



Learning Link Scotland Information Briefing
on the
Third Sector Skills Strategy

Background

In the Autumn Spending Review 2007, the Scottish Government announced £93.6m for the Third Sector. Of this, £30m are allocated to the Scottish Investment Fund which aims to increase the turnover of the social economy and reduce long-term dependence on grants. The remaining £63m feed into the Third Sector Development to support:

- Infrastructure development
- A Third Sector Enterprise fund
- The Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan.

In 2008 [The Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan](#) was launched by John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, Scottish Government. The Action Plan supports the creation of an environment in which an enterprising Third Sector can thrive and can contribute to the Government's purpose.

Third Sector Skills Strategy

The Third Sector Skills Strategy fits in Objective 4 of The Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan. Objective 4 focuses on **Investing in Skills, Learning and Leadership in the Third Sector**, where government sets out the intention to ‘*work with the Third Sector to influence and mainstream the Third Sector within the skills system in Scotland.*’¹

The Action Plan states that a wealthier and fairer, healthier, safer, stronger and greener Scotland, can only be built if people are equipped with the skills, expertise and knowledge required for success. To achieve our national outcomes, and to realise our full economic potential, the effective utilising as well as development of skills is necessary. The Action Plan argues that simply adding more skills to the workforce, won’t secure the full benefit for our economy unless employers and individuals maximise the benefits that they can derive from these skills.

Third Sector Skills: Framework for Action in Scotland

Over the course of 2009, a short-term working group comprising of representatives from Third Sector organisations, Scottish Government and the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, established ‘Third Sector Skills: A Framework for Action in Scotland’.

¹ The Enterprising and Third Sector Action Plan, Scottish Government 2008

The framework was developed by the Third Sector and its partners, for the Third Sector. It was developed by collating evidence collected from a series of facilitated development sessions and discussions with Third Sector and skills bodies, and through consultation with the wider sector.

Key Priorities and Outcomes

The Framework sets out five Key Priorities, with related activities and outcomes.

Priority 1: Cohesive approach to skills development for Third Sector Workforce in Scotland

- 1.1 Increased partnership working amongst Third Sector and Skills Development bodies
- 1.2. Improved co-ordination between education and skills providers with the Third Sector.

Priority 2: Skills Utilisation

- 2.1 Third Sector has an increased understanding of the skills gaps within the Third Sector workforce.
- 2.2 Third Sector makes more effective use of existing skills within the Third Sector workforce

Priority 3: Learning, Training and Development

- 3.1 Third Sector has better access to learning, training and development opportunities.

Priority 4: Increased awareness of Third Sector as possible career choice

- 4.1 Employment, Training and Education bodies have an increased and improved understanding of the Third Sector as a possible career choice
- 4.2 The citizens of Scotland have an increased and improved understanding of the Third Sector as a possible career choice.

Priority 5. Increase the contribution of the Third Sector towards the achievement of the Scottish Government's two strategic objectives of a Smarter and Wealthier and Fairer Scotland.

- 5.1 Third Sector workforce has an increased and improved skills base.
- 5.2 Third Sector makes full and productive use of the skills of the third sector workforce
- 5.3 Third Sector workforce works more efficiently and effectively resulting in higher levels of productivity.

Throughout the development of the Framework and proposed actions, the partners and participants emphasised the need to embed the overarching intentions of partnership, collaboration, joined up working, efficiency, effectiveness, and values.

A Single Interface - Third Sector Skills Partnership

The Scottish Government, with its partners, established a Third Sector Skills Partnership to lead, oversee and manage the implementation of the proposed actions contained within the Framework.

The Skills Partnership currently consists of some of the existing key partners (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations, Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition, Evaluation Support Scotland, Social Enterprise Academy, Learning Link Scotland and Volunteer Development Scotland) as well as the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils in Scotland (representing all 25 Sector Skills Councils in Scotland).



Diagram of the Third Sector Skills Partnership

The delivery of the framework and its key priorities requires a high level of collaboration and co-operation between the Third Sector and the skills bodies. Partners will work together to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and overcome organisational barriers to develop solutions to achieve agreed outcomes.

Next Steps

The Scottish Government has provided resources in the initial stage to support a temporary post of Project Director for Third Sector Skills Partnership. The Project Director will drive forward the initiative in partnership with SCVO's Policy Manager (Skills and Workforce Development) and the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils.

Additionally, a chair for the Third Sector Skills Partnership will be recruited. The chair will provide leadership for the Third Sector Skills Partnership and will actively provide a representational and ambassadorial role for the Third Sector Skills Partnership with all key stakeholders. Both positions were advertised in April 2010.

In the meantime, the partnership continues to meet and develop collaborative actions to progress 'Third Sector Skills – A Framework for Action in Scotland'

Contacts

For further information please contact:

Jayne Stuart, Learning Link Scotland jstuart@learninglinkscotland.org.uk

Celia Carson, SCVO celia.carson@scvo.org.uk

Further Reading

[Enterprising Third Sector](#), Scottish Government, 2008

Skills Utilisation Leadership Group

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy/making-skills-work/utilisation/SkillsUtilisation>

Skills Utilisation Cross-Sectoral Network

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy/making-skills-work/utilisation/Cross-SectoralNetwork>

Reaping the Benefits: Encouraging Employer Engagement in Skills Utilisation

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/19094657/0>

Advice on making better use of skills <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy/employeradvice>

Ambitions for Skills in the Workplace

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy/making-skills-work/utilisation/Ambitions>

Skills Strategy Updates - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/skills-strategy>