property*

The scale and variation of activity within property services brings with it a range of different approaches to the use of qualifications.

In chartered surveying there has been a recent trend towards the recruitment of people with masters degrees in surveying rather than graduates. Some firms no longer take on graduates with only bachelors degrees, others specifically recruit 'non-cognate' graduates who are then supported through a masters conversion programme. Additionally RICS has sought to raise standards within the profession by raising the entry qualification level for university programmes.

In estate agency, employers are looking for a good level of general education linked to good inter-personal and customer service skills rather than specific qualifications in estate agency. The National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA now NFOPP) technical awards are popular amongst employers. Training is generally seen as a cost, rather than a means of improving the business and there is a tendency to use external recruitment rather than training to fill skills gaps.

### *Facilities Management*

Provision in Facilities Management is extremely variable across the UK. Perhaps due to this a considerable amount of training is being undertaken in-house, which is increasingly being accredited by external bodies. There are no qualifications or national occupational standards (NOS) in facilities management and most provision consists of VRQs delivered by the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM).

## **Gaps between training available and what employers want/need**

### *Cleaning*

Across the industry there is a need for the national occupational standards to take into account changing circumstances brought about by new products, practices and legislation. Additionally there is a requirement to modify and/or update elements of existing NVQs/SVQ in order to ensure that qualifications keep up with pace of change in the industry. Contractors are unlikely to have the variety of work that the individual needs in order to complete the NVQ/SVQ and topical areas such as 'infection control' need to be built into the framework. There is also a recognised gap in supervisory/management and integrated local environmental management skills development and recognition.

In terms of mode of delivery employers want 'just in time' training that meets their immediate needs on a contract. New competence mix areas are developing as hybrid job roles, particularly in the area of local environmental management and environmental protection.

### *Housing*

Although CIOH believes that the sector does not lack suitable qualifications, the existing provision needs to be made more accessible for organisations. There is an increase in demand for more flexible and bespoke provision and part-time study and a reduction in demand for full-time courses.

There is a need for new provision in areas where there is a cross over between housing and other disciplines and demand for more specialist units around a core housing management curriculum and community support and sustainable communities. Housing organisations are increasingly working together to develop tailored training programmes, or forming relationships with training providers to develop bespoke training and for more flexible provision.

### *Property*

There is a need to provide alternatives to the traditional graduate intake route for surveying as people are often put off by the length of time it takes to achieve a qualification. Additionally, some firms question the relevance of university provision to the actual work undertaken in the sector and feel the practical aspects of job roles are often not adequately taught at university. Suggestions to improve the situation include increasing the take up of NVQs/SVQs and Foundation Degrees as a means of broadening entry routes as well as using NOS to inform HE provision. Part-time estate agency staff also need intensive training to get up to speed as well as a pathway to assist “unqualified” property managers achieve full chartered surveyor status. There is a need to incorporate enhanced skills in the areas of urban design and spatial planning in HE provision.

### *Facilities Management*

There is a need for a Level 3 NVQ/SVQ for those performing first line management roles in order to provide a clear route into the sector and progression within it. This will involve capturing a complex mix of core customer service skills as well as the specialist hard and soft FM skill areas and supplier management.

## **Changes to Qualifications**

### *Cleaning*

There is a need for a clear and recognised qualifications structure across the industry. A key issue is that the NVQ/SVQ is purely an assessment process and presumes that the cleaning operative has received training, whereas BICSc qualifications are about practical training. Work has been done to map the two types of qualification which should lead to more effective skill development and recognition. There is also a need to explore the skill mix required at Level 3 and above, in particular the balance of specialist technical skills and generic supervisory management and customer service. There is a need to ensure that qualifications provide clear progression routes within the sector.

### *Housing*

There is demand for specialist skills and qualifications, particularly at a higher level for regeneration and development and support staff. Foundation Degree provision

also needs to reflect the increasing need for generic and financial management skills linked to enhanced customer service skills required when working with individual tenants and communities as a whole. Given the variety of job roles within housing there is a need to group NOS into clear pathways in order to assist career progression.

### *Property*

There is a need to increase the take up of NVQs/SVQs and Foundation Degrees as a means of broadening the entry routes into the profession. Additionally there is a need to review qualifications at levels 3, 4 and 5 to encourage younger students into the sector and introduce a more vocational curriculum at 14-19 including 'built environment' courses. There is also a perceived need for a bridging qualification from estate agency to surveying.

### *Facilities Management*

The development of a qualifications framework would ensure consistent standards and provide a more effective basis for assessing the quality of provision. There is a need to establish a platform for delivery of standards through educational routes and review the content and modes of delivery of FE and HE provision to create a better fit with the sector.

## 5. Other Sector Uses of Qualifications

Qualifications within the Asset Skills sectors are used for a variety of reasons:

- small businesses often find qualifications useful for keeping up with legislation and helping with the running of a small business
- medium sized businesses use them to improve the demonstrable skill level and proficiency of staff when bidding for contracts
- large businesses use qualifications as a means of developing labour productivity, improving customer services and reducing employee turnover.
- qualifications are essential requirements to gain recognition by the chartered institutes within the sector

### Consumer Confidence and Protection

All of the Asset Skills industry sectors in each nation use qualifications to keep up to date with new government legislation. This ensures that in each occupation, activities are completed to current standards and in line with the law.

#### *Cleaning*

- some specific cleaning contracts require employees to have a certain level of qualification to complete the job, e.g. proof they can operate certain machinery.
- some contracts stipulate that contractors must demonstrate a commitment to training of staff as a condition of winning the contract and qualifications are a good indicator of such commitment
- literacy, language and numeracy skills are essential to ensure that staff are operating safely especially when working on clients' premises
- new standards in infection control have been developed jointly with Skills for Health in order to help protect patients
- local environmental management standards protect the public by ensuring clean and safe public spaces

#### *Facilities Management*

- HE courses are being used in order to ensure there is full, working knowledge of recent regulations of best practice within the industry.
- the development of specific FM business skills enhances the professionalism of staff and enables companies to provide enhanced customer service
- standards and qualifications help ensure compliance with health, safety and environmental requirements in order to protect the public and those working in the built environment

#### *Housing*

- qualifications are often used to provide consistency across the marketplace
- standards ensure that regulatory requirements are met
- standards help the drive for improved customer service values across all aspects of the housing service being provided

- standards specifically developed to support vulnerable and disengaged people contribute to the quality of life and the safety of individuals and communities

*Property*

- qualifications assist in standardising skills and practices in order to ensure that legislation is adhered to and service provision is the same throughout the UK
- specific qualifications (such as those developed upon the introduction of the Home Inspection Packs (HIPs) ensure that consumers understand and are aware of new legislation, how it affects them as a customer and being able to receive sound advice from the sector
- energy assessor qualifications provide opportunities for individuals to become accredited energy assessors and help ensure compliance with new EU directives in this field
- the enabling legislation to license the estate agency profession is already there and there have been regular suggestions that the industry could be obliged to adopt a licence to practice. A regulatory framework would provide a key platform for NOS based qualifications attesting to individual competence

It is also important to remember that the chartered institutes make use of qualifications as entry requirements to various levels of membership. They regulate practice and hence directly contribute to public confidence in the competence of certain professional roles within the footprint.

## **Section 6 : How Asset Skills will help realise the future**

### **6.1. Vision of future qualifications**

The Asset Skills vision for future qualifications takes into account the following:

- we are completing a major “root and branch” review of existing NOS in cleaning, housing and property based on new occupational and functional maps which take account of changes in the working environment and lessons learned from past delivery of qualifications. This new provision, therefore, should be fit for purpose and reflect employer needs.
- we are developing new NOS for facilities management ab initio and this work fully takes into account the needs of employers and changes in the work environment in this sector.
- we are taking over responsibility for land charge and parking NOS which have been recently developed with the full participation of employers
- we have been heavily involved in the review and development of 14-19 Diplomas in Construction and the Built Environment and Public Services as well as Foundation Tier provision in England.

Therefore, our requirement for radical change of existing NOS content (ie the new provision) is not extensive as much of this has already been achieved.

In order to create a comprehensive, reflexive and credible qualifications structure for the future we must achieve the following nine objectives:

- extend our provision to cover all levels and occupational groupings
- group NOS into suites to create fit for purpose qualifications which can reflect changing work roles
- ensure that Asset Skills standards conform to national framework requirements across the four Home Nations
- create qualification frameworks which enhance career progression
- enhance modes of delivery to permit greater freedom of access, location and mode of learning to better suit learners and take full account of the work environment
- work with Awarding Bodies to ensure non-bureaucratic methods of assessment
- engage employers more effectively in the standards and qualification process
- achieve greater integration and synergy between different types of qualifications across the footprint
- engage with higher education to ensure employer needs are met

This translates into the following specific areas of development:

*Extend our provision to cover all levels and occupational groupings*

- there needs to be a complete suite of NOS and N/SVQs for Facilities Management at levels 3 and 4 as well as promotion and dissemination of the Foundation Degree and HNC/HND provision which articulates with HE provision and professional qualifications including those of the BIFM
- existing Apprenticeship Frameworks for housing, cleaning and property need to be reviewed and the revised NOS and NVQs/SVQs incorporated

- there is a need to develop Apprenticeship Frameworks for surveying, facilities management and parking which conform to national requirements in each of the 4 Home Nations
- Foundation Degrees need to be developed for surveying and spatial data (land surveying) which conform to the requirements in England, Wales and Northern Ireland linked to discussions on coverage of these areas within Scottish provision
- a new entry level suite of qualifications need to be imported from within the Foundation Learning Tier to cover Skills for Life, employability, work preparation and social and life skills as well as adoption and promotion of the Foundation Diploma in Construction and the Built environment in England and equivalent structures in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- an integrated functional map for parking functions needs to be developed and gaps in existing NOS and qualification provision identified
- land charge standards and qualifications need to be promoted across the sector

*Group NOS into suites to create fit for purpose qualifications which can reflect changing work roles*

- customer service, IT, management and employability skills need to be incorporated into revised suites of standards across all qualifications
- existing NOS need to be rationalised wherever possible to maximise opportunities for recognition and transfer and to remove complex pathway and option structures
- new hybrid skill mixes are needed to reflect multi-purpose local environmental management job roles including cleaning, environmental protection, security, planting and land maintenance to align with the government's reform agenda in this area
- combination of existing NOS are needed to reflect the growing integration of cleaning and facilities management services with a broader built environment support services focus
- discrete components of NOS need to be provided which provide modular access to recognition linked to training provision, including employer-based programmes

*Ensure that Asset Skills standards conform to national framework requirements across the four Home Nations*

- there is a need to ensure that Asset Skills provision meets the requirements of national frameworks including the NQF and QCF in England, the SCQF in Scotland, the CQFW in Wales and the NICATS in Northern Ireland
- there is a need to amend and migrate appropriate NOS based qualification provision into the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in England and assign credit values to enhance access to smaller components of competence linked to modular training provision. In Scotland NOS based qualifications will migrate into the SCQF where these qualifications will be offered in Scotland
- we must review existing provision to ensure that it meets the expanded requirements of the Full Level 2

*Create qualification frameworks that enhance career progression*

- there is a need to review existing qualifications maps to provide clearer points of entry and progression through the levels linked to typical career development
- we must develop suites of standards which are shared across sectors or can be given credit recognition across a broader range of qualifications offered by Awarding Bodies
- there is a need to make greater use of functional and standards mapping linked to job roles and career pathways to ensure that standards provide the basis for skills development linked to progression
- we must create smaller sets of standards which allow incremental growth of skills in realistic ways which reflect the reality of the work environment

*Enhance modes of delivery to permit greater freedom of access, location and mode of learning to better suit learners and take full account of the work environment*

- there is a need to build upon best practice among existing providers and extrapolate improved models of delivery
- we need to map smaller “bundles” of NOS outcomes to training provision to encourage credit accumulation and recognition of competence
- there is a need to expand the pool of people in the workplace able to accredit competence as and when achieved
- we must work with training providers to develop smaller and discrete training modules capable of delivery in the workplace in relatively short periods of time and/or capable of being delivered by supervisors/in-company staff

*Work with Awarding Bodies to ensure non-bureaucratic methods of assessment*

- we need to work closely with Awarding Bodies to encourage an holistic approach to the assessment of NOS-based units
- there is a need to review existing Assessment Strategies in order to permit enhanced workplace assessment and a wider mix of acceptable evidence
- the role of e-assessment needs to be reviewed in relation to relevant qualifications to increase assessment opportunity and identify where underpinning knowledge and understanding can best be assessed
- assessment pathways need to be developed which allow candidates to demonstrate achievement of generic standards through specific job-related “evidence routes”

*Engage employers more effectively in the standards and qualification process*

- we must engage employers more effectively in the standards development process including enhance consultation and skills review
- there is a need to promote NOS and qualifications to employers and encourage their participation in the delivery process
- there is a need to support SMEs and micros to take up standards and qualifications through mapping of functions to NOS and brokering access to assessment
- a recognition and credit system for in-house company learning and development and non-formal learning should be developed which maps into NOS and hence permits accreditation within qualifications. The SCQF already supports this and in Scotland it is expected that the SCQF will underpin this work

- standards and qualifications should form the base of a refreshed skills passport initiative linked to the recognition of company in-house training

*Achieve greater integration and synergy between different types of qualifications across the footprint*

- we need to map the full range of existing provision within the footprint in terms of NVQs/SVQs and VRQs at all levels of provision in order to avoid duplication and provide coherence for employers and candidates
- there is a need to avoid duplication of different types of qualifications for the same client group by supporting the most appropriate existing provision
- we must ensure that non-accredited qualifications can be brought into the various national frameworks through mapping to NOS and supporting changes to the assessment process. This is particularly important in high volume qualifications such as BICSc provision. The SCQF already has the ability to include employer/industry developed qualifications (although credit rating and inclusion in the SCQF is not the same as accreditation)

*Engage with higher education to ensure employer needs are met*

- there is a need to ensure that our Foundation Degree and other higher level provision articulates with HE first degree and vocational certificate/diploma provision across the 4 Home Nations
- we must broker greater dialogue between employers and HEIs to ensure that provision reflects the needs of employment. This is particularly true in key areas such as surveying, housing and property
- there is a need to work closely with partners to ensure that the Higher Diplomas in Construction and the Built Environment and Public Services provide effective access to HE provision in England and Wales

## **6:2 Past and Future Dialogues**

Many aspects of the SQS derive directly from the research and consultation conducted as part of the Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) process with employers, Home Nation agencies and Departments, funders, Awarding Bodies and learning providers.

In addition, Asset Skills has recently redeveloped its occupational and functional maps in all four of its occupational areas as well as developing revised NOS and qualifications. This has involved extensive consultation across the 4 Home Nations with employers, professional bodies and trade associations and the Awarding Bodies. The development of this strategy has relied heavily on this activity and is largely derived from this extensive consultation.

The Asset Skills industry Boards have been fully engaged in both these activities and the employer engagement team have consulted widely with employers, funders and the RDAs on the implementation Action Plans arising from the SSA.

We intend to consult widely on the draft strategy with the regulatory authorities and funding agencies in each of the 4 Home Nations in the early part of 2008.

A further round of consultation will also take place with the Asset Skills national Boards in each Home Nation and the industry Boards as we move towards a final SQS.

### **6:3 Practical Help**

Asset Skills will work closely with employers, awarding bodies, funding agencies and the regulatory bodies in each of the 4 Home Nations in order to deliver the programme of work outlined above. The Action Plans which will be developed from the final SQS will provide fuller details but we summarise below how we will support the delivery of each strand of work.

This support will include:

- promoting new qualifications such as those within facilities management
- developing promotional materials for apprenticeships and foundation degrees
- expanding provision of qualifications for those in the 14-19 age range
- developing and promoting qualifications maps to provide clearer points of entry and progression through the levels linked to typical career development
- provide organisational needs analysis support materials to employers which map standards to job functions
- promoting the use of sets of standards which allow incremental growth of skills which reflect the reality of the work environment
- developing new mixes of standards which better reflect changing work roles
- promoting modular access to recognition linked to employer-based training provision
- migrating appropriate NOS provision into the Credit and Qualifications Framework (CQF) and promoting modular achievement of components
- working with Awarding Bodies to ensure existing provision to ensure that it meets the expanded requirements of the Full Level 2
- identifying and disseminating best practice in terms of flexible delivery of training
- working with training providers to develop smaller and discrete training modules capable of delivery in the workplace in relatively short periods of time and/or capable of being delivered by supervisors/in-company staff
- supporting awarding bodies to develop integrated assessment of a number of NOS-based units to decrease the burden of assessment
- identifying and promoting forms of e-assessment to assess underpinning knowledge and understanding and develop support materials
- developing and making use of new forms of consultation with employers including interactive on-line questionnaires and telephone interviews
- developing promotional materials aimed at employers which link NOS to job functions to encourage their participation in the delivery process
- providing a brokerage service to SME and micro employers which maps skills needs to funded training and support peripatetic assessment
- developing and promoting a recognition and credit system for in-house company learning and development and non-formal learning
- developing methods of ensuring that non-accredited qualifications can be brought into the national framework through mapping to NOS and supporting changes to the assessment process
- brokering greater dialogue between employers and HEIs to ensure that provision reflects the needs of employment
- promoting the acceptance of the Higher Diplomas in Construction and the Built Environment and Public Services within HE

#### **6:4 Future Evolution of the SQS**

The SQS will be kept under constant review through a number of mechanisms:

- internal progress meetings by the standards and qualifications team
- senior management team reviews
- reporting to and evaluation by the Cleaning, Facilities Management, Housing and Property Asset Skills Boards
- periodic reporting to and review by the Asset Skills Board

The SQS will be integrated into the Asset Skills review and re-development of its Sector Skills Agreement both in terms of being a means of implementing key aspects of the SSA and also providing feedback on its effectiveness and impact.

The SQS will be completed by March 2008.

Presentation to National Asset Skills Boards and Sector Board in the summer of 2008

Detailed Action Plans to be developed from the SQS April 2008.

Implementation of Action Plans June 2008 – December 2009.

The SQS will be reviewed alongside the Sector Skills Agreement on a six monthly basis and modifications made to both the SQS and the detailed Action Plans accordingly.

**Annex 1 : NQF sector provision.**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Title</b>
HL	4	Certificate in Housing Certificate in Housing Maintenance Management Diploma in Home Inspection Diploma in Housing
HL	5	Diploma in Residential Estate Agency Diploma in Residential Letting and Management Higher National Certificate in Facilities Management Higher National Certificate in Housing Higher National Diploma in Facilities Management
NVQ	1	Cleaning and Support Services Cleaning and Support Services (Food Premises)
NVQ	2	Cleaning and Support Services Cleaning and Support Services (Highway and Land) Housing Sale of Residential Property
NVQ	3	Building Maintenance and Estate Services Housing Property and Caretaking Provision Sale of Residential Property Surveying Support Town Planning Support
NVQ	4	Building Maintenance and Estate Services Housing Property Management Town Planning Valuation
SVQ	1	Cleaning and Support Services
SVQ	2	Cleaning and Support Services Cleaning and Support Services (Building Interiors) Cleaning and Support Services (Caretaking) Cleaning and Support Services (Carpets) Cleaning and Support Services (Food Premises) Cleaning and Support Services (Highways and Land) Cleaning and Support Services (Passenger Transport Services)
SVQ	3	Surveying Support Town Planning Town Planning Support (Administration) Town Planning Support (Enforcement) Town Planning Support (Technical)
SVQ	4	Property Management Valuation
VRQ	1	Certificate in Cleaning Science
VRQ	2	Certificate in Cleaning Science Certificate in Housing Certificate in Housing Maintenance Certificate of Competence in Vertebrate Pest Control

VRQ	3	Award in Housing Award in Commercial Property Agency Award in Property Auctioneering Award in Residential Letting and Property Management Award in Sale of Residential Property Certificate in Housing Maintenance Certificate in Pest Control Diploma in Cleaning Services Supervision National Certificate in Housing National Certificate in Tenant Participation and Neighbourhood Renewal
-----	---	---

Source: SSA Stage 2, Tables 2, 4, 6 and 7

### **Annex 2: Sample of non-NQF Asset Skills qualifications provision.**

<b>Awarding Body</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Title</b>
Myerscough College	2	Apprenticeship in Waste Management
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)	4	Diploma in Surveying Practice
Various	4-5	Environmental Cleaning Management Estate Agency Estate Management Supported Housing Valuation Management
Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)	6	Degree in Building Surveying
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)	7	Master of Arts in Town Planning

Source: SSA Stage 2

### **Annex 3: Sample of Professional Body activity and private training provision in the Asset Skills sector:**

<b>Professional Body/Trainer</b>	<b>Summary of Qualifications</b>
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)	Courses which are accredited for the purpose of meeting the RTPI's standards for corporate membership. Courses receiving accreditation include BA, MA, Diploma, MSc and PhD.
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)	Many universities offer RICS accredited Facilities Management qualifications including BSc, Diploma, MSc, MBA and PgDip.
National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA)	The NAEA recognises and accredits diplomas in Residential Estate Agency, Letting and Management and Commercial property agency.
Contact Property Training (private training)	Commercial training relating to the built environment
British Institute of Cleaning Science (private training)	Cleaning operatives' proficiency certificate Dry cleaning laundry management
British Institute of Facilities Management (private training)	Part 1 and 2 Professional Examinations

Source: SSA Stage 2

## **Annex 4: Degrees and Foundation Degrees relevant to the Asset Skills Sector**

### **Foundation Degrees**

#### *Community and Social Studies*

- Community Development, Enterprise and Regeneration
- Community Governance
- Housing, Communities and Regeneration
- Housing Communities and Regeneration
- Housing Management
- Neighbourhood Renewal and Management
- Social Policy Health and Housing
- Sustainable Communities

#### *Building, Construction and Property*

- Building Control
- Building Conservation Management
- Built Environment
- Built Environment (Architecture)
- Building Restoration and Conservation
- Building Services
- Building Surveying and Property Management
- Building Technology
- Estate Management
- Facilities Management
- Historic Building Conservation
- Landscape and Amenity Management
- Landscape Construction
- Quantity Surveying
- Sustainable Resources for the Built Environment
- Town Planning

#### *Environmental Conservation and Emergency Services*

- Environmental Conservation
- Environmental Design
- Environmental Cleaning Management
- Environmental Management Science
- Integrated Environmental Management
- Land Management
- Landscape Conservation
- Public Services
- Public Health and Well Being
- Wastes Management

### **Degrees**

Architecture Design and Technology  
Architecture and Planning  
City and Regional Planning  
Landscape Architecture  
Building Control

Building Surveying  
Building Maintenance and Management  
Building Services Engineering  
City and Regional Planning  
Community Regeneration and Development  
Community Management  
Environmental Health  
Environmental Studies  
Environment and Planning  
Estate Management  
Facilities Management  
Housing Development and Management  
Housing Policy and Practice  
Housing and Community Studies  
Housing Professional Studies  
Housing Management  
Supported and Community Housing  
Social Housing  
Social Policy Health and Housing  
Spatial Economics and Development  
Land economy  
Landscape Planning  
Planning and Development  
Planning Housing and Renewal  
Planning and Public Policy, Government and Management  
Planning and Transport  
Planning Sustainable Environments  
Politics and Social Policy  
Politics and Urban Studies  
Property Asset Management  
Property Planning and Development  
Property Development and Valuation  
Property Development and Quantity Surveying  
Property and Facilities Management  
Property Investment and Development  
Public and Community Services  
Public Management Studies/Urban Studies  
Real Estate and Property Management  
Real Estate with Urban Planning  
Sociology and Social Policy  
Spatial Design  
Spatial Economics and Development  
Sustainable Infrastructure  
Town and Country Planning  
Town and Regional Planning  
Quantity Surveying  
Urban Planning Design and Management  
Urban and Environmental Planning  
Urban Land Economics  
Urban Estate Management  
Urban and Regional Planning and Social Policy  
Urban Studies and Planning

## Annex 5: Data Sources informing the Strategy

The following are the primary data sources which inform the strategy.

- Skills Needs Assessment for the United Kingdom – March 2006
- Skills Needs Assessment for Scotland – March 2006
- Skills Needs Assessment for Northern Ireland – March 2006
- Skills Needs Assessment for Wales - March 2006
- Skills Needs Assessment for the English regions – March 2006

URL for the above: <http://www.assetskills.org/site/tabid/211/default.aspx>

- An Assessment of current provision for Skill Needs in the Asset Skills Sector and Supporting Data reports- September 2006

URL for the above: <http://www.assetskills.org/site/tabid/209/default.aspx>

- Sector Skills Agreement Stage Three UK Wide Report – November 2006
- Summary of Key Issues and Proposals for England – November 2006
- Summary of Key Issues and Proposals for Northern Ireland – November 2006
- Summary of Key Issues and Proposals for Scotland – November 2006
- Summary of Key Issues and Proposals for Wales – November 2006

URL for the above: <http://www.assetskills.org/site/tabid/213/default.aspx>

- Data Report 1: Mapping Provision in the Asset Skills Sector -September 2006
- Data Report 2: Expenditure on Learning within the Asset Skills Sector - September 2006
- Data Report 6: The uptake and assessment of private training providers - September 2006
- Data Report 8: Overview of employer attitudes towards training and skills development - September 2006
- Data Report 9: National and English regional perspectives – September 2006
- Data Report 10: Training and skills development within the cleaning industry – September 2006
- Data Report 11: Training and skills development within the housing industry – September 2006
- Data Report 12: Training and skills development within the Facilities Management industry – September 2006
- Data Report 13: Training and skills development within the property industry – September 2006

LMI Key Facts for each sector:

Cleaning Fact Sheet  
Facilities Management Fact Sheet  
Housing Fact Sheet  
Property Fact Sheet

URL for the above: <http://www.assetskills.org/site/tabid/289/Default.aspx>

- Regional Fact Sheets for English Regions

URL for the above:

<http://www.assetskills.org/site/Research/LabourMarketInformation/RegionalFacts/tabid/290/Default.aspx>

In addition, the Strategy is informed by the work of each of the following Asset Skills Boards:

- Asset Skills Board
- Asset Skills Board Scotland
- Asset Skills Cymru
- Asset Skills Board Northern Ireland
- Asset Skills Facilities Management Board
- Asset Skills Cleaning Board
- Asset Skills Housing Board
- Asset Skills Property Board

Employer feedback is obtained through the Asset Skills Employer Engagement Team, our Specialist Advisers in each sub-sector and the Asset Skills Awarding Body Forum.

Data is also obtained from:

- Awarding Bodies
- Professional bodies
- LSC
- Learn Direct
- National datasets including National Employer Skills Survey (NESS), Annual Business Enquiry (ABE), Labour Force Survey (LFS) etc
- The SSDA Matrix

## **Annex 6 Strategic Priorities in the Four Home Nations**

### **Policy context in England**

#### **The Leitch Review of Skills (2006)**

The Leitch review provides the framework by which Asset Skills will seek to achieve:

- enhanced employer engagement, investment in skills and commitment to the skills pledge
- an increase in adult skills across all levels and ages within the footprint
- a base of adult literacy language and numeracy in elementary job roles in order to provide the necessary platform of skills to move on to full level 2 qualifications

#### **World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch review of Skills in England (2007)**

This set targets for achieving enhanced functional literacy and numeracy as well as full Level 2 qualifications by 2020 with an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the VET system at that time. It also requires a shift from Level 2 to Level 3 skills levels and a much expanded uptake of apprenticeships. A further target involves 40% of all adults having a higher education qualification at Level 4 or above. There are also ambitious targets for levels of engagement in education by all 16-18 year olds. Train to Gain will be expanded to ensure a demand led training system. There will also be an integrated adult IAG service linked to improved employability programmes to encourage re-entry to the labour market via JobcentrePlus. Skills accounts will be introduced linked to enhanced learner choice.

The key aspect of the plan from an SSC perspective is the new role given to employers to directly influence the content of standards and qualifications linked to the Employer Pledge commitment to driving up skill levels in the workforce. The role of SSCs was also made clear in terms of three key functions: raising employer ambition in skills investment; articulating future skills needs; and ensuring employer led fit for purpose qualifications.

#### **Skills White Paper (2005)**

'Getting on in business, getting on at work' focuses on the skills of adults already in, or seeking to enter, the labour market. The aim is to help even more adults get the skills they need to move from welfare into jobs, and to progress in their careers. The aim is to put employer's needs at the heart of the design and delivery of training, to support individuals in gaining the skills and qualifications they need and to reform supply. This informs Asset Skills' approach to enhancing employability skills and training across the footprint and its focus on addressing the skill needs of those in elementary job roles.

#### **The 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper and Diploma Development. (2005)**

The White Paper sets out proposals to build on the existing education system and to improve upon vocational education and develop Diplomas. Asset Skills is currently contributing to the development of Diplomas in Public Service and Construction and the Build Environment and sees this as a key part of attracting young people to the footprint and changing its image among young people.

### **The LSC's Agenda for Change (2004)**

This focuses on increasing the number of adults gaining a Level 2 qualification and by ensuring that provision is demand led by employers. This has an impact for Asset Skills in terms of changes to the funding streams available and in particular Level 1 qualifications in the cleaning sector. It also influences how Asset Skills will go about redeveloping its existing provision to meet the increased demands of full Level 2 qualifications.

### **Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances (2006)**

This report builds upon previous 14-19 and skills strategies and the future role for colleges with the aim of establishing a clear mission for FE, focusing on the employability and progression of learners. It will inform Asset Skills approach to Foundation Learning Tier qualifications in England and similar 14-19 curricular provision in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The proposed programme of legislation for England in relation to housing, energy and planning announced in the autumn of 2007 will also influence future Asset Skills provision as will any reform of the Apprenticeship legislation.

### **Policy context in Scotland**

#### **The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (2000 and 2004)**

The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (FEDS) is the Scottish Government's overall policy on the economy. It was originally published in 2000 and was refreshed in 2004 to take account of developments in the global economy. FEDS reiterates that productivity is the key challenge facing Scotland and stresses that, among other factors affecting economic development is the need to improve the skills of the population as a whole through education at schools, colleges and universities and through lifelong learning.

#### **Smart, Successful Scotland (2001)**

Smart, Successful Scotland is updated annually and sets out the Scottish Executive's strategic direction for Enterprise Networks. It was designed to build upon the Framework for Economic Development in Scotland. The three broad themes that are reviewed annually are growing businesses, learning and skills development to make the best use of human capital and to prepare for tomorrow's labour market.

Both these strategies are particularly important for Asset Skills which has a large number of elementary job holders in cleaning who require skills development to enhance productivity.

#### **Life Through Learning; Through Life**

This is Scotland's strategy for lifelong learning. It is principally concerned with post-compulsory education, training and learning, workplace learning, and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that people acquire. The overall aim of the lifelong learning strategy in Scotland is to use public funding to stimulate the supply of learning to individuals and employers and to stimulate demand.

This will influence how Asset Skills continues to contribute to the Adult Literacies in Scotland in order to raise the literacy and numeracy levels of those in elementary job roles within the Asset Skills footprint in Scotland, as well as contributions to 14-19 vocationally-related curriculum offers.

### **Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy (2007)**

This sets out ambitions for skills in a lifelong learning context, from the cradle to the grave. The strategy is a framework to show how all the constituent parts of the education and learning systems can contribute to the Scottish skills base that is world class.

The report recognises the need to work closely with by Sector Skills Councils to utilise existing LMI information, work with on developing and promoting qualifications and to gain employer feedback.

### **The Government Economic Strategy (2007)**

The focus is to align the investment of learning and skills with other key priorities – a supportive business environment, investment in infrastructure and place, effective government and greater equity in pursuit of greater comparative advantage. The strategic objectives for Scotland include; to make Scotland wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger, and greener.

The majority of these priorities are areas that Asset Skills can contribute to in a meaningful and proactive way building upon the current relationships in place.

### **Policy context in Wales**

#### **The Webb Review (2007)**

The Webb Review identified the need for a thorough policy review of the mission and purpose of the further education sector in Wales that was identified in The Learning Country: Vision into Action. This involves taking a holistic approach, including analysis of developments in 14-19 education; responsiveness to the skills needs of employers and the economy; adult learning, social justice and community engagement; the interface with higher education provision; and the needs of, and responsiveness to, post 14 learners in Wales.

#### **Wales: A Vibrant Economy (2005)**

Wales: A Vibrant Economy (W:AVE) has been produced by the Welsh Assembly Government and there are a number of policies specifically related to skills development and are listed below:

- Wales – a Better Country
- Learning Pathways 14-19
- Basic Skills Strategy
- Iaith Pawb and Cymru ar lein (The National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales)
- Winning Wales
- Communities First

- Wales Spatial Plan
- ELWa Priorities

All of these policies will impact directly on the Asset Skills footprint and therefore need to be taken into consideration when moving forward to review and action planning stages. In particular, Asset Skills will continue to support the development of Basic Skills within the elementary job workforce in Wales and support the introduction of the Principal Learning from the Public Service and Construction and the Built Environment Diplomas within the Welsh Baccalaureate. The Wales Spatial policy will also impact on the introduction of the new housing NOS and qualifications in Wales as well as future foundation degree work.

### **Skills that work for Wales: A Skills and Employment Strategy (2008)**

The consultation for this strategy was launched on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2008 and will replace the Skills and Employment Action Plan 2005. The aim is to simplify business support, create a stronger partnership with employers, to target funding where it is needed and to develop a more efficient learning network.

The role of Sector Skills Councils is seen as significant with references to helping strengthen the voice of employers in the skills and qualifications system. The Assembly is looking to redirect resources to expand the Workforce Development Programme and create a new Sector Priority Fund. SSC's will also continue to work closely with the Assembly in the LMI area and will seek to develop employer engagement activity.

### **One Wales (2007)**

One Wales is an agreement resulting in the coalition of the Labour Party Wales and Plaid Cymru as two of the largest parties in the Assembly. The aim is to deliver a progressive, stable and ambitious programme for government over the Assembly term. Some of the key areas within the agreement include; a strong and confident nation, living communities, a sustainable environment, a prosperous society and learning for life.

The details in a prosperous society focuses on four sets of actions – creating jobs across Wales, stimulating enterprise and business growth, promoting tourism and enhancing skills for jobs. The learning for life section aims to – establish a right to learning, reforming funding, ensuring the best start for young children and developing adult learning.

Both these sections will have an impact with the Qualifications Reform being undertaken by Asset Skills. In particular, a commitment has been made within the agreement to substantially increase the number of apprenticeships, and to ensure that a system of adult learning is developed that is responsive to the needs of local communities, employers and the local and regional economy.

### **The Learning Country – Vision into Action (2001)**

This document describes a range of measures which aim at transforming the life changes of people in Wales for the better. This was one of the first comprehensive strategic statements by the National Assembly and the key areas covered within the report are as follows: sound foundations, comprehensive education and lifelong

learning in Wales, learning and equality of opportunity, progress and practitioners, beyond comprehensive education and access and the future of higher education.

Asset Skills is already proactively working on some of the above mentioned areas, including the Welsh Baccalaureate and working in partnership other SSCs in developing the 14-19 Diplomas. A review of Apprenticeships is also underway.

## **Policy context in Northern Ireland**

### **Success Through Skills The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland: A programme of Implementation, (2006)**

The plan sets out a vision to achieve the government's key aims in relation to the development of skills within Northern Ireland:

- To enable people to progress up a skills ladder, in order to raise the skills level of the whole workforce
- To help deliver high productivity and increased competitiveness
- To secure Northern Ireland's future in a global marketplace

A 10 year timeframe is envisaged for the full effects of the Strategy to be realised, for the purposes of implementation, the initial focus for delivery is a period of 3 years at which point the implementation plan will be evaluated. There are four key themes which underpin the vision:

- Understanding the demand for skills
- Improving the skills levels of the workforce
- Improving the quality and relevance of education and training; and
- Tackling the skills barriers to employment and employability

There was also a recognition of working closely with Sector Skills Councils in order to be able to deliver against the implementation plan.

Asset Skills will continue to support the development of Essential Skills within the elementary job workforce in order to provide the basis of literacy and numeracy necessary to progress to full Level 2 qualifications. We will also ensure that we contribute to the 14-19 vocationally related curriculum in order to enhance the image of the sector with young people in Northern Ireland. We will also ensure that our housing NOS and qualifications articulate with the Northern Ireland Housing strategy.



The UK Commission aims to raise UK prosperity and opportunity by improving employment and skills. Our ambition is to benefit employers, individuals and government by advising how improved employment and skills systems can help the UK become a worldclass leader in productivity, in employment and in having a fair and inclusive society: all this in the context of a fast-changing global economy.

Because employers, whether in private business or the public sector, have prime responsibility for the achievement of greater productivity, the UK Commission will strengthen the employer voice and provide greater employer influence over the employment and skills systems.

Having developed a view of what's needed, the UK Commission will provide independent advice to the highest levels in government to help achieve those improvements through strategic policy development, evidence-based analysis and the exchange of good practice.

#### UKCES

3 Callflex Business Park  
Golden Smithies Lane  
Wath-Upon-Dearne  
South Yorkshire  
S63 7ER  
T +44 (0)1709 774 800  
F +44 (0)1709 774 801

#### UKCES

28-30 Grosvenor Gardens  
London  
SW1W 0TT  
T +44 (0)20 7881 8900  
F +44 (0)20 7881 8999

