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Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Education
Lifelong Learning Policy Development

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Implementing Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe:

Progress report on the follow-up to the 2002 Council resolution

Reply to the Commission Questionnaire

UNITED KINGDOM

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I. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

- 1. Describe the legislative and financial framework in which lifelong learning strategies are implemented in your country. In the case of regional governments or decentralised decision-making, please detail the responsibilities of the different levels of Government in this process:**

England

Government Offices

Government Offices (GOs) are key agents of Government for the nine English Regions (e.g. Government Office for London), ensuring effective delivery of Government programmes regionally and locally. They work with regional partners, including local authorities, Regional Development Agencies and other organisations, to achieve the Government's aims in a joined up way.

Government Offices directly manage significant spending programmes on behalf of Departments. They oversee budgets and contracts delegated to regional organisations, as well as carrying out regulatory functions and sponsoring Regional Development Agencies.

The Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) is the corporate centre of the GOs and represents them in Whitehall, ensuring that the regional voice is heard and taken into account at the heart of Government.

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)

RDAs opened for business in April 1999. Their main role is to lead the development of an integrated Regional Economic Strategy that has skills as a key element. The Government (DfES) contributes £42.5 million to the RDA Single Programme to enable RDAs to carry out innovative development projects on education and skills.

The Government has commissioned the RDAs to work with partners to produce a Framework for Employment and Skills Action (FRESA). The FRESAs have produced a set of regional priorities and targets for partners to work towards. The RDAs have benchmarked current performance against the National Learning Targets and set new improvement targets.

At a regional level, the RDAs are already playing an important role working with local Learning and Skills Councils and other partners to improve regional intelligence and mount regional initiatives to complement central programmes.

Northern Ireland

Suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly

The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive were suspended on 15 October 2002. During the period of suspension the functions of the Assembly and Executive are discharged by Northern Ireland Government Departments subject to the direction and control of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The suspension is intended to be a temporary measure and Government Departments remain as configured to facilitate a smooth return to the normal operation of devolution when it is restored.

Northern Ireland Executive - Programme for Government

Central to the work of the Northern Ireland Assembly is the Northern Ireland Executive Programme for Government 2001-2004, formally agreed in March 2001. It represents a unique approach to creating consistent, focused and effective policies that meet the people's needs and which are built on cross-community and multi-party consultation. It sets out the strategic aims and priorities to be implemented by the Government Departments and various agencies. Public Service Agreements have been developed for each Department including specific objectives, actions and targets for achieving the Executive's priorities. Key strategies include:

- Investing in Education and Skills - to provide high quality education equally accessible to all; ensure that all young people have the skills and qualifications to gain employment or to improve their quality of life.
- Securing a Competitive Economy - to develop a dynamic, competitive knowledge-based economy the needs of all will be recognised; sufficient employment opportunities will be provided; natural resources used prudently to protect the environment; and high and stable levels of economic growth maintained.

Government Departments work closely with local Government and the Social Partners to ensure that lifelong learning programmes are developed and implemented in a working partnership.

Scotland

The Scottish Parliament's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee (ELLC) launched an inquiry into lifelong learning in Scotland in July 2001. Their remit was "to inquire into the need for a long-term, comprehensive strategy for continuing post-compulsory education and training in Scotland which meets the needs and aspirations of individuals and society as a whole in respect of quality, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, accountability, funding levels and structures and delivery mechanisms". The Committee published its final report in October 2002. It was both comprehensive and detailed, containing around 80 recommendations.

The first of these was that the Executive should develop a strategy for lifelong learning. **Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life**, the Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland was published on 11 February 2003. This document sets out the Executive's five-year strategy for lifelong learning, building on the significant achievements stemming from the Executive's two Programmes for Government and 'Opportunity Scotland'.

Wales

Extending Entitlement for 11- 25 year olds

Extending Entitlement: support for 11-25 year olds in Wales" directed local authorities in Wales through legislation to work with other partners to ensure the provision of a comprehensive network of services for young people within their area in order to encourage enable and assist them directly or indirectly to:

- Participate effectively in education and training
- Take advantage of opportunities for employment
- Participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities

Young People's Partnerships have been set up in 22 local authority areas in order to deliver this agenda 14-19.

Languages Count. The Welsh Assembly Government's Modern Foreign Languages Strategy

In 2002 the Assembly Government in Wales published its strategy for promoting the learning of foreign languages. The actions being taken forward include:

- Establishing the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (Wales) (CILT) as a new agency to deliver a programme of support for language learning. CILT Wales's work programme includes support for teaching in secondary schools and on making the case for languages to 14-year olds when they select subject options.
- supporting pilots of foreign language learning in junior schools (Key Stage 2). 96 primary schools in Wales will participate in pilots from September 2003.
- Estyn (the school and college inspectorate) and ACCAC (the curriculum authority) are supporting schools with important new guidance documents.
- the new Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification for 16-19 year olds enshrines as a minimum a small foreign language module for all baccalaureate students.
- The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales is beginning a strategic review of foreign language provision in Wales's universities and colleges.

The Welsh Baccalaureate

The Assembly Government in Wales is supporting the development of a new overarching qualification for 16-19 year olds. The Welsh Baccalaureate will recognise all of the learning undertaken by a young person and accord equal recognition to academic and vocational learning. It aims to promote inclusion and retention of students and includes requirements for one-to-one mentoring of students. The Baccalaureate is structured on a Core plus Options model, with the Core programme for all students comprising:

- 'Wales, Europe and the World'
- a short Language Module
- Personal and Social Education
- Work-related Education, including work experience
- Key Skills
- Community Service

The Baccalaureate is initially being piloted in 18 schools and colleges in Wales at intermediate and advanced levels from 2003, with plans for a foundation level baccalaureate to be developed by 2005. Subject to successful outcomes from the pilot, the use of the Welsh Baccalaureate will become widespread for 16-19 learning in Wales."

- 2. Describe how your Government ensures effective co-ordination and coherence in policy between different Ministries and departments as far as the definition and implementation of lifelong learning policies are concerned.**

England

Skills Strategy

The Investment for Reform White Paper, published in July 2002 set out the Government's intention to publish a Skills Strategy setting out the roles and responsibilities of employers, individuals and government.

Specifically the strategy will:

- set out how the Government as a whole aims to close the productivity gap with competitors through a highly skilled, productive workforce;
- show how different programmes and policies contribute to raising the skills of the population, both for labour market entrants and adults;
- provide a framework and delivery plan for meeting the economy's skill needs. It will outline how all Government Departments, the Learning and Skills Council, Sector Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies and others will work together;

- publish a statement of the roles of employers, individuals and government in skills development, including the state's role in providing institutional, qualifications and quality frameworks.

The Skills Strategy white paper is due to be launched in late June 2003

Northern Ireland

Two of the NI Executive's key priority areas for action are 'Investing in Education and Skills' and 'Securing a Competitive Economy'. The provision of lifelong learning opportunities to enable people to update their knowledge, skills and qualifications is an integral part of the Executive's Programme for Government.

Scotland

Changing to Deliver, which was launched in 2003, is a 2-year programme of activity designed to help the Scottish Executive move from being a good organisation, to an excellent one. Changing to Deliver is about working together, not just within our own units and departments, but in the corporate interest, helping others to achieve their objectives as well as achieving our own, with everyone making a contribution, creating a culture of shared endeavour with Ministers, delivery partners and stakeholders.

Wales

A Cabinet Sub Committee on Children and Young People has responsibility for monitoring and co-ordinating a range of programmes and action including those in lifelong learning. Assembly Officials also operate a group which also bring together actions and programmes across the Assembly

II. BUILDING-UP PARTNERSHIPS

- 3. Local level partnerships. Describe measures taken in order to foster local level partnerships in the definition of actions or projects intended to promote lifelong learning for all.**

England

Connexions Service

Connexions, the Government's front line support and guidance service for all young people 13-19 is available throughout England. 47 Partnerships, based on Learning and Skills council boundaries bring together support services for young people.

Partnerships have local operating arms (Local Managements Committiees – LMCs) usually based on Local Authority boundaries. LMCs are responsible for identifying local needs and priorities and helping Connexions Partnerships to determine most effective use of resources. Health Services, Police and Probation, Youth Services, Social Services, Youth Offending Teams, Drug Action Teams, Voluntary and Community organisations, Careers companies and many more play a role in delivering the service.

Local Learning Partnerships

The Department set up a network of 101 Learning Partnerships which have been in place since early 1999. They are non-statutory, voluntary groupings of local learning providers (ranging from voluntary sector to Further Education/Higher Education Institutes) and others such as local government, Connexions/Careers Service, trade unions, employers and faith groups. Their revised core roles announced April 2002 are:

- promoting provider collaboration in support of lifelong learning; and
- maximising the contribution of learning to local regeneration.

Northern Ireland

Learndirect (UK online learning service)

In introducing **learndirect** to Northern Ireland a partnership approach has been fostered since the outset. The community and voluntary sector run almost 60% of the learndirect centres operating in Northern Ireland. Partnerships may be with businesses, libraries and specific interest groups.

Partnership Fund

The Partnership Fund assists Further Education (FE) colleges establish local partnerships inclusive of all major interests e.g. employers, District Councils, Chambers of Commerce, community organisations, trade unions, and providers of education and training at every level. This funding is to assist colleges to bring teaching and learning to those who would not ordinarily use FE.

Scotland

- Careers Scotland was launched in March 2002. This all age guidance organisation, has brought together the roles previously undertaken by the Career Service Companies, Adult Guidance Networks, Education Business Partnerships and Local Learning Partnerships, offering clients a one-stop shop approach to careers support services
- Funding for adult literacy and numeracy (ALN) is routed through local authorities to the Community Learning and Development Partnerships where all providers of ALN can access resources.

- We support Community Learning and Development Partnerships which bring together local authorities, further education, higher education, the voluntary sector and others, linking learning to community regeneration in Scotland's Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) and elsewhere.
- The Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF) was established in January 2002 to work "in partnership with the Scottish Executive, and in consultation with the wider public and voluntary sector interests, to develop action plans to enable the successful integration of refugees in Scotland". SRIF published its Action Plan in February 2003
- The Scottish Executive funds *learn direct scotland* to foster partnerships with learning providers to enable the delivery of flexible adult learning throughout Scotland
- Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is managed by a partnership of national bodies – the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) through its Scottish Office, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Universities Scotland supported by the Scottish Executive. These development partners have been working with the Scottish Fire Service, the National Health Service in Scotland, the Scottish Police Force, and Universities Scotland supported by the Scottish Executive
- At an institutional level, many higher education institutions work with local authorities and community learning initiatives within the local community. Such partnerships are undertaken at the discretion of individual institutions
- We are encouraging schools to participate in lifelong learning projects by funding the Schools Enterprise Programme (SEP) that was introduced in 2001. This has resulted in over 4,500 teachers being trained to deliver enterprise activity to 5-18 year old school pupils
- We will be working with local education departments to build on the success of SEP as part of an enhanced programme for enterprising, entrepreneurial and vocational activity in 2003.

Wales

- Community Consortia for Education and Training in Wales (CCETs) are voluntary partnerships of local groupings of learning providers who agree to collaborate in the local planning and delivery of provision to the benefit of local learners, the community and employers. The National Council - ELWa has recently undertaken a review of CCETs. The review will provide a baseline against which to evaluate CCET progress and future development.

4. **Social partners. Describe how the involvement of social partners in the definition and implementation of lifelong strategy and policies is being ensured.**

England

Examples of work:

Basic Skills

The Department is working with its key partners, including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Trades Union Congress (TUC), Small Business Service and Sector Skills Councils to promote the idea to employers that addressing basic skills should be a normal part of workforce development activity.

Union Learning Representatives

The Government set up the Union Learning Fund (ULF) some 6 years ago to give financial backing to the union role as a key element in its workplace learning strategy. The ULF is a source of funding to help trade unions use their influence with employers, employees and others to encourage greater take up of learning at work, and boost their capacity as learning organisations.

Some 120 ULF projects are currently underway with objectives ranging from tackling basic skills needs to continuing professional development of union members.

See also section 8.

Northern Ireland

Essential Skills Strategy

In Northern Ireland the social partners are involved in the definition and implementation of lifelong learning strategies and policies, e.g. in the Essential Skills Committee established to take forward the Essential Skills Strategy. The Essential Skills Committee is chaired by the Minister with responsibility for Employment and Learning, with membership from other Northern Ireland Government Departments, business and industry, the further education sector and the voluntary and community sectors.

Union Learning Fund

A Union Learning Fund was introduced for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2002 with an initial funding allocation of £250,000. This builds on existing experience in England and Wales and aims to harness the potential of Trades Unions in promoting in the workplace the benefits of lifelong learning.

Scotland

A Trade Union Working Party on Lifelong Learning (TUWPLL) has been established to provide a forum for Trade Union input to Scottish Executive lifelong learning policy. This forum, which is chaired by the Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning, meets quarterly.

Wales

Officials bring together a range of Partner agencies at an All Wales level to support local development.

5. Schools and Universities. Describe specific measures aimed at fostering the participation of schools and universities in lifelong learning programmes and projects.

England

There are a number of examples of measures the UK Government has taken to foster the participation of schools and universities in lifelong learning programmes and projects. e.g.

- **Key Skills:** Aimed at 13 - 16 year olds in schools. Involve teacher training to develop the capacity to delivery key skills teaching in schools. Supporting the generic employability skills required by employers.
- **Enhanced Curriculum** aimed at 13 - 16 year olds in schools by building the capacity of schools to deliver vocational and applied qualifications and building partnerships between schools, colleges and training providers to deliver a vocational curriculum, resulting in improved links with employers.
- **Re-engagement** with Learning aimed at 13 -16 year olds in schools. Use of varied interventions to support re-engagement of young people in schools who are at risk of disengaging, or have already disengaged, from learning.
- **A Project**, aimed at Young People in schools aged 11 +, small businesses and adults in the community. Delivering substantial improvements to ICT infrastructure through investment in schools, community learning centres and learning pods for small businesses
- **A Project** aimed at raising aspirations & awareness of higher education (HE) in year 10/11 pupils, through working with the local University to give year 10 pupils three days of HE experience beyond the normal school curriculum.

- **A Local Learning Partnership** has used its funding to produce booklets which signpost local learning providers and learning opportunities for distribution to homes in the locality.

Extended Schools

We are encouraging all schools to provide or work with others to provide extended services which will benefit the wider community.

Funding has been made available over the period 2003 – 04 to 2005 – 06 to develop full service extended schools which will provide a core set of services and activities - childcare, health and social care, lifelong learning opportunities , family learning, parenting support, study support, sports and arts and ICT access.

In March 2003, the Government announced funding of £52.2 million over the period 2003 – 04 to 2005 – 06 for the extended schools programme. By 2006, we will be working with up to 240 schools to enable them to provide a more comprehensive range of extended services for their communities as well as support staff who can plan, develop, manage and maintain extended services in other schools.

Literacy and Numeracy

A new project *Skills for Families* will improve the planning and delivery of Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy in nine local pilot projects. The new models of delivery will include secondary schools, workplaces and voluntary organisations to reach and engage more parents and carers.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland a comprehensive review of the statutory further education sector is underway to maximise its contribution to personal and economic development. A programme is currently supported that allows further education lecturers to spend more time in industry to update their skills and knowledge.

Collaboration continues between the further and higher education sectors, business and the community to ensure that further and higher education is responsive to their needs. Support will be provided for Centres of Excellence in priority skill areas and a review of the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) pilots in four further education colleges will be undertaken

Scotland

- The Scottish Executive: Education Department, National Debate on Education was launched in March 2002. It was intended as an inclusive dialogue with pupils, teachers, employers and everyone else with an interest in the future of school-age education. The Scottish Executive's response to the National Debate was published in January 2003.

This sets out the vision for a comprehensive educational system with excellent schools at the heart of the community, and where young people have the opportunity to leave school with the skills, the attitudes and the expectations to succeed.

- The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council established its Wider Access Development Grant for four years in 1999 that amounts to over £2.25m per annum. This money has enabled the establishment of projects across Scotland which facilitate links between schools, Further Education colleges and Universities with the aim of raising awareness of and aspirations towards Higher Education. The most high profile of these are the Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools (GOALS) project in the West of Scotland and the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) in the East of Scotland. These both target schools with participation rates in Higher Education severely below the average - the aim being to stimulate achievement at school and encourage aspiration towards and progression into Higher Education.

Wales

Schools have a role within the Young People's Partnership (see General framework) so that the contribution to the learning and opportunities happen not only in school time but outside with other organisations.

III. INSIGHT INTO THE DEMAND FOR LEARNING

- 6. Describe how your Government ensures that everyone has access to the basic skills that should be provided to all citizens as a necessary foundation for any further learning.**

England

Basic Skills

Skills for Life, the Government's strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills was launched in March 2001 and aims to improve the literacy, numeracy or language skills of 1.5 million adults by 2007.

Literacy and numeracy provision is entirely free to the learner, no matter where it is or who provides it. The availability of provision is being highlighted by our high profile promotion and marketing campaign, launched in August 2001. The "Get On" campaign featuring the Gremlins has achieved considerable success in increasing the demand for literacy, numeracy and language skills among potential and existing learners. There is a national free phone number for those interested in courses – so far 170,000 adults have called the hotline.

A range of other activity is encouraging adults to take up literacy and numeracy provision, and helping to remove barriers to learning:

- Contextualised basic skills: People with literacy, language and numeracy needs may be reluctant to join basic skills classes but may engage in other courses (vocational, sport, ICT) in a variety of settings (in schools, community centres, colleges). The Embedded Learning project, commissioned by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, researched courses where learning activities promoting literacy, language and numeracy skills were embedded within another course or activity. This research will be taken forward in 2003 by our National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy.
- Jobseekers: We are working with Jobcentre Plus to test interventions and approaches to improve the delivery of basic skills to jobseekers and other benefit claimants.

Prison Education

Prisons are also part of the national Skills for Life Strategy, and are involved in pathfinder projects in literacy, numeracy, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Inclusion in national initiatives ensures that teachers in prisons have access to the same training and materials as their peers in the mainstream

A new initiative funded by the Prisoners' Learning and Skills Unit will enable prisoners to achieve commercial and academic qualifications in ICT leading to further study or work opportunities on release: the Prisons ICT Academy will be piloted in three prisons in summer 2003, then gradually rolled out to a further twelve prisons and three external sites e.g. National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders centres, local colleges and universities.

Northern Ireland

Essential Skills in Northern Ireland

The Essential Skills for Living Strategy was launched in Northern Ireland in October 2002. The Strategy adopts a radical new approach to literacy and numeracy issues and includes the introduction of a regional curriculum, accreditation for adult learners and improved tutor qualifications. It contains targets for building capacity (including providers of literacy and numeracy and new avenues such as work-based and family learning), engaging new learners and suggests ways in which these might be achieved.

Key targets include: By March 2004, Essential Skills qualifications ranging from Entry Level to Level 2, together with a system for tracking learners' progression against the qualification, will be in place; and by March 2005, one third of tutors will have enrolled on a new Diploma course developed by Queen's University Belfast and 25,000 Essential Skills learners will have been supported.

Scotland

- In July 2001, following the publication of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALN) report, a programme was designed, in collaboration with Communities Scotland, local authorities and their community learning partners, to help 80,000 adults by 2002 tackle ALN
- In January 2003, the National Development Centre for Community Learning and Development, Adult Literacy and Numeracy was established at Communities Scotland. The Centre will carry out research and development and drive the creation of quality ALN provision

7. Describe recent measures aimed at developing ICT skills for the general population or for specific groups of citizens, as a means to improve access to the knowledge society.

England

National Learning Network (NLN) Transformation Programme

NLN Transformation Programme is an initiative which is designed to embed electronic (e) -learning in the post 16 sector. It is, as yet, in the formative stage and work is being undertaken to provide the following:

- user research to analyse the current perception of users and potential users, make recommendations in respect of removing barriers and stimulating demand.
- curriculum and content research to examine coverage, gaps and priorities, and learner, provider and employer needs.
- a portal will be introduced to provide a content gateway, for tutors in educational institutions in the first instance, but which will eventually allow learners to access appropriate e-learning materials from their homes or workplaces.

Otherwise, no real changes since the last report. Measures to develop ICT skills for the general population are still being implemented through:

- **University for Industry/learndirect**
- **UK online centres- now number 6000**

Scotland

- The first Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs)scheme which ran from October 2000 until it was closed in December 2001 specifically targeted ICT skills by offering incentives for a wide range of ICT courses. There was a very large uptake, 260,000 accounts had been opened by December 2001 and 128,000 ILAs used. Of these the majority of funding was spent on ICT courses

- It was announced in February 2003 that ILA2 would be launched as soon as Scottish Ministers are satisfied that all the concerns raised by ILA1 have been dealt with. ILA2 will also incentivise ICT learning, though for a more limited range of accredited courses up to SVQ level 2 only

Wales

- The Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned a programme to develop broadband internet learning packages for those in excluded groups, including courses aimed at enhancing ICT skills amongst groups not traditionally involved in learning and amongst groups disadvantaged by geographical situation.
- Consultation on a Wales e-learning strategy is running from March-June 2003. The aim is to transform learning in Wales using technology as an enabler and to incorporate within this a national drive to boost competence, confidence and application regarding the use of ICT in businesses, communities and learning.
- There is a continuing roll out of a broadband lifelong learning network in Wales so that all schools, colleges, public libraries and universities have high speed internet access by 2005.
- There is an Assembly funded pilot (commenced in 2002, and to be expanded by the National Council – ELWa in 2003) to place graduates with high level ICT skills in community settings to work as a team to build local awareness and confidence in the use of ICT to support business processes and access to services.
- There is a multi-partner collaboration (including learning providers, Career Services and the National Council – ELWa) with BBC Wales to develop innovative informal and participation learning programmes on the BBC website linked to popular television programmes ('Learning Journeys').
- All Further Education institutions have e-learning champions funded by the national council. This is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the provider network for e-learning delivery. In 2003 we will be aiming to:
 - Strengthen the networking of these champions to boost best practice
 - Expand the concept to community led learning through funding e-learning champions in the voluntary sector
 - Laying foundations for capacity building in the work based learning sector
 - Begin a major programme of investment digitalise materials held in the National Museum and Library of Wales to enable access by all.

8. What recent measures have been taken to promote learning at the workplace?

England

Basic Skills

In March 2003 we launched a campaign to persuade employers to take the issue of poor literacy, language and numeracy skills seriously, and offer all of their staff who need it free training. Business Links and learndirect will both be able to offer advice on what businesses should do and advisers from the Learning and Skills Council will be on hand to visit workplaces to change the culture of learning at work.

Employer Training Pilots

Employer Training Pilots were launched in September 2002, to help improve access to training and enable employees to attain basic and level 2 skills. They operate on a voluntary basis, and employers may come from the private, public or voluntary sector. Employers release low-skilled employees during working hours to achieve basic and level 2 skills.

The pilots offer between 35 and 70 hours subsidised Basic Skills or level 2 training. Wage compensation is paid at the rate of 0% - 150% dependant upon size and location of the company.

Small Firms Development Account (SFDA) Pilot:

The existing SFDA packages provide support for small businesses and introduce a range of new incentives aimed at increasing commitment to learning. Initially a one year pilot which was to run from April 2002 to March 2003, approval has now been given to extend the pilot for a second year and we are currently consulting with partners to decide on the best way to take SFDA forward. (See section 9 for further details)

Union Learning Representatives

See section 4.

Northern Ireland

Union Learning Fund

The introduction of a Union Learning Fund in Northern Ireland in 2002 with an initial budget of £250,000 aims to harness the potential of Union Learning Representatives in promoting the value of lifelong learning in the workplace. Successful bids in the first phase of the fund focus on building the infrastructure and addressing essential (basic) skills needs via workplace learning. A key feature is also training for Workplace Learning Representatives.

Scotland

We need to ensure that there are learning opportunities that respond to the needs of society and the economy. We want to encourage all types of organisations – private, public and voluntary – to train people in their workforce, helping everyone to see the benefits.

- The Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) was established to help fund workplace learning projects, led by trade unions, for their members. It also promotes activity by trade unions in support of the Executive's lifelong learning initiatives.
- Funding for SULF increased by 50% to £800k per annum, for three years from 2003
- We strongly support the use of Investors in People (IiP) as a key tool in developing learning organisations. Scotland currently has 3500 companies recognised as Investors in People
- The Scottish Executive's Learning Strategy, introduced in June 2001, commits the Executive to becoming a Learning Organisation – encouraging and supporting lifelong learning by its entire staff
- In April 2002, 4 pathfinders were launched to test new ways of delivering the ALN strategy, raise awareness and stimulate demand
- £40m will have been invested in Community Learning Partnerships for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) by 2006.
- *learnirect scotland* for business was launched in September 2002

9. Have specific incentives (financial, fiscal, etc.) been recently introduced to help economic sectors and / or companies (in particular SMEs) to implement lifelong learning programmes and actions in your country?

England

Small Firm Development Account (SFDA) Pilot

The SFDA pilot was introduced to help address the particular problems which discourage small firms from engaging in training and development. The pilot is aimed at owner-managed businesses with 5 – 49 employees.

The first stage of the pilot ran from April 2002 to March 2003. In year one the pilot offered:

- £500 to each small business that submitted an approved development plan;
- 50 per cent discount on training costs to a maximum of £150 per employee named in the plan. Training did not have to be qualifications-based but had to support the firms' business objectives;
- Advice and guidance on government sponsored initiatives such as IiP, Learnirect, Modern Apprenticeships, Business Link Operator services;
- Training and mentoring for a Training Champion to be nominated by each participating firm.

In year two we plan to concentrate the greater part of the financial incentives on development opportunities for owner managers and other key workers. We propose to provide grants towards the costs of management and leadership training and to offer the services of a mentor for the owner/manager.

Employer Training Pilots

See Section 8.

Northern Ireland

Learndirect

A pilot programme with an initial allocation of £500,000 has been introduced via a number of **learndirect** Premier Business Centres aimed at businesses with 10 employees or fewer – the micro-business sector. A key feature of **learndirect** learning is the ability to access the courses in the workplace. The Small Firms Growth Plan is a bursary scheme to encourage these very small businesses to participate in learning.

Enterprising Education Action Plan

In Northern Ireland, the Enterprising Education Action Plan, published on 27 March 2003, recognises that every learner, including the lifelong learner, should be given the opportunity to develop the skills and attributes which will equip them to make a unique, innovative and creative contribution in the world of work. The Action Plan establishes an initial framework of agreed and co-ordinated actions to ensure greater synergy, co-operation and understanding between the worlds of work and education. It represents a first step towards a longer-term goal of ensuring that all learners have equal access to a wide range of high quality enterprise learning experiences.

Economic Development Forum

The Economic Development Forum – a partnership body which brings together Government and the major social partner organisations – published, in June 2002, a statement of the priorities to be addressed – by all sectors – if the Northern Ireland economy is to be significantly strengthened during the period to the year 2010. *Working Together for a Stronger Economy*, identified seven areas for collaborative action, one of which addresses the need to maximise on human capital and enhance capabilities and skills.

Regional Innovation Strategy

- Also in Northern Ireland an Inter-Departmental Working Group, consisting of the eleven NI Government Departments and the economic development agency, Invest Northern Ireland, is developing “think|create|innovate” – the Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland.

“think|create|innovate” recognises that the longer-term success of the NI economy will depend on the ability to create more and better entrepreneurs and a world-class, innovative, workforce. A key priority is to enhance the culture of innovation and enterprise, placing emphasis on educational and vocational training providers (including Further Education colleges and universities) developing programmes to ensure the provision of a highly skilled and trained workforce for a modern economy.

Scotland

- The Scottish Skills Fund (SSF) was established in 2001 to improve the demand for high quality in-work training at sector level in Scotland. Funding is £500k per annum. The SSF aims to maintain existing skills projects; to continue to develop a learning culture; to tackle skills gaps, shortages and other issues; and to encourage skills development in employment sectors.

10. Describe recent measures taken to support the role of learning facilitators (teachers, trainers, adult educators, guidance workers, etc.) and their adaptation to the needs resulting from the implementation of lifelong learning strategies and policies.

England

Connexions Service

Connexions is the Government’s front line support service for all young people in England aged 13-19. Personal Advisers (PAs) are a key feature of the service, and provide advice and support on careers and lifestyle issues.

Personal Advisers must to be qualified at NVQ level 4 or equivalent in a relevant professional discipline and have undertaken additional specific Connexions training to work with young people to better understand how to re-engage them in learning.

The Connexions Personal Adviser and Assessment, Planning Implementation and Review (APIR) Framework provides Personal Advisers with a structure to follow as they work one-to-one with a young person. Use of the APIR Framework will be mandatory for all Connexions Partnerships from April 2004.

A new National Framework for Careers Education and Guidance 11-19, was introduced in March 2003 to help teachers and tutors develop improved programmes of careers education, which better prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Connexions Service National Unit also fund a national Careers Education Support Programme (from November 2001) to develop and improve careers education and guidance by identifying, developing and providing easy access to high quality resources and advice to careers education teachers and tutors, and those who support them.

Careers education teachers in schools are also now eligible for a centrally funded Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) initiative, which recognises excellent classroom teachers. Successful careers teachers access an enhanced pay scale and spend 20% of their time working outside their own school to develop and share good practice. 33 ASTs for careers education and guidance have been recruited for the start of April 2003.

Work is in progress to ensure that all careers teachers and tutors have access to accredited qualifications and a National Vocational Qualification for careers education and guidance that will provide access to an accredited qualification via a work based route is being piloted.

Further Education – Success For All

Success for All, our strategy for reforming education and training, was published in November. It includes proposals for improving teaching and learning and developing leaders, teachers, trainers and support staff in the sector.

A new Standards Unit has been established in the Department to take this work forward. The Unit is identifying best practice and developing teaching and learning materials and support mechanisms to help improve teaching and learning. The Unit is also developing strategies to raise the numbers of qualified teachers, lecturers and trainers in the sector and to support employers in the sector in developing their workforce.

In addition, the Department, together with its partners, are looking to launch a new leadership college for the sector from 2003, and improve mentoring for managers. The Department is also developing a succession planning strategy which will bring leaders with a wide range of experience into the sector and also increase the diversity of senior staff.

Guidance

The Department is currently undertaking a review of the competence framework for guidance workers to ensure that suitable qualifications are available to support them in the delivery of guidance and counselling services. We are also trialling new methods of NVQ assessment and exploring alternative routes to qualification which may involve more recognition of APL and developing a package for continuous professional development.

Northern Ireland

ICT - teacher training programme

As part of the core skills programme, 'Connecting Teachers to ICT' 1,300 laptop computers were provided to schools in 1999 and a further 4,500 in March 2000. In 2001, a further £13.2m was invested providing another 6,000 laptops and 1,000 digital projectors to schools. Schools have reported that providing laptops to support teachers' ICT training has already made a considerable difference to teachers' professional development and to their lesson preparation.

Some 99.9% of schools registered for the New Opportunities Funded training – the highest proportion in any region of the UK and a clear indication of the commitment of teachers to continuing professional development. Training of almost all teachers was completed by the end of March 2003.

ICT in the Further Education (FE) Sector

The implementation of the Information Communications Technology (ICT) strategy for the Northern Ireland FE sector was completed in September 2002 and four key operational objectives have been achieved;

- Infrastructure – significant improvements were made to FE College networks. Target ratios for student and staff access to networked industry specification. PC's of 1:5 for full-time equivalent (FTE) students and 1:3 FTE staff.
- Staff Development – a 'Teaching & Learning', level 2, Certificate in the use of ICT in FE was accredited with awarding bodies with a target for all full-time lecturing staff to achieve the qualification by September 2002. (At September 2002 80% of all full-time lecturing staff had achieved the qualification with the remaining staff pursuing it in the 02/03 academic year)
- Curriculum development – FE colleges were members of the FE National Consortium in 1999/00 and 2000/01; access to National Learning Network materials secured for most colleges; curriculum and management strands of British Educational Communications and Technology Agency's 'Information and Learning Technology Champions' programme were delivered in 2001/02; and various Champion networks are currently operating;
- Networking - all FE colleges are connected to the Joint Academic Network (JANET), at 2 Mb/s, facilitating access to high bandwidth. Plans are currently in place for the introduction of a Northern Ireland Metropolitan Area Network.

Raising teacher standards

All full time teachers in Further Education complete a postgraduate certificate in Further and Higher Education (PGC(FH)E) within three years of their appointment.

From September 2002 the course has included a module that incorporates adult literacy and numeracy. All teachers complete an induction programme within their own college. This programme is currently under review with a view to introducing a programme for all new teachers both full and part-time and a precursor to the PGC(FH)E.

In the case of basic skills, a new professional career structure is currently under development and by March 2005, one third of the tutors will have enrolled on a Diploma course developed by Queen's University Belfast.

Induction for new teachers in Northern Ireland

In 1996 the Northern Ireland Teacher Education Committee (NITEC – now subsumed within the NI General Teaching Council - GTC) placed induction as a one year middle stage in a three-phase model of teacher education, between initial education and early professional development (the second and third years of teaching). This is based on a professional model of teacher competencies. The aim of this integrated partnership-based approach is to encourage beginning professionals to develop their critical, reflective practice in order to improve their teaching and the quality of pupils' learning. "Arrangements for Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland" laid out five areas of competence as the foundation for the three stages of teacher education.

Northern Ireland Key Stage 4 Flexibility Initiative

A review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment revealed that teachers in a significant number of schools considered that the academic focus of the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4 was unsuitable to the needs of some students. Consequently, in April 2000, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland introduced the Key Stage 4 Flexibility Initiative, which allows schools to replace certain elements of the statutory curriculum with innovative work-related learning programmes for selected groups of pupils in the 14 to 16 age range.

The initiative is now in its third year and a review of the operation of the first two years of the initiative by the Department's Education and Training Inspectorate's in a number of the participating schools reported increased levels of motivation, improved attendance among students concerned and benefits from their work-related learning experiences. In the 2002/2003 academic year some 75 schools and around 3500 pupils are participating in the Initiative. This is expected to increase in the forthcoming year.

Scotland

- A National Training Project was established in 2001 to deliver immediate training opportunities to practitioners in all sectors throughout Scotland. This includes carrying out a training needs analysis with Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland (ALN) practitioners, and piloting new tutor training modules

- February 2003 saw the commencement of a 4 month consultation exercise in connection with the review of the national guidelines on the provision leading to the Teaching Qualification in Further Education and related professional development
- Currently a fully accredited national training programme for practitioners is being developed, as well as a new learner curriculum framework and a system to “recognise real learner progress”
- The Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) has set targets which aim to increase the number of lecturers who hold a teaching qualification to 90% of full-time staff and 80% of part-time staff
- In 2002-03 the SFEFC has allocated a total of £4.5m for quality initiatives, £2.75m will cover the cost of staff training and development.

Wales

- In June 2002 the Welsh Assembly Government introduced regulations requiring new entrant teachers in the Further Education sector to possess or be working towards a recognised teaching qualification.
- In 2002-03 the Welsh Assembly Government employed the National Institute of National Continuing Education (NIACE Dysgu Cymru) on a project establishing an internet resource and support supporting the Continuing Professional Development of those engaged in community-based adult learning.
- The Assembly Government also funded development of a training programme for staff and community volunteers engaged in community-based learning in an outreach context.

IV. ADEQUATE RESOURCING

- 11. Has a target for investment in human resources been established by your Government and, in the affirmative, what is that target? What progress has been achieved so far as regards the achievement of this target?**

England

Investors in People (IiP)

Investors in People (IiP) is a national standard, which aims to improve organisational performance through the development of people. The Government is working with the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and Investors in People UK to position Investors in People as a primary business development tool. The partnership will sustain and develop the Investors standard as a central element for promoting employer investment in skills.

In April 2002, an extra £30m was announced in the budget to encourage more small firms to take up the Investors in People Standard. Target for the extra money - 20,000 small firms engaging with the standard, and 10,000 recognised. This target is in addition to the LSC's Workforce Development Strategy target for employer engagement with IiP.

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)

EMAs are part of the Government's commitment to make sure that all young people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, no matter what their financial circumstances may be. Eligible young people can receive an allowance if they stay on at school.

Scheme piloted in 15 Local Education Authority Areas. Spend for last financial year 2002-03 £116 million. Similar spend for current year. National roll out of scheme from September 2004, estimated cost being £400-£500 million.

Northern Ireland

Investors in People, Northern Ireland, Quality Centre

The aim of the NI Investors in People Quality Centre is to promote awareness of Investors in People in Northern Ireland and to encourage and support organisations to achieve and maintain the Standard. A key objective for the Centre over the next two years is to target organisations employing less than 50 people. An important element of this work is working with intermediaries such as local Councils.

Essential Skills Strategy

For the Essential Skills Strategy, to build capacity, both in the short term and in the longer term, requires resources necessary to fund the actual learning programmes. Initially there are four sources available for providers, these are the Further Education College funding mechanism, EU Peace II programme, Workplace and Family Innovation funds and other Departmental programmes such as Jobskills and New Deal. Currently £1.9m is spent annually on this area from within the further education budget and £7m is available from the EU Peace II programme.

- 12. Has new funding been accorded to, or existing funding re-directed towards, new priority sectors (e.g., pre-school learning, non-formal and informal learning, adult education, etc.)?**

England

Please see replies at sections 5 (Extended Schools), 9 (Small Firm Development Account (SFDA) Pilot), section 11 and also the reference to Further Education Student Support at section 16.

Scotland

The Scottish Executive provides funding for an Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department (ELLD), which supports Scottish Ministers in developing and promoting an environment that encourages business and enterprise to flourish in Scotland. ELLD promotes lifelong learning through policy development and funding for further and adult education, and higher education. It promotes and supports education and training for people at every stage in life beyond school age. Investment includes:

- Financial resources totalling over £51m have been invested over 5 years to 2006 to raise levels of Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN). £40m has been routed through Community Learning and Development Partnerships
- In May 2001, the following funding was allocated:
 - £1.75m to assist colleges with development work relating to new National Qualifications
 - £5.5m for new student support measures
 - £2.5m to take forward the Knowledge-Economy Cross-Cutting Initiative
 - £1m to take forward the policy on “inclusiveness” set out by the Beattie Committee
- In July 2001, £3m was awarded for childcare in the Further Education (FE) sector, and £0.5m for support and re-training of the Motorola workforce who had been made redundant
- In October 2001, £8m for the improvement and upgrading of FE estates in anticipation of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- In October 2001, £1.7m was made available for access to basic English language courses
- In December 2001, £0.5m was released to the FE sector to support/retrain workers affected by the impact of the Foot and Mouth outbreak on their livelihood
- In June 2002, £10m allocated for equipment to upgrade technical skills, and provide equipment to comply with DDA requirements
- In July 2002, a further £10m for estates improvements in FE
- In September 2002, £3m to aid restructuring
- In October 2002, £18k allocated to the Brite Centre in support of staff working with students with disabilities
- In December 2002, £2m for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support for asylum seekers, and £16m to ensure financial security throughout the FE sector

Wales

- The Youth Service in Wales has received over 10 million pounds of funding over a three year period to develop its role in informal learning by appointing youth workers, updating equipment including ICT. The service also receives a grant to update part time youth workers.

- New funding has been directed towards the pay of teaching staff in the further education sector, to enhance their pay, in particular of lower-paid lecturers and support staff; and begin eliminating the lower spine points on the lecturers' payscale..
- In late 2001 the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Education Commissioned the National Council for Education and Training in Wales (the Council) to undertake a **comprehensive review of the funding arrangements for post 16 learning** and make recommendations for the development of a new funding system. The new system will be developed broadly on the following principles:
 - Shifting the emphasis from providers to learners
 - Equitable prices to be paid for the same training provision
 - The system should be strategy led
 - Providers should be treated equitably
 - There should be transparency in the system.

The new system will be introduced using a phased approach building towards the full introduction of demand led purchasing of learning by August 2004.

Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) -Wales

The successor programme to the ILA (UK), the first phase of which was introduced on 26 February 2003. The Welsh Assembly Government in partnership with the National Council for Education and Training in Wales (ELWA) has developed a better-targeted ILA programme, building on the strength of the original, using evidence gathered from external evaluators, internal reviews and lessons learned from other UK countries.

It has at its core the objective of widening participation by encouraging take-up from those with no or low qualifications. Further it will encourage take-up from those who face financial barriers to learning by offering a higher incentive to those on a low income. When it is open to individuals later this year, there will be three levels of funding determined by the learner's status and the maximum ILA will be £200 in the learning year:-

- 100% of course costs if Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based) is in payment and highest prior learning attainment level 2 or below up to a maximum ILA of £200.
- 80% of course costs if Working Families Tax Credit, Disabled Person's Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit is in payment and highest prior learning attainment level 2 or below up to a maximum ILA of £160
- 50% of course costs up to a maximum ILA of £100 – Highest prior learning attainment is level 2 or below.
- In its first year it is anticipated that between 12-15,000 individuals will make use of an ILA Wales to fund their learning with 40% coming from the priority group of people on a low income.

13. Describe initiatives undertaken to stimulate private investment in education (e.g., public-private partnerships).

England

The Connexions Card

The Connexions Card is an example of private-public partnership in the lifelong learning and training field. The Card aims to encourage young people to continue in learning at 16 in three ways:

- Enabling more young people to remain in learning by providing a range of discounts to help reduce the cost of learning, covering local transport, learning materials, leisure and the high street
 - Motivating young people to fulfil their potential by rewarding attendance and application through exciting and innovative rewards
 - Improving the career and life choices that young people make by providing them with relevant information through a website.
- Policy Commitment :

The concept behind the Connexions Card is the result of the Prime Minister's announcement in 1999, that a smart card would be developed to encourage more young people to stay in learning at 16. A seven year contract was signed with *Capita* in July 2001 to work through a Public Private Partnership to deliver the Card. The Card is now available to all 16-19 year olds across England and a national launch programme has recently taken place with events around the country.

Northern Ireland

Partnership Fund

The Partnership Fund assists Further Education (FE) colleges establish local partnerships inclusive of all major interests e.g. employers, District Councils, Chambers of Commerce, community organisations, trade unions, and providers of education and training at every level. This funding is to assist colleges establish and develop partnerships and take forward innovative approaches, to bring teaching and learning to those who would not ordinarily use FE.

14. Give examples of private-public partnerships (PPP) in the field of lifelong education and training (e.g. joint funding to develop infrastructure and/or human resources).

See reference to the **Connexions Card** at section 13.

V. FACILITATING ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

15. Describe measures taken to improve access to learning, by removing the most important barriers to learning (age, social barriers, geographical barriers, motivation, etc.).

England

Connexions Service

See section 10 and 13 (Connexions card).

National Learning Network Transformation Programme

See reference at section 7

Neighbourhood Learning Centres

Neighbourhood Learning Centres, which are a part of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, are community venues where attractive learning opportunities are available in areas of disadvantage as part of the Government's drive to widen access and remove barriers.

Schools – Community Links

We are encouraging all schools to provide, or work with others to provide extended services.

- The *Schools: Achieving Success* White Paper outlined the Government's commitment to promoting and developing extended schools. It said that we would legislate to make sure that there are no barriers to schools developing these innovative approaches.
- *Investment for Reform* said that we would create extended schools in the most deprived areas, and that we would also support local delivery of extended services in many other areas.
- *A New Specialist System: Transforming Secondary Education* said that over the next three years we will work closely with 240 schools to enable them to provide a more comprehensive range of extended services for their communities. It also said that we were keen to support all Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools in setting up extended services in other schools.

In October 2002, guidance on setting up extended services for schools, LEAs and other partners was published, as well as guidance on developing childcare facilities in schools.

25 LEAs were funded to act as pathfinders in 2002 – 03. Each received up to £200k each (+ £25k specifically for school based childcare). The aim was to test out various approaches used by schools and authorities in the development of family and community facilities and services on school premises. With the pathfinders we aim to look at the impact of the legislation, the processes involved in setting up extended schools, the impact on pupils' attainment, behaviour and motivation and on schools and the local community, as well as to help to identify any potential barriers and how they might be overcome. They are being evaluated with the report due in December 2003.

Basic Skills

Literacy and numeracy provision is completely free to the learner, irrespective of circumstances. (As noted in last report)

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Metropolitan information technology network

During the 2003/04 financial year the further and higher education sectors will introduce a Northern Ireland Metropolitan information technology network. This will improve the electronic links between further and higher education institutions within Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, and will facilitate greater exploitation of e-learning.

Access to Further and Higher Education

In Northern Ireland widening access to higher education to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities is an important objective. Around 700 additional places are planned in higher education over the next three years and these will be supplemented by a significant increase in part-time higher education provision. Links between further and higher education will be strengthened to give students clearer and more flexible progression pathways and support the development of work based quality initiatives including the new Foundation Degrees. Additional financial support for students from families on low incomes will be provided from September 2003. In Northern Ireland the non-repayable grant will increase to a maximum of £2,000 with the income threshold rising to £20,000.

Review of Further Education Sector

In Northern Ireland a comprehensive review of the statutory further education sector is underway focusing on improving the quality of education provision, enhancing its contribution to economic development and ensuring more people have access to further education.

Further Education Partnership Fund/The Access Initiative Fund

The Further Education Partnership Fund has been introduced to assist further education colleges establish and/ or strengthen local partnerships to increase local demand for learning and develop the education and training infrastructure.

The Access Initiative Fund is also available to assist college's review their access policies in order to identify under representation of groups or individuals and take forward innovative projects and policies designed to increase levels of participation. "Compact" partnership arrangements between further education and non-statutory providers will continue to encourage greater diversity and provide an access route into more formal education for those without qualifications.

Scotland

The Scottish Executive is committed to ensuring that lifelong learning is accessible to everyone. To support this policy, many institutions have outreach centres, in the heart of their local communities, making it easier to access learning opportunities. In addition, courses can delivered in a range of ways designed to meet the needs of the learners.

Encouraging mature and non traditional students to enter Higher Education underpins the overall agenda of widening access to Higher Education. A method of encouraging such students is through the provision of part time places as these encourage the flexible provision of learning. In addition, a funding premium is provided to Universities for the provision of part time places - this is worth approximately £6m per annum across the sector.

Other examples are:

- Part time undergraduate students on a first degree course (on very low incomes) benefit from a part time fee waiver.
- The Graduate Endowment and Student Support (Scotland) Act 2001, introduced the graduate endowment scheme and enabled support to be provided to distance learning students
- In October 2001, the South of Scotland University Steering Group report supported developments in the south of Scotland based at the Crichton Campus and Galashiels to bring Higher Education to rural areas of Scotland, and to encourage continuing professional development of those in employment where it was not previously available
- The Scottish Executive's Higher Education Review (March 2003) makes clear the importance with which it views flexibility in the provision of Higher Education. The review contains an undertaking to examine what further specific work could be done, or incentives put in place, to stimulate the further development of more flexible provision.
- Give it a Go! Learning Tasters – a campaign to engage 5,000 new learners was funded in April 2003. *learnirect scotland* learning centres were used to give new learners a free taste of learning and encourage them into lifelong learning
- Our Learning, Skills and Employability strategy for the Scottish Prison Service, which provides a framework for prisoners to develop skills and lead more productive lifestyles independent of come post-release, will be launched in Spring 2003.
- The Executive encourages community-based learning, as this plays a crucial role in supporting people to engage in or return to learning. We support Community Learning and Development Partnerships,

16. **Groups at special risk of exclusion. Describe measures addressed at promoting lifelong learning amongst groups at special risk of exclusion from the knowledge-based society (migrants, people living outside urban centres or in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, single parent women, etc.).**

England

Social Exclusion Unit

The Social Exclusion Unit's report "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan", sets out the Government's vision that, within 10 to 20 years, no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. People on low incomes should not have to suffer conditions and services that are failing, and so, different from what the rest of the population receives.

The Government's vision is reflected in two long-term goals:

- In all the poorest neighbourhoods, to have common goals of lower worklessness and crime, and better health, skills, housing and physical environment.
- To narrow the gap on these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

The UK has a number of policies which contribute to tackling Social Exclusion: Examples include:

Connexions Service

Connexions has a particular role to play in making a real difference to the way which support is given to the most vulnerable young people in our society. It brings together all those organisations and bodies that are delivering services to teenagers to provide a coherent, holistic, multi-agency package and one that is clearly focussed on the needs of the individual.

The Neighbourhood Support Fund (NSF) supports the hardest to reach young people aged 13 – 19 years, with a view to re-engaging them with education, employment and training. This is achieved through a programme of informal learning and personal development delivered through around 650 local voluntary and community sector projects in 40 of the most deprived local authority areas in England.

Information and Communication Technology and Black and Ethnic Minority Groups

A steering group comprising of representatives from black and ethnic minority groups are currently working on three research and development projects with the purpose of:-

- Meeting the recommendations of Policy Action Team 15 that information is needed on attitudes towards and use of ICTs by black and ethnic minority groups.
- Meeting the requirement of The National Strategy Action Plan to harness the knowledge and energy of local people and empowering them to develop their own solutions.

Wireless Outreach Networks (WON)

Wireless Outreach Networks (WON) will bring supported access to the learning potential of the Internet to some of the hardest to reach groups. WON builds on lessons learned from the Computers within Reach (CwR) pilot and also the Department for Education and Skills laptop loan initiative.

WON contributes to the social inclusion agenda by providing laptop wireless networks to organisations that are providing adult and community learning in order to widen access to the Internet and participation in learning. It will focus on the 88 most deprived local authority areas.

19+ Further Education (FE) Student Support

The aims of Learner Support Funds are to improve student access, participation and achievement particularly for those who are most disadvantaged and socially excluded with priority given to the following groups of students:

- students who are disadvantaged, disabled and/or have learning difficulties who need support with transport, childcare or other associated learning costs
- undertaking basic education or English as a second language;
- care leavers;
- have learning difficulties;
- lone parents & young people;
- those in receipt of benefits.

In 2003-04, £96.5m of Learner Support Funds have been made available to FE students aged 19+. In 2001-02 this was £55.7m and 2002-03 £81.5m.

Prison Education

Prison establishments are supported in developing a range of ways in which to deliver learning and nationally recognised qualifications to prisoners beyond the traditional classroom setting, including through activities such as parenting and work in the kitchens.

Establishments across the prison estate are running projects which encourage prisoners to volunteer as tutors to other prisoners. These projects have been successful in engaging the hardest to reach in learning, and also enable volunteers to work towards nationally recognised teaching qualifications.

Northern Ireland

New Targeting Social Need

In Northern Ireland equality and tackling social disadvantage underpin the Programme for Government and shape Government Departments' priorities. The New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) policy involves the targeting of resources and effort on people, groups and areas objectively shown to be most socially disadvantaged. This policy includes special focus on the problems of unemployed people and on improving their chances of finding employment.

The elements of New TSN are:

- a special focus on the problems of unemployed people and on increasing their chances of finding a job
- targeting other sorts of social need which may not be directly related to unemployment (e.g. health, housing, education)
- a special initiative Promoting Social Inclusion which will "seek new and creative ways of helping people who are disadvantaged in several ways, to the extent that they cannot enjoy the full range of life opportunities which most people take for granted"

New TSN is not a spending programme in itself, but is about identifying priorities and requires Government Departments and agencies to undertake audits, prepare Action Plans, and monitor and review programmes and spending in relation to TSN.

Scotland

A substantial amount of work has been done to widen access to lifelong learning for those in disadvantaged groups. This includes:

- £102m made available through Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to fund an additional 40,000 Further Education (FE) places during the three years to 2002
- £6m made available in 2002-03 for childcare needs of non-advanced FE students
- £3.4m made available to language support to anyone, including asylum seekers
- £4.5m allocated from Beattie funding to improve support for students in FE
- £10m allocated to the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) for 2002-03 for the to support colleges in the investment of major items of equipment and the purchase of auxiliary aids to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- £10m allocated in July 2002 for estates work to improve physical access and to help compliance with DDA

- In 2001-02, the number of vocational enrolments by students from areas of high deprivation represented 27% of all enrolments
- The Minister for Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning stated in his guidance letter to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (December 2002), that widening access to higher education for under-represented and disadvantaged groups is a priority of the Scottish Executive.
- Improving access to this learning has meant additional investment in student support targeted on those from the lowest income backgrounds, with increases of up to 20% in living cost support, bursaries worth up to £2,000 and funding for childcare costs.
- 2,800 additional full-time equivalent places were created in Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) between 1999 and 2003, these were targeted at those from under-represented groups.
- Specific funding has been allocated to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council to widen participation: Projects are being funded to stimulate interest and raise aspirations among under-represented groups e.g. the Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools (GOALS) project.
- One of the aims of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Bill is to strengthen transition support arrangements for young people with additional support needs to make the move from school a positive experience and pave the way for the continuation of their learning. The context for the Bill is set out in the framework document 'Moving Forward! Additional Support for Learning' (January 2003)
- Premium funding is available to institutions to enable them to provide additional support and materials for students with disabilities or those from under-represented areas, with the aim of improving retention.
- Institutions that attract private sector investment for wider access are being rewarded with additional places.
- 4 regional wider access forums have been established to facilitate collaboration between HEIs, Further Education Colleges (FECs), Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) locally.
- The Principals of Scotland's HEIs signed a social inclusion pledge which gave an undertaking, on behalf of their institutions, to promote inclusion and remove barriers to learning through areas such as fair admission, valuing all achievement, the provision of flexible learning and the appropriate support of students, whatever their background

Wales

- In 2002-03 the Assembly Government supported Adult Learners' Week and Sign-Up Now campaigns in Wales. It also engaged the National Institute of National Continuing Education (NIACE Dysgu Cymru), to run promotional activities aimed at encouraging participation in learning by members of black and ethnic minority communities. (see also item 7)

17. Youth. What specific measures address improving the participation in lifelong learning of young people, not covered by the formal systems of education and training?

England

See references to:

- Basic Skills - section 6
- Connexions Service - sections 3 and 16
- Connexions Service Framework - section 10
- The Connexions Card - section 13
- Connexions Direct - section 19
- Education Maintenance Allowances - section 11.

Northern Ireland

Jobskills

Jobskills is the primary vocational training programme which ensures the guarantee of a training place for 16 and 17 year old school leavers. There is also some provision for young people aged up to 24. The programme over-arches three distinct but inter-linked strands each addressing the needs of a particular group of trainees:

- the **Access** strand offers bespoke training to disadvantaged entrants, including those with basic skills and/or special needs, and provides enhanced funding support and training periods for approved qualifications up to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 1;
- the **Traineeship** strand focuses on the delivery and attainment of NVQs at Level 2 and specified key skills awards; and
- the **Modern Apprenticeship** strand is open to young people aged 16 to 24 who are either entering employment for the first time or meet specified criteria for existing employees. Apprentices follow a training framework approved for delivery under the programme and developed in conjunction with the relevant industry, which includes achievement at NVQ Level 3 and specified key skills.

Scotland

- Our action to re-engineer Skillseekers (a programme run by Local Enterprise Companies to encourage employers to train young people age 16-24 towards a recognised workplace qualification by helping them with the cost of training), and encouraging flexible funding for collaboration between schools, colleges, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the Enterprise Networks and employers will also help encourage more young people into further learning.

- The Enterprise in Education Report, Determined to Succeed, recommends that all pupils and students over the age of 14 should have the opportunity for work-based vocational learning and enterprise experience. The Executive is determined to ensure that significant funding is used to build on and develop existing programme to ensure that our young people have an understanding of the world of work.

Wales

A part of taking forward the “Extending Entitlement” agenda (see item 1) Canllaw Online Cyf is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to provide comprehensive information services for all young people of school leaving age (year 11). These services include – Information Handbook, Youth Card, Website and Telephone Helplines. (see also item 7)

- 18. Ageing population. Have specific measures been taken addressed at improving the participation in lifelong learning for mature workers and citizens who have not had the benefits of post-compulsory education and who need to upgrade their competencies to remain in the workforce, or senior citizens preparing for retirement?**

England

The Government is committed to encouraging people of all ages to participate in learning and continues to highlight both benefits of learning in later life and the achievements of older learners. For example, we sponsor the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education’s (NIACE) annual Senior Learner Awards which celebrate the learning achievements of the over 50s and have published leaflets aimed at encouraging older people to take up learning.

Our approach to older learners has not been to provide specific initiatives, rather we encourage older people to access mainstream learning. In terms of workplace learning, we seek to encourage employers to provide training for employees of all ages, including the older members of their workforce. In ICT terms, UK online centres attract impressive numbers of older people (around 25% of learners in total) and indeed specifically target older people

Northern Ireland

A range of measures have been introduced to tackle these difficulties and to help older people, who want to work, back into a job. New Deal 50 Plus, New Deal for Disabled People, New Deal 25+, are all helping older people back into work - full-time, part-time and self-employment, and many of these measures support training either to help older people compete for jobs, or to remain in sustained employment .

This category of learner has been embraced by the public funding learner support measures put in place for **learndirect** learning in Northern Ireland.

Scotland

The Executive is committed to providing high quality learning opportunities to everyone regardless of their age. There is no upper age limit to participation in further education and financial support may be available to eligible students.

Developments include:

- Over 99,000 new Further Education places have been created since 1999
- Enrolments by those in the 60+ age group accounted for 19% of the increase in enrolments from 1998 to 2002
- In the 2001-02 year there were 72,224 enrolments on vocational courses by students aged 50+
- There was considerable uptake among the 50+ in the Individual Learning Accounts scheme, especially for ICT courses

19. How are guidance and counselling services being developed to meet the needs of specific target groups and to raise awareness of the benefits of learning?

England

Connexions Direct

Connexions Direct is a pilot which aims to improve access to and provide high quality information, advice and guidance to young people aged 13-19 via telephone, internet and other interactive media such as webchat and text message, as part of the overall Connexions Service. It has extended opening hours (8am-2am) and makes an important contribution to the Governments commitment to make all services available on line by 2005.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland plans to provide a high quality Information, Advice and Guidance service are underway. This will involve the integration of the Departmental careers guidance and adult personal adviser services with those provided by the Education and Guidance Service for Adults and the learndirect information and advice line service. In addition, careers information and guidance is provided in schools, further education colleges and universities. A new central policy development team will manage the various Information, Advice and Guidance service activities and Internet technology will be used to support the guidance offered.

In Northern Ireland a modern, technology-enabled employment service which meets the needs of employers who have vacancies as well as those of people who are looking for work is provided. An employer strategy and enhancement to the vacancy Internet site, JobCentreOnline are also planned.

Scotland

- Higher Education institutions within Scotland offer careers education, information and guidance (CEIG) to undergraduate students - this work is undertaken autonomously. However, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council set up a working group in 2001 to examine and advise on issues related to CEIG
- A short report was completed by the working group which addresses the role of CEIG provision and its potential to contribute to the employability of learners as part of a wider funding council strategy for quality improvement. The key message from this report was that the approach to CEIG should sit within a broader approach to effective student learning, which includes developing employability and enterprise skills, becoming an active participant in lifelong learning and developing skills of career and learning management. A period of consultation on the report ended in early March 2003 and the results will be published in 2003
- In March 2002, Careers Scotland was launched to provide careers information and guidance. It offers comprehensive and independent advice on employment, enterprise and learning opportunities to all

VI. CREATING A LEARNING CULTURE

- 20. Describe measures taken to promote positive perceptions of learning and raising awareness of its entitlements and benefits, at pre-school, school and higher education levels, as well as in youth organisations and among the adult population.**

England

Connexions Service

Now available across the whole of England, it offers teenagers integrated advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities to help them overcome barriers to participation in learning .

Basic Skills

See reference to Basic skills at section 6, especially the “Get On” campaign.

Northern Ireland

The Essential Skills Strategy has developed and implemented a comprehensive promotional campaign to increase awareness among adults and drive up the demand for Essential Skills. The ‘Learning Works’ campaign is designed to encourage thousands of adults to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Scotland

- The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework website, launched in January 2003, and a national communication strategy, provides accessible information about the SCQF to all potential users
- *learn direct scotland* learning centres gave 5000 new learners a free taste of learning through the campaign Give it a Go! Learning Tasters
- an in-house review of research on reasons for (re)engaging with learning and sustaining learning careers was completed in April 2003

Wales

See section 16.

- 21. How does the formal systems of education and training take account of the life-wide perspective and, in particular, how are entry, progression and recognition requirements in the formal sector (e.g. mechanisms for accreditation of prior learning, methodologies and systems for assessment and validation of competence) being adapted accordingly?**

England

All qualifications entering the national qualifications framework are submitted to the process of accreditation. This is dependent of a number of criteria. There are criteria common to all qualifications submitted and criteria specific to general, vocationally related and occupational qualifications. National Vocational Qualifications falls into the last category.

At the request of Ministers the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) have developed design principles for unitised qualifications which consultation has proven to be acceptable to partners in the qualifications system. Ministers further asked QCA in early 2003 to continue their work on the unitisation of qualifications. Change will be introduced gradually using the “accreditation of qualification” cycle as a way of achieving step by step progress.

Implementation is being structured into four phases of work. The first phase would see the voluntary completion of the accreditation programme for qualifications where unitisation has yet to be achieved. In phase 2 designated size indicators and levels would become a requirement for all units in qualifications at levels 1 to 3 in the national qualification framework. In Phase 3, the same requirements would apply to higher level and to lower level entry level qualifications; and in Phase 4, they would apply to occupational qualifications, including NVQs. Implementation is scheduled for completion in summer 2007.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System

The developmental stage of the Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System has been completed. The Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment is currently considering implementation of the system and will provide advice on implementation to the Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland).

Access to Higher Education

The UK is moving towards a national strategy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer at higher education level. The National Qualifications Frameworks for Higher Education was developed in line with Bologna principles. A new two-year Foundation Degree will provide opportunities for those who missed out on higher education the first time around as well as for those who wish to continue to earn and learn. Access to an institution may be gained through accreditation of prior learning, giving recognition for the skills and experience they already possess. The quality assurance arrangements agreed for Universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England also apply in Northern Ireland.

Scotland

- By 2004, most of the main Scottish qualifications will be within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, allowing Scotland to have a single, unified, integrated framework, encompassing a wide range of education and training provision

Wales

- The Welsh Assembly Government is developing a Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, allowing a credit value to be ascribed to units of learning and accumulated towards the achievement of qualifications. The Framework will be extended to cover non-formal learning.

VII. STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

- 22. Describe the general framework for improving quality of lifelong learning provision and, in particular, for evaluating lifelong strategies, programs and projects in your country?**

England

In April 2001, the Government introduced a new national framework for raising standards with independent inspection against a Common Inspection Framework across all providers.

All providers are expected to establish and sustain a culture of continuous improvement based on self-assessment; development planning and agreeing improvement targets with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The LSC undertakes a formal assessment of the performance of providers twice a year to ensure that all provision is of an acceptable standard; identify excellence so that it can be rewarded and disseminated across the sector; identify concerns at an early stage and take action to strengthen provision in difficulty, and ultimately will apply sanctions if necessary. Intervention will be in inverse proportion to success; where resources will be targeted for under-performing providers to enable them to improve; and where lighter touch monitoring, audit and inspection will apply to the top performers.

The LSC will introduce floor targets for success rates from September 2003, setting out the minimum acceptable levels of performance to be achieved by 2005/06. The LSC will also introduce higher funding rates linked to performance for Further Education colleges in 2004-05.

The Department is currently working with the LSC, the Inspectorates and other key partners to develop and establish a range of success measures as the basis for evaluating improvements in quality and standards, both at national levels and for institutions. A programme of evaluation work is currently underway.

Northern Ireland

Raising Standards/Inspection

A consistent approach to inspections, grading systems and inspection reports, crucial to the aim of driving up standards. In Northern Ireland the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is responsible for the inspection of all Government funded education and training. ETI carries out inspections in schools, Further Education (FE) Colleges and private Training Organisations.

The new arrangements ensure that the standards and frameworks for inspection of school sixth forms, FE and work based training are harmonised as much as possible, while at the same time ensuring that they are flexible enough to deal with a varied provider base and that the inspectors have the experience to understand the providers they inspect. The annual reports which the Chief Inspectors will produce covering their post-16 responsibilities will provide the Northern Ireland Assembly with a picture of standards and performance.

Induction for new teachers in Northern Ireland

Effective teaching and learning is an essential element in the promotion of excellence and opportunity in further and higher education. Over the next three years investment in the quality of learning and teaching will include the full implementation of the new Quality Assurance arrangements for learning and teaching.

Other measures under consideration are incentives for universities to develop human resource strategies that explicitly value and reward good teaching, the expansion of the National Teaching Fellowships Scheme, the development of new national professional standards for teaching as part of accredited training and a new national programme of training and induction for external examiners. A new professional body will also be supported to provide curriculum and staff development for the further education sector in areas such as quality improvement, support for essential skills and progression training for managers.

Scotland

In the Spending Review 2002, the Executive set out its spending plans for the three years from April 2003-March 2006. In lifelong learning, spending has been focused on objectives that are aimed at improving skills, enterprise, employability, widening access and ensuring high quality provision

Quality Assurance in the Higher Education sector was recently reviewed following consultation with stakeholders and a new approach is being introduced from this year. The new quality regime has a clear focus on quality enhancement, with institutions expected to demonstrate that they have clear, well-managed strategies for promoting constant quality improvement across all aspects of learning and teaching.

The Executive also strongly supports the Further Education (FE) Professional Development Forum and its application of occupational standards. It does so by approving and monitoring provision of higher education courses leading to the Teaching Qualification (FE) and by endorsing their setting up of targets, supported by funding, for full-time and part-time staff undertaking formal training.

The Enterprise Networks use the Scottish Quality Management System (SQMS) to quality assure private training providers and government-funded training provision in FE colleges used by Local Enterprise Companies (LECs). However, the Executive's goal is to develop a quality framework for post-compulsory education and training (both public and private provision) which is 'fit for purpose', owned at the point of delivery, does not overburden learning providers with audit requirements, considers results (outcomes and outputs), as well as inputs and processes that impact on the quality of the learners' experience. We will do this by:

- Commissioning a study, reporting by early 2004, on the current quality assurance landscape in Scotland, drawing on other countries' approaches to enhancing the quality of the learning experience
- asking the Enterprise Networks to develop work they are currently undertaking to reduce the audit burden on the learning providers in their training programmes, with a view to establishing, wherever possible, a single audit of a training provider
- publishing the outcomes of the review of governance and accountability of FE colleges and develop an action plan to tackle the issues identified.

Futureskills Scotland has been established as part of the Scottish Executive's strategy to improve its understanding of the Scottish labour market and facilitate better matching of people to jobs.

Wales

- The National Council for Education and Training in Wales (ELWA) established a Quality Assurance Committee to advise on the quality of the learning programmes that it funds and has issued circulars and guidance to learning providers which demonstrate its quality assurance responsibilities and priorities
- A Partnership Agreement has been signed between The National Council - ELWa and Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) to ensure that all post-16 learners in Wales have access to education and training of the highest possible quality and standard.
- The National Council – ELWa has established a new three year programme – Investing in Quality – to support providers to improve their performance and raise standards; provide staff development opportunities for practitioners; and facilitate the sharing of good practice.

23. Is there a mechanism to regularly review these strategies and to assess their relevance, effectiveness and synergy with other Government policies and initiatives (lifelong learning and employment, innovation, research and development, etc)?

England

A programme management structure has been established to review progress and assess the impact of the further education reform strategy (*Success for All* – published November 2002). The steering group is chaired by Ministers and brings together Board members from the Department and the LSC. The framework for quality and success is one of four key themes within the strategy which is regularly reviewed under this programme structure.

Northern Ireland

The NI Executive will review progress towards the achievement of the targets set in its Programme for Government, Public Service Agreements agreed with the eleven departments which make up the Executive.

Scotland

The Executive plays an important role in strategy development, implementation and evaluation. We also take a rigorous approach to measuring the success of policies and building a better evidence base.

Evaluation tools include:

- The six high level indicators to assess progress that are contained in Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life, the Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland
- Assessing Scotland's position in relation to other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, as has been done with 'A Smart Successful Scotland'
- Contributing to cross-national studies to improve the scope and reliability of international benchmarking
- The establishment of a Lifelong Learning Forum and supporting panels, that will develop other performance indicators and monitor progress
- Continued liaison with the research community to ensure that the best use is made of the existing evidence base.
- In-house analytical services will continually review and prioritise our programme of research and analysis. This will involve integrating research, statistical and economic analysis, to underpin the further development of the strategy and the assessment in relation to its goals