Ashbrook
RESEARCH & CONSULTANCY

FINAL REPORT – *AD HOC* QUESTIONS
STAKEHOLDER TRACKING RESEARCH
June 2007

PREPARED FOR: The Scottish Qualifications Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In May/June 2007, around two thirds of respondents stated that they had heard of Skills for Work Courses. This represents a notable increase over the past 6 months, and is particularly apparent amongst Schools and Employers.

- Around half of those aware of Skills for Work Courses in May/June 2007 stated that they had a well developed knowledge and understanding of these courses. Again, this represents a significant improvement over the past 6 months, and is most apparent amongst Schools, Employers and Training Providers.

- Those aware of Skills for Works Courses in May/June 2007 most commonly believed that they prepare pupils for the workplace, provide practical experience and are for school pupils and young people.

- On an unprompted basis, respondents in May/June 2007 stated that the 'best way' for them to be updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work Courses would be through *"e-mail or the internet"* and, thereafter, through *"leaflets, a mailshot or letters"*.

- On a prompted basis, *"leaflets"* most commonly emerged as being a suitable way of helping to keep respondents updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work Courses. Thereafter, a significant proportion of respondents stated that *"the SQA E-zine"*, *"newspapers"* (particularly local newspapers and The Herald) and *"trade journals or publications"* (with particular mention being made here of TES) represented suitable ways of updating or informing them in this regard.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report details findings to emerge from research undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Qualifications Authority by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd.

The purpose of the research was to derive a range of information pertaining to Skills for Work Courses.

The research was undertaken as part of an ongoing programme of Stakeholder Tracking Research undertaken on a quarterly basis on behalf of the SQA by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd. This research incorporates a number of 'core' questions (which are asked during each survey tranche) and '*ad hoc*' questions (which relate to a specific survey tranche).

In the Stakeholder Tracking Research undertaken in May/June 2007, *ad hoc* questions were asked during the course of 700 telephone interviews with 4 groups:

- Colleges
- Schools
- Employers
- Training Providers

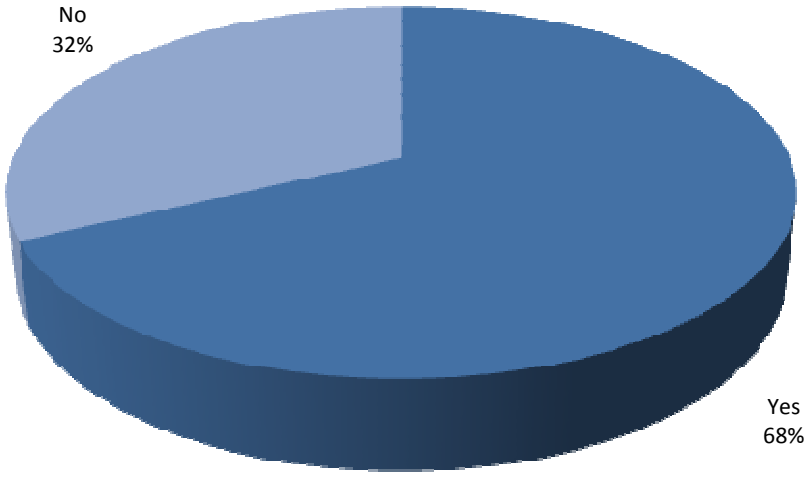
A copy of the questions asked is attached as *Appendix I*.

2.0 RESULTS PROFILE

2.1 Awareness Of Skills for Work Courses

"Have you heard of Skills for Work courses?"

Figure 1: Heard of Skills for Work Courses?



Base: All Respondents

From Figure 1 it can be seen that two thirds of respondents in May/June 2007 (68%) stated that they had heard of Skills for Work Courses. This represents a notable improvement since November/December 2006 (from 62%).

Further examination of the data indicates that awareness of Skills for Work Courses in May/June 2007 was highest amongst Colleges and Schools i.e.:

- Colleges = 77%
- Schools = 77%
- Training Providers = 69%
- Employers = 48%

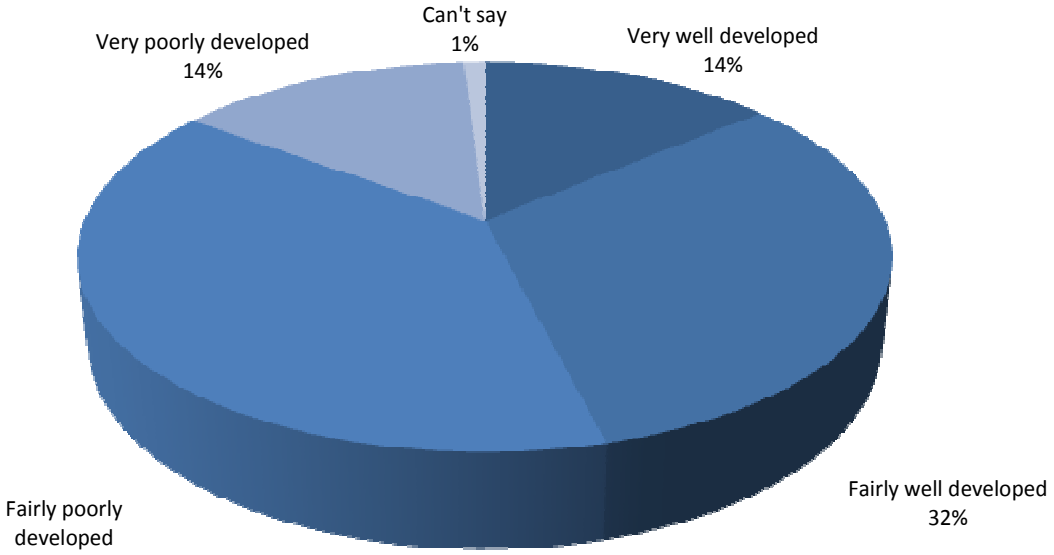
It should be noted that between November/December 2006 and May/June 2007 there was a notable improvement in levels of awareness of Skills for Work Courses amongst:

- Schools (rising from 68% to 77%)
- Training Providers (rising from 64% to 69%)
- Employers (rising from 39% to 48%)

2.2 Knowledge & Understanding of Skills for Work Courses

"How would you describe your level of knowledge and understanding of Skills for Work Courses?"

Figure 2: Level Of Knowledge & Understanding Of Skills for Work Courses?



Base: 'Yes' in Figure 1

From Figure 2 it can be seen that – amongst those aware of Skills for Work Courses in May/June 2007 – around half (46%) described their knowledge and understanding of these courses as being 'well developed' (compared to a figure of 37% in November/December 2006).

As a corollary of this, over half of respondents aware of Skills for Work Courses in May/June 2007 (53%) described their level of knowledge and understanding of such courses as being 'poorly developed' (compared to a figure of 67% in November/December 2006).

Further examination of the data here indicates that those most likely to have a well developed level of knowledge and understanding of Skills for Work Courses in May/June 2007 were in Schools and Colleges i.e.:

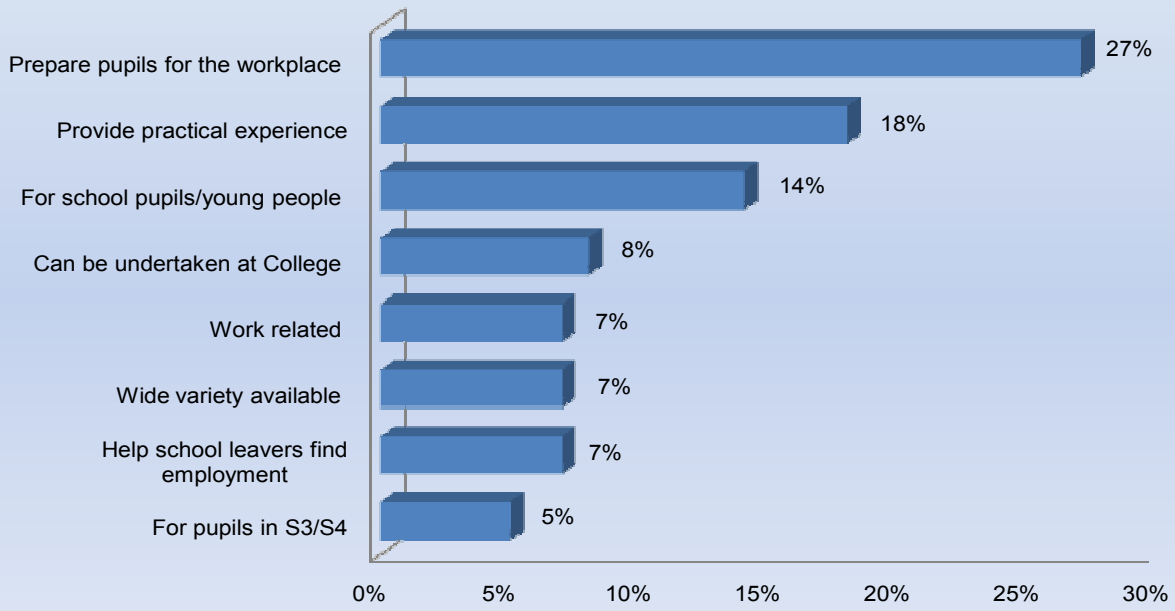
- Schools = 55%
- Colleges = 47%
- Employers = 41%
- Training Providers = 38%

It should be noted that between November/December 2006 and May/June 2007 there was a notable improvement in the extent to which three groups described their knowledge and understanding of Skills for Work Courses as being 'well developed', namely:

- Schools (rising from 31% to 55%)
- Employers (rising from 27% to 41%)
- Training Providers (rising from 22% to 38%)

"Can you tell briefly tell me what you know about Skills for Work Courses?"

Figure 3: Knowledge Of Skills for Work Courses (Unprompted)



Base: 'Yes' in Figure 1

From Figure 3 it can be seen that, when those aware of Skills for Work Courses in May/June 2007 were asked – on an unprompted basis – to state what they knew about them, the primary responses elicited to Skills for Work Courses:

- Preparing pupils for the workplace (27%)
- Providing practical experience (18%)
- Being for school pupils/young people (14%)

However, a number of other notable unprompted responses were also elicited here, including:

- A belief that Skills for Work Courses can be undertaken at College (8%)
- Skills for Work Courses helping school leavers find employment (7%)

- A wide variety of Skills for Work Courses being available (7%)
- Skills for Work Courses being work related (7%)

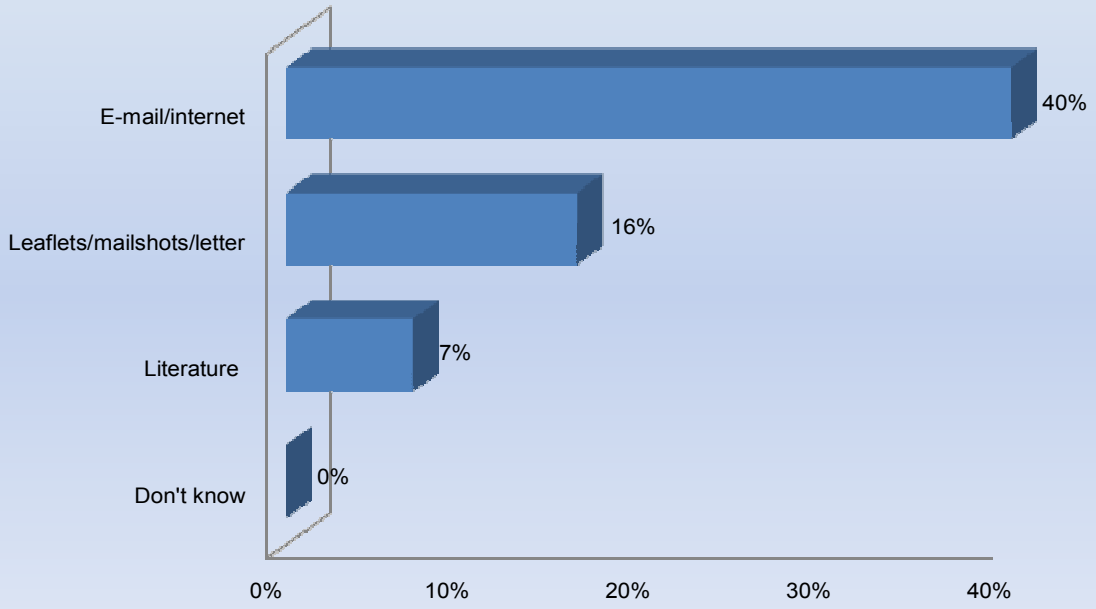
2.3 Promoting the Meaning & Value of Skills for Work Courses

2.3.1 Unprompted

All respondents were read out the following statement – *"From August 2007, a new range of National Qualifications Skills for Work courses will be available. They are mainly for 3rd and 4th year pupils and they focus on the world of work. These new qualifications encourage young people to become familiar with the working world by providing a variety of practical experiences"*

"What would be the best way or ways for you to be updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work qualifications?"

Figure 4: Preferred Means of Increasing Knowledge/Understanding Of Skills for Work Courses (Unprompted)



Base: All Respondents

From Figure 4 it can be seen that respondents most commonly stated (on an unprompted basis) that the 'best way' for them to be updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work qualifications would be through *"e-mail or the internet"* (40%), with this preference being most commonly expressed by Training Providers and Colleges i.e.:

- Training Providers = 48%
- Colleges = 45%
- Schools = 36%
- Employers = 33%

Thereafter, a notable core of respondents expressed a preference here for *"leaflets, mailshots or letters"* (16%), with this preference being most notable amongst Employers i.e.:

- Employers = 30%
- Training Providers = 14%
- Colleges = 13%
- Schools = 6%

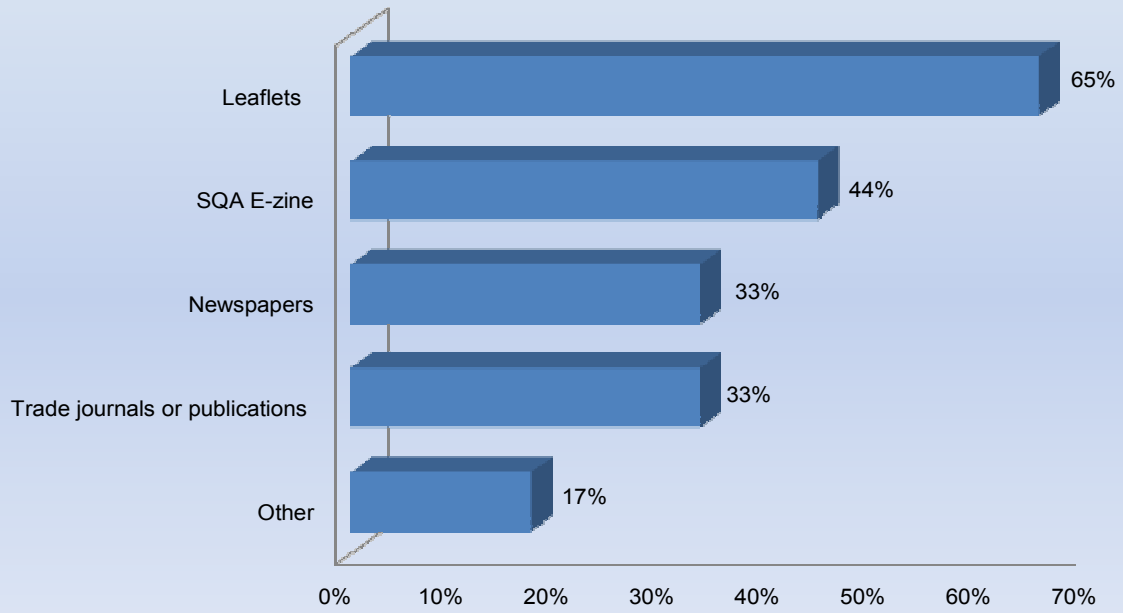
Finally, a core of Employers made reference here to *"literature"*, with this preference being most notable amongst Colleges i.e.:

- Colleges = 15%
- Schools = 6%
- Employers = 5%
- Training Providers = 2%

2.3.2 Prompted

"Can I just check, would any of the following be suitable ways of helping to keep you updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work qualifications?"

Figure 5: Preferred Means of Increasing Knowledge/Understanding Of Skills for Work Courses (Prompted)



Base: All Respondents

Figure 5 indicates that – on a prompted basis – respondents in May/June 2007 stated that the most suitable way of helping to keep them updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work Qualifications would be *"leaflets"* (65% - compared to 69% in November/December 2006), with this preference being greatest amongst Schools and Employers i.e.:

- Schools = 71%
- Employers = 71%
- Colleges = 62%
- Training Providers = 58%

Thereafter, approaching half of respondents in May/June 2007 (44% - compared to 68% in November/December 2006) stated that *"the SQA E-zine"* would be a suitable way to help to keep them updated or informed regarding Skills for Work qualifications, with this preference being most notable amongst Schools and Training Providers i.e.:

- Schools = 65%
- Training Providers = 50%
- Colleges = 35%
- Employers = 25%

Figure 5 also indicates that a third of respondents in May/June 2007 (33% - compared to 43% in November/December 2006) stated that *"newspapers"* would be a suitable way of updating or informing them about Skills for Work qualifications, with this preference being most notable amongst Employers and Schools i.e.:

- Employers = 39%
- Schools = 35%
- Colleges = 28%
- Training Providers = 28%

It should also be noted that when respondents here were asked – on an unprompted basis – <u>which</u> newspapers would be most suitable in this regard, those which emerged as <u>primary</u> preferences were 'local newspapers' (30%) and 'The Herald' (25%) and, thereafter, 'The Scotsman' (15%) and 'The Daily Record' (10%).

Finally, Figure 5 indicates that a third of respondents in May/June 2007 (33% - compared to 38% in November/December 2006) stated that *"trade journals or publications"* would be suitable ways for them to be updated or

informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work qualifications, with this preference being most notable amongst Schools and Colleges i.e.:

- Schools = 40%
- Colleges = 36%
- Employers = 29%
- Training Providers = 28%

It should be noted that there was no discernable pattern here in respect of the specific trade journals or publications preferred, although it is of interest to note that those representing Colleges and Schools expressed a significant preference for TES (52% and 53% respectively) which was also expressed as a preference by 1 in 5 Employers (21%).

APPENDIX I

21. Have you heard of Skills for Work courses?

		Route
Yes	1	Q22
No	2	Q24

22. How would you describe your level of knowledge and understanding of Skills for Work courses?

		Route
Very well developed	1	Q23
Fairly well developed	2	Q23
Fairly poorly developed	3	Q24
Very poorly developed	4	Q24
Can't say	5	Q24

23. **Can you briefly tell me what you know about Skills for Work courses?** (Probe Fully. Do Not Prompt)

Route

_____

_____

_____ ____ Q24

24. (Researcher, read out) ***"From August 2007, a new range of National Qualifications Skills for Work courses will be available. They are mainly for 3rd and 4th year pupils and they focus on the world of work. These new qualifications encourage young people to become familiar with the working world by providing a variety of practical experiences"*** **What would be the best way or ways for you to be updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work qualifications?** (Probe Fully. Do Not Prompt)

Route

_____

_____

_____ ____

Don't Know 1 Q25

25. **Can I just check, would any of the following be suitable ways of helping to keep you updated or informed about the meaning or value of Skills for Work qualifications?**

	Yes	No	Route
SQA E-zine ('Connecting With SQA')	1	2	
Newspapers If so, which ones _____	1	2	
Trade journals or publications If so, which ones _____	1	2	
Leaflets	1	2	
Other (specify) _____			Q26