



National Audit Office

A REVIEW BY THE  
NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE  
JULY 2009

# Skills for Justice

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# Part One

## Preface

**1.1** Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are partially publicly funded, employer led organisations that cover specific economic sectors in the United Kingdom. They have three key goals:

- Raising employer engagement, demand and investment in skills;
- Ensuring authoritative Labour Market Information for their sectors;
- Development of National Occupational Standards and ensuring qualifications meet employer needs.

**1.2** There are 25 SSCs, covering about 85 per cent of the British workforce.

### **SSC Relicensing**

**1.3** Sector Skills Councils operate under licence from the UK Government.

**1.4** The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is responsible for arrangements for relicensing the SSCs with the aim of ensuring the Councils will be more sharply focused on raising employer ambition and investment in skills at all levels, articulating future skills needs of their sector and ensuring that the supply of skills and qualifications is driven by employers.

**1.5** The UK Commissioners will make their recommendations on whether to relicense or not to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, in consultation with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is responsible for awarding a new licence.

### **The National Audit Office Role**

**1.6** The National Audit Office has been asked by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to undertake an Independent Performance Assessment of each Sector Skills Council to help inform decision making by the Commissioners.

**1.7** We have undertaken the assessment in accordance with the UK Commission's relicensing framework for Sector Skills Councils and not as part of NAO's wider VFM programme to provide assurance to Parliament.

# Part Two

## Executive Summary

**2.1** Our assessment against the Relicensing Framework showed that strong progress has been made, particularly over the last 18 months. Feedback from employers and other stakeholders was consistently positive. Where areas for improvement were identified, Skills for Justice was able to demonstrate action being taken to address these.

**2.2** The key areas of strength included:

- A high level of employer engagement. The consistent message received was that Skills for Justice is an employer led organisation.
- National Occupational Standards are well regarded and widely used by the sector. Key employers, such as the police forces, have embedded the occupational standards within their core Human Resources processes.
- A positive relationship with wider stakeholders, such as awarding bodies and Higher Education providers.
- Clear objectives and strategic direction, driven by employer consultation.
- Development of Skillsmark, a highly regarded accreditation standard specifically developed for the sector in response to employer requests.
- Positive impact on access to funding for skills development, particularly for third sector organisations in the sector.

**2.3** The key areas for improvement identified were:

- Further work required to develop Labour Market Intelligence and increase awareness of research.
- Strengthen the management of the country team and its work in Wales.

**2.4** Commissioners may wish to explore the following issues in more detail with Skills for Justice:

- What action Skills for Justice plans to take to build on its relationships and joint working with other SSCs. During our assessment, we heard some concerns about overlap between the Skills for Justice and Skills for Government footprints and the need for the two SSCs to work in a more joined up way. A Memorandum Of Understanding has been drawn up with the aim of improving working between the two SSCs.
- What action Skills for Justice plans to take to ensure that its employer engagement strategy is effective for the third sector, given the large number of small voluntary organisations in the justice sector.

### **Theme 1: A Well run SSC**

**2.5** Skills for Justice serves the sector through a combination of Occupational Groups, covering the various sub sectors and Country Groups for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as a cross sector forum in England.

**2.6** The UK Board is made up of 22 representatives from across the sector. A proposed restructuring of the Board structure will see the number of members of the UK Board reduced with a new council being created to ensure that sector interests are discussed at an appropriate level with adequate representation from the key sector organisations. The proposed restructuring was supported by the Board members we interviewed.

**2.7** Employer engagement was cited as a key strength in our employer interviews. There was some dissatisfaction with the level of employer and stakeholder engagement related to Wales. During 2008-09, Skills for Justice restructured its team in Wales to increase its capacity and capability to deliver in Wales.

**2.8** Skills for Justice recognises that engaging with small organisations in the third sector is a challenge and is continuing to focus on this as an area for development.

### **Theme 2: SSC Core products and services**

**2.9** National Occupational Standards have a strong presence in the sector. Major areas of employment, for example, police, prison and probation services, use these extensively. The work undertaken by Skills for Justice to develop the suite of National Occupational Standards for the sector received very positive feedback in our interviews. Many employers regarded this as the SSC's most valuable contribution.

**2.10** Research undertaken by Skills for Justice follows a clear strategy which has been developed in conjunction with employers. Feedback from employers was positive on the quality of research and Labour Market Intelligence.

**2.11** Awareness of research was variable and improving awareness is an area for development. Skills for Justice has increased the capacity of its research team recently and expects this to improve further the quality and quantity of the information produced.

**2.12** Skills for Justice has several ongoing projects around qualifications and has agreed a compact with DIUS and the Learning and Skills Council providing £72 million for training over three years. This is expected to lead to 83,000 qualifications over three years. The compact allows public sector workers to benefit from Train to Gain funding for the first time. While Third Sector workers have always been able to access Train to Gain funding, Skills for Justice is encouraging and supporting them to do so and also to access other aspects of the Compact, including Leadership Development.

### **Theme 3: SSC Sector specific solutions**

**2.13** Sector Skills Agreements are in place for each of the nations. Delivery of initiatives is primarily through the strand teams which serve their respective sub sectors and through the country groups.

**2.14** Skills for Justice provides career tools through its website. It has developed specific occupational standards for management and leadership within the justice sector. These link to qualifications within the S/NVQ framework.

**2.15** Skills for Justice has developed several sector specific solutions. The accreditation standard Skillsmark is highly regarded in the sector.

### **Theme 4: SSC Results and impacts**

**2.16** Performance is monitored through a balanced scorecard approach and reported quarterly at Board level through a performance report. The balanced scorecard is monitored by management on a monthly basis. Skills for Justice has developed specific performance targets against which progress is monitored. Monitoring of progress is communicated to employers via an e-bulletin.

**2.17** A range of impacts were cited by employers and other stakeholders. Skills for Justice undertakes evaluations of individual projects to determine whether they have been successful in achieving the planned outputs and outcomes.

## Part Three

### Context for Skills for Justice's work

**3.1** Skills for Justice was licensed in 2004, following a merger of the Police Skills and Standards Organisation, the Community Justice NTO and the Custodial Care NTO.

**3.2** Skills for Justice is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It employs 67 staff across the UK based in either the head office in Sheffield, the country offices in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, or field based home workers. Income is around £6.2 million a year. Core funding is £1.6 million a year (around 26 per cent of its income).

**3.3** Skills for Justice has responsibility for the justice sector which comprises approximately 576,000 employees. The number of employees by each of the major justice sector strands can be broken down as follows:

- 325,000 in policing and law enforcement;
- 73,000 in community justice;
- 63,000 in custodial care;
- 25,000 in court and tribunals;
- 11,000 in prosecution;
- 9,000 in forensic science; and
- 70,000 in fire and rescue.

**3.4** Within the UK, 81 per cent of the justice sector workforce is based in England, four per cent in Northern Ireland, ten per cent in Scotland and five per cent in Wales.

**3.5** There are more than 4,000 employers in the Justice sector. However, this figure covers a wide range of different size organisations. The Annual Business Inquiry data from 2007 suggests that: some 36 per cent of the workforce is in organisations employing 1-10 people; some 33 per cent are in organisations employing 11-49 people; some 19 per cent are in organisations employing 50-199 people; and some 11 per cent are in organisations employing over 200 people.

**3.6** A key challenge for Skills for Justice is the complexity and diversity of the sector. There are a wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations delivering services across the major strands of the justice sector.

**3.7** From 1 April 2009, Skills for Justice's footprint was broadened to include fire and rescue. The footprint expansion has been instigated by Skills for Justice with the support of both sectors' employers who have recognised the synergies in purpose and skills priorities between Justice and fire and rescue services. There have been detailed discussions with the fire and rescue services to understand their needs and outputs will be driven by service level agreements.

**3.8** There have been discussions around bringing the private security industry within the footprint. Justice sector employers and other stakeholders considered that this was not appropriate as the majority of private security industry functions did not have synergy with Justice and had more synergy with other SSCs, such as Asset Skills (facilities management) and Summit Skills (building services engineering).

**3.9** Although not part of its footprint, Skills for Justice is at an early stage of discussing a formal relationship with key stakeholder organisations in Legal Services.

**3.10** The justice sector has a high profile, both politically and socially, and is a continual focus of media attention. The sector has been subject to considerable change over the past few years, most recently the restructuring of the Home Office and the creation of the Ministry of Justice.

**3.11** Justice and Policing is devolved to Scotland and is expected to be devolved to Northern Ireland in the coming year. Skills for Justice has to work with the skills departments in the four UK nations and the Justice departments in two (soon to be three) of the four UK nations. This adds a further layer of complexity to the context in which Skills for Justice operates.

**3.12** Skills for Justice's vision is to be a leading, recognised Sector Skills Council delivering a world class skills agenda for the justice sector. Its mission is to help organisations and individuals in the justice sector deliver benefit to society by being significantly better skilled and to influence policy makers to ensure that they take full account of workforce development needs in the justice sector.

**3.13** Skills for Justice has three strategic objectives:

- To run an effective and efficient organisation; sustaining and developing Skills for Justice as a customer focused and dynamic organisation.
- To be the authoritative voice of employers and stakeholders and influence UK Governments and Parliaments to take account of skills development in the justice sector.
- To develop and deliver skills solutions based on evidence and intelligence to support an efficient, effective, world class justice sector workforce.

## Part Four

### A Well Run SSC

The Sector Skills Council is employer led, has the confidence and support of employers in its sector and is a strategically and operationally effective organisation.

**4.1** There is good evidence that Skills for Justice is an **employer led** organisation and is well regarded and supported by employers. The UK Board comprises 22 members which represent the various sectors which the SSC covers. The UK Board meets four times a year. In addition to the UK Board there are:

- UK Board Committees (Finance and Audit, Nominations, and Remuneration).
- Country Groups for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and a cross sector forum in England.
- Occupational Groups for each strand of the sector.

**4.2** The UK Board is made up of key strategic representatives from across the sector. The members of the UK Board represent occupations, sectors, countries and the interests of employees within the justice sector.

**4.3** Board members comprise employers and stakeholders. The former include employers in the public, private and third sector. Our interviews with a wide range of employers showed that they considered that they were well represented on the UK Board and on the Country Groups and Occupational Groups.

**4.4** Skills for Justice had been organised on a regional basis. However, following a review, there was a reorganisation to a sub sector (occupational group) basis. This reorganisation has been well received by both employers and stakeholders. This was confirmed in the feedback we received.

**4.5** We received positive feedback regarding the Country Groups and Occupational Groups. One large private sector employer told us that the move to occupational groups meant that it now considered itself well represented.

**4.6** At the UK Board meeting in February 2009, which we attended, the Chair of Skills for Justice informed the Board members that discussions had taken place in the Nominations Committee about a proposed restructuring of the governance arrangements. The proposals would create a smaller more strategic Board and a council. Members of the UK Board appeared to welcome these proposals. If approved, the revised governance arrangements will start on 1 April 2010.

**4.7** In our interviews with employers, including employers on the UK Board, we heard consistent support for the proposals. The current UK Board was considered too large and the proposed restructuring was seen as a sensible way of allowing the UK Board to focus on strategic issues with the Council ensuring that there continues to be representation from the employers in the different sub sectors.

**4.8** The current Chief Executive of Skills for Justice was appointed in October 2007. The Board members we interviewed were consistently positive about the support they received from the Chief Executive and his team. There have been a number of changes to the Skills for Justice Senior Management team over the last 18 months. The feedback we received from employers and stakeholders was very positive about the Chief Executive and the new members of the Senior Management team.

**4.9** From our interviews and the other feedback we received, there were a number of references to Skills for Justice: “reinventing” itself; coming from a difficult position a year or so ago, but getting things up and running successfully now; moving in the right direction; and being an improving organisation.

**4.10** Skills for Justice has sub-sector (strand) employer engagement strategies with the operations teams set up on a sub sector basis (known as strand teams). Its **engagement with employers** was identified as a key strength in the feedback we received. Examples of the feedback include:

- An employer told us that the governance structure is employer led and representative of the diverse nature of the sector.
- A large private sector employer told us that Skills for Justice is keen to understand what employers want and responds to feedback from employers.
- At our focus group with the Scottish Government we were told that Skills for Justice is well engaged with the Third Sector.
- An awarding body told us that Skills for Justice works closely with employers in its sector and highlighted the police area as a good example.

**4.11** The Skills for Business Survey of Employers 2007 reported that 38 per cent of establishments within the SSC footprint were aware of Skills for Justice, higher than the national average of 29 per cent. Twenty four per cent of such establishments had contact with Skills for Justice in the last 12 months, higher than the national average of 13 per cent.

**4.12** Some of the feedback we received noted that, while Skills for Justice had raised its profile, there was scope to raise it further. Skills for Justice identified the need to broaden its employer engagement as a key area of work for 2008-09.

**4.13** Some of the feedback we received suggested that Skills for Justice's engagement was more focused on the bigger employers than the community groups. Most of the Third Sector organisations working in the justice sector are very small and it is estimated that such organisations could number 10,000. Skills for Justice acknowledges that engagement with some of the smaller employers, such as those in the Third Sector, can be challenging. One of its key objectives for 2009-10 is to "develop and implement a third sector engagement strategy".

**4.14** The feedback we received about Skills for Justice's **engagement with stakeholders** was particularly positive:

- Several awarding bodies made reference to having excellent relationships with Skills for Justice.
- At our focus group with awarding bodies we were told that Skills for Justice was good at engagement and listened to the views of awarding bodies.
- Feedback from a range of stakeholders referred to Skills for Justice having good engagement with trade unions.
- Feedback from regulators and third sector organisations in the sector referred to good engagement with Skills for Justice.
- Written feedback from the Welsh Assembly Government referred to Skills for Justice engaging well with a range of stakeholders in Wales.

**4.15** Feedback from one Welsh stakeholder raised a concern about engagement with Skills for Justice in Wales. This concern was also raised by one of the members of the Wales Country Group. He told us that the team in Wales had not been at full strength. In his view this had impacted on the level of engagement, particularly with the key officials in the various agencies in Wales. Skills for Justice is aware of this problem and is seeking to strengthen the management of the country team and its work in Wales.

**4.17** The feedback we received was generally positive about Skills for Justice's engagement with employers and stakeholders. However, Skills for Justice acknowledges the need to improve further. One of its key objectives for 2009-10 is to "maintain and improve links with employers and stakeholders across the whole footprint and all the four countries of the UK so that we can better represent their views".

**4.17** Although not part of its footprint, Skills for Justice is at an early stage of discussing a formal relationship with key stakeholder organisations in Legal Services.

**4.18** Skills for Justice undertakes an annual **customer satisfaction survey**. The 2008 survey involved telephone interviews with 146 employers and 179 stakeholders. This survey showed a satisfaction rate of 68 per cent. Satisfaction has decreased since the 2007 survey (when the result was 78 per cent). However, the scoring of the question was changed for the 2008 survey so a direct comparison cannot be made.

**4.19** Skills for Justice has a three year **strategic plan** (Corporate Plan 2008-11) and annual operational plans for each country. These cascade to team plans and to the objectives of employees. Feedback from a large employer in Scotland highlighted the strategic and business planning process as a particular strength and noted that employers are involved at all stages.

**4.20** Skills for Justice's income in 2007-08 was around £6.2 million, some £1.6 million of which was core funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

**4.21** Skills for Justice's auditors produced a key issues memorandum to record the key matters arising from the audit of the **financial statements** for 2007-08. One of the control issues identified was that the membership of the Audit Committee comprised two members, which was below the statutory minimum of three. In response, Skills for Justice has recruited three additional members to the Audit Committee, bringing the total membership to five. Skills for Justice confirmed to us that all the issues identified during the 2007-08 audit have been addressed or are being addressed.

**4.22** During 2007-08 the Financial Controller resigned. As a precautionary measure, as Skills for Justice did not have a qualified accountant, Skills for Justice's auditors were commissioned to undertake some work following the resignation. The auditors found no evidence of any inappropriate activity and made a small number of recommendations to improve some processes.

**4.23** In November 2008, Skills for Justice recruited a new Corporate Services Director who is a qualified accountant. One of the roles of the new director is to work with the Senior Management team and increase financial accountability and skills in the organisation.

**4.24** Skills for Justice has a **reserves** policy. The policy is that reserves should be maintained equivalent to the operating and salary costs of the organisation for a period of three months. The reserves policy is reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee. The target level of reserves in the Corporate Services Operation Plan 2008-09 is £1.1 million. Reserves in the 2007-08 financial statement were £1.645 million. However, £1.274 million of these reserves were deemed restricted.

**4.25** Skills for Justice monitors and reports on income sources quarterly, based on targets in the Corporate Plan 2008-11. The aim is to ensure a balance of income sources and that there is not an over dependence on a single funding stream.

**4.26** Skills for Justice has a **risk management strategy** which sets out its policies and procedures for managing and responding to risks. A corporate risk register is maintained and kept under review by the Board of Directors, Chief Executive and Senior Management team. All risks identified have a formal "owner" at the appropriate level within the organisation.

**4.27** Skills for Justice has a **human resources strategy**. Skills for Justice achieved Investors in People accreditation in early 2009. A development review process was introduced in the second quarter of 2008-09 and put into effect with mid year reviews for all staff with the aim of ensuring alignment of individual and organisational objectives.

**4.28** An effective leadership programme was launched for all managers in 2008-09. Skills for Justice is working to be one of the Sunday Times 'Top 100 Best Small Companies to Work For'.

#### **Strengths**

- Strong direction and leadership from the Board and the Executive.
- Employer led and high level of engagement from organisations in the sector.
- Good level of engagement with stakeholders.
- Clear vision, mission and strategic objectives, based on consultation with employers.
- Motivated staff committed to providing high quality service.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

- Building upon the current level of engagement with employers and stakeholders and increasing engagement with the Third Sector.
- Strengthening the team in Wales to increase the level of stakeholder engagement.

## Part Five

### SSC Core Products and Services

The Sector Skills Council provides a clear, credible and coherent voice for employers on the skills and qualification needs of the sector backed by high quality Labour Market Intelligence, standards and qualification development.

**5.1** Skills for Justice has a clear **research strategy**, developed through consultation with employers. The strategy is widely available and clearly explained on the Skills for Justice website. The research strategy is clearly linked to the corporate plan and the strategic objectives of the SSC.

**5.2** The current research strategy covers the period 2008-11. It is refreshed annually and supplemented with an annual plan. The plan sets out specific tasks with details of the approach, outputs and timeline. The annual refresh process has an emphasis on employer consultation and aims to reflect changing employer needs.

**5.3** Research is split on a nation and sub-sector basis, as well as regionally in England where feasible. The **Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Matrix** ultimately aims to gather and present LMI data across 18 different data types. To date only the core SSC demographic data (numbers of organisations numbers employed broken down by gender and race) is included, but this is updated annually and progress is being made to populate the rest of the Matrix. The LMI Matrix available through the Skills for Justice website has many gaps where the required information still needs to be gathered. Nevertheless, the LMI Matrix has been well received by employers and stakeholders who are conscious that Skills for Justice is making steady progress to develop the LMI available. A substantial refresh of the LMI Matrix is due in April 2009.

**5.4** Employer feedback on research and LMI was generally positive. Several interviewees described this work as “very useful” or “extremely useful”. This feedback is consistent with the 2008 Customer Survey. In the survey, 93 per cent of respondents found the LMI useful and, of those, 21 per cent found it very useful or extremely useful. Skills for Justice has a target of 75 per cent of users finding its LMI useful. There was recognition that the LMI work needs further development, but employers were satisfied with the steps taken to date.

**5.5** Awareness of research and the LMI available was mixed. A substantial proportion of interviewees had not seen any LMI or research and most were not aware of what is available. This was an awareness issue rather than an issue of accessibility as the research and LMI is easily accessible through the Skills for Justice website.

**5.6** Bespoke research is undertaken to a limited extent, usually on a commission basis or indirectly commissioned as part of a service level agreement which is linked to a per capita fee. For example, the National Police Improvement Agency has commissioned a specific piece of work around skills foresight in policing. Other examples of bespoke research include a Skills Survey of the Northern Ireland justice sector workforce for DELNI, and “Fit for Purpose? – Research into the provision of Forensic Science Degree programmes in UK HEIs”.

**5.7** LMI is used in business planning by Skills for Justice. It is also a key resource for strand teams as part of their ongoing communication with employers and other stakeholders. Skills for Justice is seeking to establish a research forum. The SSC is currently linked with professional researchers and Higher Education researchers.

**5.8 Sector Skills Agreements** are in place for all of the nations. These were put together after consultation with a wide range of employers. We received positive feedback from the employers we interviewed about the Sector Skills Agreements.

**5.9 A Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS)** was developed in consultation with employers. Skills for Justice is keen to avoid pushing qualifications into areas of the sector where they may not be needed, for example, where skills requirements can be addressed without a formal qualification adding any value.

**5.10** Skills for Justice is seeking to improve the flexibility of qualifications delivery. This is in response to feedback from employers who highlighted a strong demand for “bite size” qualifications. A challenge to this approach is funding support being more difficult to attain for such qualifications.

**5.11 National Occupational Standards** are well established in the sector. They underpin the recruitment, appraisal and promotion processes in key sub sectors such as the police, custodial care and the probation service. For example, the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme for newly recruited police officers in England and Wales is based on National Occupational Standards developed by Skills for Justice.

**5.12** The work undertaken by Skills for Justice in relation to the National Occupational Standards is viewed as extremely important. Many of the employers and stakeholders we interviewed considered this to be the SSC’s most valuable contribution.

**5.13** There are 1,205 National Occupational Standards covered by Skills for Justice. These are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Strand teams monitor industry changes to identify factors which will drive changes to National Occupational Standards. The teams are in regular contact with employers and stakeholders within their respective strands, facilitating strong employer engagement around occupational standards.

**5.14** Progress is being made against the **Qualifications and Credits Framework (QCF)** with various actions relating to QCF in place. For example, Skills for Justice is working with the Children’s Workforce Network to develop a new award to be part of the test and trial for the Children’s Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF).

**5.15** Skills for Justice has negotiated and agreed the sector's **compact** with DIUS and the Learning and Skills Council, providing £72 million for training over three years. This is expected to lead to 83,000 qualifications. The compact allows public sector workers to benefit from Train to Gain funding for the first time. While Third Sector workers have always been able to access Train to Gain funding, Skills for Justice is encouraging and supporting them to do so and also to access other aspects of the Compact, including Leadership Development.

**5.16 Apprenticeships** in the justice sector are available at Level Three and above. Apprenticeships have historically had a minor presence in the sector and have not enjoyed a good reputation. One of the problems has been difficulties in employers understanding the funding regime. Currently, there is one apprenticeship for Community Justice. This has a common foundation and five pathways allowing specialisation in either: Youth Justice; Work with Offending Behaviour; Drugs and Alcohol; Work with Victims, Survivors and Witnesses; or Community Safety. However, progress is being made to promote apprenticeships within the sector and develop new programmes. For example, the police are looking at the Police Community Support Officer role and linking apprenticeships to it. Skills for Justice has undertaken research to identify the barriers to take up of apprenticeships in the sector and has produced a report proposing solutions.

**5.17** Feedback from DIUS/DCSF noted that Skills for Justice had taken the opportunity during Apprenticeship Week to promote the apprenticeships to employers and individuals. This had been done through e-marketing, regional events and workshops.

**5.18** Skills for Justice is involved in three **14-19 Diplomas**. It is the lead SSC on the Diploma in Public Services which is due to start in September 2011.

**5.19** Skills for Justice has a supporting role in the development of the Diploma in Society, Health and Development (working with Skills for Health, Skills for Care and Development and the Children's Workforce Network). Skills for Justice is also supporting the Science Diploma (due to the link with forensic science).

**5.20** There has been positive interaction with a number of **Higher Education and Further Education providers**. Skills for Justice has established a Higher Education Forum for Policing which brings together police forces and Higher Education institutions. The Forum is now proactively exploring the potential for pre entry learning programmes for the police service, which cuts down on the amount of police training required on entering the police force. This is modelled on the success in this area achieved by Surrey Police and the University of Portsmouth.

**5.21** Skills for Justice is working with Higher Education providers to improve the quality of forensic science courses in response to employer feedback. Skills for Justice has also developed a new qualifications framework for Probation Officers whereby they follow an innovative integrated learning programme which results in the award of a degree and NVQ Level Four.

**5.22** Skills for Justice has a high level of engagement with awarding bodies. There is an **Awarding Bodies** Forum and joined up working in the development of qualifications. Positive feedback was received from awarding bodies. For example, City & Guilds noted the strong relationship with Skills for Justice and the quality of the National Occupational Standards that had been developed.

#### **Strengths**

- Clear research strategy.
- Compact in place allowing Public Sector and Third Sector organisations to access £72 million of funding.
- National Occupational Standards embedded in key Human Resources processes within the sector.
- Very positive feedback on work relating to the National Occupational Standards.
- Track record of delivering successful projects through aligning employers and Higher Education providers.
- Positive relationship with awarding bodies.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

- Further work required to expand Labour Market Intelligence Matrix and develop research function.
- Improve awareness of research and Labour Market Intelligence.
- Continued challenges in developing apprenticeships within the sector and encouraging participation.

## Part Six

### SSC Sector Specific Solutions

The Sector Skills Council can demonstrate a compelling employer offer which addresses sector skill priorities, including cross sector skills, with defined routes to market.

**6.1** Skills for Justice has **consulted with employers and stakeholders** to develop sector specific solutions. Feedback from the employers and stakeholders we interviewed was positive and Skills for Justice was considered to be addressing the skills gaps in the sector.

**6.2** The Sector Skills Agreements for each of the nations set out the skills gaps and weaknesses across the sector and the solutions to address these.

**6.3** Skills for Justice works with other SSCs. It has **worked in partnership** with Government Skills SSC and Skills for Care and Development SSC, for example, around 14-19 Diplomas.

**6.4** We heard some concerns about the relationship between Skills for Justice and Government Skills. The two SSCs have some clients in common and some employers considered that the two organisations could work in a more joined up manner, for example, in areas such as Labour Market Intelligence and work relating to apprenticeships. A Memorandum Of Understanding between Skills for Justice and Government Skills has been drawn up with the aim of improving the working between the two SSCs.

**6.5** The justice sector has a high number of volunteers. On behalf of DIUS and the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, Skills for Justice is assisting the new sector skills body 'Skills – Third Sector' to establish itself.

**6.6** Skills for Justice is working with Higher Education institutions to improve the suitability of courses, particularly in the area of forensic science. Another example of partnership working is with the National Police Improvement Agency and we received positive feedback about this relationship.

**6.7** The primary **route to market** is via the strand and country teams which focus on their respective sub-sectors and countries and are in regular contact with employers and stakeholders. There are also various forums in place, such as the Cross Sector Forum, plus Country Groups and Occupational Groups. Plans are developed based on the corporate plan, often on a strand basis with the strand teams. These plans are generally approved by occupational committees, ensuring the buy in of employers and other stakeholders. Skills for Justice also works with the unions, providing access directly to

learners.

**6.8** Employers told us that delivery methods are appropriate to the sector. The system of splitting the staff resource into dedicated strand teams appears to be effective, with positive responses from interviewees around employer engagement and the added value provided by Skills for Justice.

**6.9** The case for Skills for Justice submitting a bid for a **National Skills Academy** has been discussed with employers and stakeholders over the past few years. However, until recently, employers considered that they were not ready to proceed with a bid. Following further consultation with the sector, it has been agreed that an Expression of Interest for a National Skills Academy for policing and law enforcement should be developed. Skills for Justice plans to submit its bid for a National Skills Academy in the next bidding round.

**6.10** Skills for Justice participated in the Skills Pledge on 14 June 2007. As noted in Part Five of the report on SSC Core Products and Services a compact has been agreed with DIUS and the Learning and Skills Council regarding Train to Gain funding.

**6.11** Career tools and information are available through the Skills for Justice website. Links are provided to other information sources relevant to each sub sector. For example, for the community justice sector key employers and volunteer organisations, such as Victim Support and Apex Scotland, are signposted.

**6.12** There are qualifications and National Occupational Standards for **management and leadership** within the justice sector. Qualifications are offered at three levels within the S/NVQ framework. Level Three is aimed at first line managers and team leaders, Level Four for middle managers and Level Five for senior managers. The National Occupational Standards within the qualifications have been derived from three sources: those that have been newly developed for the sector; those that have been developed as part of the “common” units for the justice sector; and those that are from the National Occupational Standards for management and leadership.

**6.13** Skills for Justice works closely with the National Offender Management Service. Positive feedback was received from this organisation regarding the relationship and the work that Skills for Justice is doing in conjunction with them. In particular, Skills for Justice was considered to be adding value through access to funding, industry advice, defining occupational standards and providing a key link into qualifications. The Train to Gain funding will also benefit the offender skills agenda through improving operational standards in the Prison Service.

**6.14** Skills for Justice has worked with the Forensic Science Regulator to develop and promote the Regulator’s Quality Standards for Forensic Science. The Standards are a new framework to ensure the quality of Forensic Science practice across the UK, bringing together ISO Accreditation with National Occupational Standards to ensure individual practitioner competence. We received positive feedback from the Forensic Science Regulator on the work undertaken by Skills for Justice in this area.

**6.15** Skills for Justice launched **Skillsmark** in 2006 to accredit learning providers and learning programmes of a high quality. Skillsmark originated from employers in the policing area who wanted accreditation for courses brought in.

**6.16** In order to achieve Skillsmark, training providers have to demonstrate that they have rigorous and effective processes for the design and delivery of education and training programmes and that employers have an input to these. To gain the Skillsmark quality mark, programmes must meet the needs of employers and of the wider justice sector, be properly resourced and fit for purpose.

**6.17** Fifty learning programmes from 27 learning providers have achieved the accreditation. Skillsmark has been well received by the sector with major training providers commenting on the rigorous nature of the accreditation process and the usefulness of the programme as a benchmarking tool. The National Policing Improvement Agency has recommended that all police forces in England and Wales include Skillsmark accreditation as a requirement when outsourcing learning and development.

**6.18** Skills for Justice has promoted **multi agency** approaches to skills development. Skills for Justice is developing a qualification for those who work in a multi agency environment either at an operational or strategic level. As part of the project a training programme will be developed that is based on multi agency working National Occupational Standards. Skills for Justice will focus initially on South East England and consult with practitioners, managers and employers to develop the qualification. It is hoped that following a successful trial in the South East, this programme will be rolled out nationally.

**6.19** Skills for Justice has developed a funding wizard tool, which is of particular use to the Third Sector. This is accessible through the Skills for Justice website and is updated daily. Employers and individuals can search for funding specific to the justice sector, for a range of activities from project startup to workforce training and development.

**6.20** Skills for Justice is developing several initiatives relating to **skills competitions**. The Skills for Justice Awards have been established to recognise exceptional achievement in the sector. These will be awarded for the first time in April 2010.

**6.21** In 2008, Skills for Justice submitted an entry into the National Training Awards and awards are being developed with the Butler Trust (a charity linked to the sector). Skills for Justice sponsors an award for the justice sector under the City and Guilds Medals of Excellence scheme.

**6.22** Skills for Justice is working with the National Policing Improvement Agency on preparations for the task of policing the 2012 Olympics. Skills for Justice took part in a cross SSC research project relating to customer service, and associated training needs, for the 2012 Olympics.

**Strengths**

- Consultation with employers and stakeholders to develop sector specific solutions.
- Skillsmark accreditation standard.

**Areas for Improvement**

- More joined up approach with Government Skills SSC.

## Part Seven

### SSC Results and Impacts

The Sector Skills Council has set ambitious and realistic targets in relation to skills priorities of the sector which are used to measure the direct results and shared impacts of products, services and solutions.

**7.1** Skills for Justice's operational plans include performance targets which are linked directly to the strategic and corporate plans. They also link to the relevant sector skills agreements.

**7.2** Skills for Justice uses a **balanced scorecard** to monitor its performance. This has been in place since July 2008. The balanced scorecard has been developed in line with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills Performance Management Evaluation Framework to create a performance measure that translates Skills for Justice's strategy into results that drive long term performance. Detailed reports are prepared quarterly and reviewed by operational managers, with actions to improve being agreed. A summary report is sent to the UK Board. Skills for Justice's senior management also monitor progress against the scorecard on a monthly basis. A traffic light system is used to summarise performance against targets.

**7.3** Examples of Skills for Justice's **performance targets** include:

- Seventy five per cent satisfaction with Labour Market Intelligence each year.
- Ninety per cent awareness and seventy five per cent understanding of the work of Skills for Justice amongst employers and stakeholders.
- Five policies/initiatives developed in the sector each year with a recognisable input from Skills for Justice.

**7.4** Skills for Justice is on track to meet or exceed its performance targets. The most recent summary of progress on the corporate plan measures show all but one out of eight measures is on "green", with the other on "amber". The balanced scorecard measure shows eight on "green" and five as "amber", with ten measures not yet due for reporting.

**7.5** Monitoring of progress is communicated to employers via an e-bulletin.

**7.6** Employers and stakeholders were able to cite a range of **impacts** including:

- Developing high quality National Occupational Standards which have led to revised Human Resources policies within key sub-sectors such as the police that incorporate the standards. We were told that this has improved Human Resources policies and provided greater consistency between police forces.
- Raising qualification standards in custodial care; the Level Three N/SVQ developed by Skills for Justice is now a requirement for employment as a prison officer in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Making funding more accessible, in particular for the Third Sector. For example, obtaining funding from the European Social Fund to train over 100 candidates in management and leadership skills.
- Enabling employers to network and discuss skills issues collectively and encouraging multi agency working. For example, by setting up the cross sector forum.
- Agreeing a compact with DIUS which will provide £72 million of funding over three years, which will help to fund 80,000 qualifications.
- Developing Skillsmark which provides a highly respected standard of accreditation for training providers.

**7.7** The SSC's work has received **international** recognition. For example, the Police Commissioner of New Zealand purchased a copy of Skills for Justice's Integrated Competency Framework.

**7.8** A key impact cited by many employers and stakeholders was that Skills for Justice has facilitated the bringing together of the various parts of the justice sector. Skills for Justice were seen as crucial to connecting the justice sector together

**7.9** Skills for Justice has identified the need to make progress in measuring the contribution its work makes to the **productivity** of public services. It has worked with other public service SSCs to progress discussions to develop a common measure.

**7.10** Skills for Justice has a system called Project Central which captures and reports data on spend, activities and outputs across the various programmes and projects which the SSC implements. This is a key tool to monitor whether projects are on track to meet their targets.

**7.11** Skills for Justice undertakes **evaluations** of individual projects to determine whether they have been successful in achieving the planned outputs and outcomes. Two members of the research team focus on providing detailed evaluations for use across the SSC. The evaluation process also seeks to identify lessons for future programmes.

**7.12** Changes within the sector are tracked through the employer survey and the Labour Market Intelligence Matrix. The aim is to provide Skills for Justice with a basis upon which it can evaluate the extent to which its projects have made an impact in particular areas of the sector. An annual evaluation report will be produced when the LMI Matrix is refreshed.

**Strengths**

- Clear and concise performance reporting.
- A range of impacts cited by employers.

**Areas for Improvement**

- Too early to demonstrate meaningful impact on the productivity of the sector.

# Technical Annex

## Performance Assessment Methodology

### Background

The National Audit Office (NAO) has undertaken this Independent Performance Assessment of Skills for Justice at the request of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

It has undertaken the assessment in accordance with the assessment framework set out in the relicensing framework for Sector Skills Councils published by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

The purpose of the Assessment Framework is to assess the capacity and capability of the Sector Skills Council against four key themes:

- The SSC is employer led, has the confidence and support of employers in its sector and is a strategically and operationally effective organisation;
- The SSC provides a clear, credible and coherent voice for employers on the skills and qualification needs of the sector backed by high quality LMI, standards and qualification development;
- The SSC can demonstrate a compelling employer offer which addresses sector skill priorities, including cross sector skills, with defined routes to market;
- The SSC has set ambitious and realistic targets in relation to skills priorities of the sector which are used to measure the direct results and shared impacts of SSC products, services and solutions.

Each key theme has a number of key tests and assessment questions which we have used to scrutinise the evidence across the four nations and prepare our report.

### Evidence

The Commission asked us to conduct our reviews to a very tight timetable and with the least burden on the Sector Skills Council.

We reviewed Sector Skills Council generated evidence for a period of two weeks before collecting evidence more directly from staff, employers and local stakeholders during a one week site visit to the Sector Skills Council. During this week we conducted a number of interviews and focus groups and observed meetings.

We chose a random sample of employers to interview, ensuring we covered as far as possible the full range of Council footprint. We also invited comments from employers and other stakeholders through our and the UK Commission's website. To measure the wider reach and engagement of the footprint, we examined the results of the Sector Skills Development Agency's 2007 census.

We collected information centrally from:

- The UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
- Central Government departments.
- Each of the Devolved Administrations through visits to Belfast, Cardiff and Glasgow.
- The Regional Development Agencies.
- The Learning and Skills Councils.
- Local Government.
- Awarding bodies.

To make our assessment we also reviewed a wide range of internal evidence including:

Expressions of Interest, Strategic Plans, Business Plans, Board Constitution, Minutes and attendance, Audit and Remuneration minutes, Operational plans, National and Regional plans, Sector Skills Agreements, Research Strategies, capacity and capability reviews, customer and staff satisfaction surveys, complaints procedures. SQRP strategy, Sector Skills Agreements, Sector Skills Action Plans, Labour Market Intelligence and Research strategies and plans, Employer Engagement Strategies, Take-up statistics, Stakeholder surveys, International Research data, Website materials,, Memoranda of Understanding, Compact arrangements, Sector Skills Agreements, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, stakeholder maps, performance review records, market assessments.



