Policy and New Products

Research Report 2

XSQA

Review of the Implications of the Scottish Executive's NEET Strategy for SQA

Contents

1 Introduction

Note on terminology

This report was written prior to changes in the recognised terminology. The report makes reference to young people and NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). However, there is now general acceptance that the term 'young people needing more choices and more chances' is more appropriate. For the sake of continuity, though, and to maintain the context of the work being undertaken, this report retains the reference to NEET.

Study objectives and output

This report has been produced by Margaret Sutherland and Sheila Martin of Inspire Scotland at the request of SQA in June 2007.

The key aim of the work is to start to identify the implications of the 'NEET Strategy, More Choices, More Chances' for SQA qualifications and assessment approaches in the context of changes arising from:

♦ A Curriculum for Excellence

♦ Assessment is for Learning

♦ the need for recognition of wider achievement

The key outcomes for A Curriculum for Excellence and features of Assessment is for Learning are summarised in the Appendices 1 and 2.

A further aim is to start to build a library of relevant material that will help to inform future development of qualifications and programmes targeted at young people at risk of becoming NEET.

Specific objectives for this study are to:

♦ clarify the nature of the pre-NEET group in terms of size, structure and composition

♦ identify barriers to meeting the learning, training and qualification needs of the NEET group for those below school leaving age[1]

♦ identify the relevance of current learning opportunities (both certificated and non-certificated) and qualifications to the needs of those at risk of becoming NEET

♦ identify good/innovative practice in learning design, delivery and assessment (including assessment of wider achievements) that is relevant to the needs of those at risk of becoming NEET[2]

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[1] Since this report was written, SQA has undertaken an engagement exercise with stakeholders and partners seeking views on: current SQA provision that supports the More Choices, More Chances agenda; where SQA may be able to offer further support; and what issues currently exist.

♦ identify issues relating to recognition of the wider achievement of those at risk of becoming NEET

♦ identify issues relating to the development of qualifications for the target learner groups, eg use of existing core and optional qualification components; gaps in existing qualifications; essential workplace/employability skills; skills for life/citizenship; additional support needs; context for learning and implications for assessment and certification; and staff development issues.

The research shows that there are common characteristics in programmes and initiatives that effectively meet the needs of those client groups with most likelihood of becoming NEET, and that there is already a range of high quality and innovative practice from which lessons can be learned. However, the research also suggests that there is still some way to go in raising attainment levels of the lowest performing pupils, and that partners should work together to address these needs.

A Curriculum for Excellence, Assessment is for Learning and the drive to recognise wider achievements provide the frameworks within which to extend good practice in learner-centred curriculum planning, delivery and use of assessment to aid learning and achievement for all pupils.

Research methods

The following research methods have been used to fulfil the research needs:

♦ Stage 1: desk/internet research to identify background materials, documents, programmes and innovative practice of relevance to the pre-NEET group to identify key issues for SQA to consider — this has included Scottish reports, strategies and statistical information produced by a range of agencies, and review of evaluation reports on programmes such as Skills for Work and Get Ready for Work, as well as material produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (particularly on the pilot qualifications aimed at their Foundation Learning Tier)

♦ Stage 2: review and analysis of the relevant reports for points of convergence on underpinning values, principles and theory that point towards the most appropriate programme and qualifications design, delivery, assessment and certification arrangements

♦ Stage 3: synthesis of the research into a report highlighting key issues for SQA

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[2] SQA is currently undertaking an exercise to identify and highlight examples of good and innovative practice and to help centres to develop case studies.

About this report

The remainder of this report is presented as follows:

♦ Size, structure and composition/characteristics of the pre-NEET group
♦ Learning, training, qualifications needs of the pre-NEET group
♦ Barriers to meeting the learning, training, and qualification needs of the pre-NEET group
♦ Relevance of current learning opportunities and qualifications to the needs of those most at risk of becoming NEET
♦ Issues relating to recognition of the wider achievement of those at risk of becoming NEET
♦ The Foundation Learning Tier
♦ Appendices

2   Size, structure and composition of the pre-NEET group

The Scottish Executive launched More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland in 2006. Given that low attainment is a characteristic of the NEET group, it recognises that participating in education and training is the most effective way of enabling these young people to access and sustain employment opportunities throughout their adult lives. The overarching aims of the strategy are to:

♦   stem the flow — prevention rather than cure

♦   have a system-wide (pre and post 16 years) focus on ownership of — and accountability for — the NEET group

♦   prioritise education and training outcomes for the NEET group as a step towards lifelong employability, given their low attainment profile

♦   position NEET reduction as one of the key indicators for measuring the pre and post 16 systems' success[3]

The Scottish Executive's *Closing the Opportunity Gap* sets out a renewed focus on tackling poverty in Scotland over the next five years, and places particular importance on the needs of young people. It recognises the importance of early intervention to support those who are at risk of experiencing disadvantage in later life.

The headline figure of young people in Scotland aged 16–19 who are NEET is 35,000 (13.5%). The strategy, More Choices, More Chances, proposes that there is evidence to suggest that a truer figure for young people who will need additional support to access and sustain opportunities in the labour market is around 20,000.

The pre-NEET group

It is well reported that poor attainment at school and socio-economic disadvantage are closely interrelated and are key determinants of risk for being NEET at 16 years. 35% of the workless population has no qualifications, and raising attainment of young people will have a significant impact on reducing the risk of worklessness.[4]

Scotland has a high performing education system, with only three OECD countries outperforming Scotland in each of the key measures of maths, science and literacy.[5] More pupils are gaining five or more qualifications at Standard Grade Credit or equivalent level — up 9% since 1999 — and fewer pupils are

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[3] More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland, Scottish Executive 2006
[4] Final Report of the Workless Client Groups Workstream, Scottish Executive, August 2005
[5] Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003

leaving school with no qualifications. However, the performance of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils has remained static over recent years.
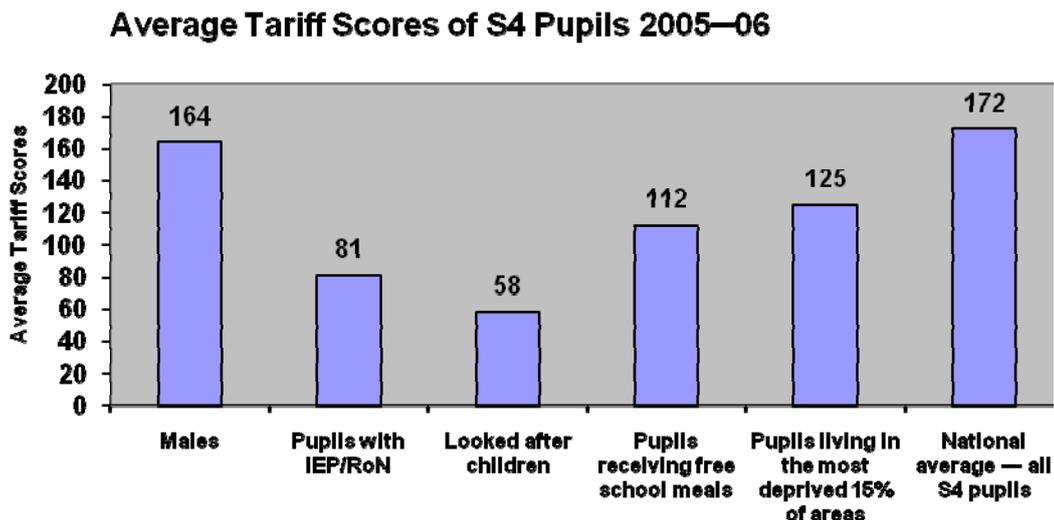
When looking at the characteristics of the lowest attaining pupils, a number of indicators can be identified:

♦ pupils with a Record of Needs or an Individualised Education Programme
♦ looked-after children
♦ pupils registered for free school meals
♦ pupils living in the most deprived areas

It is important to recognise that not all pupils who fall into these groups will progress to being NEET. The early identification of pupils with the potential of being NEET is important. Schools will be best placed to do this.

The HMIE report, *Missing Out*[6], identifies a challenge for schools faced with the current national targets to reduce the NEET group, which is an aggregate across schools. The challenge is identifying the pupils in the school who are in the lowest performing 20% nationally. The report suggests that a more useful perspective is to examine the barriers and 'risk factors' facing each pupil, many of which can be very complex, especially if a pupil is facing multiple barriers.

The characteristics of the lowest attaining pupils, based on the analysis of tariff scores supplied by the Scottish Executive[7], are shown in the table below and illustrate the difference in attainment between the different groups, compared to the national average.

Average Tariff Scores of S4 Pupils 2005—06

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[6] Missing Out: A report on children at risk of missing out on educational opportunities, HMIE 2006
[7] SQA Attainment and School Leaver Qualifications in Scotland: 2005–06, Scottish Executive Statistics Publication

Overall, looked-after children are the lowest attaining sub-group and, when looked at in more detail, the report shows that looked-after children with Record of Needs/Individualised Education Programme status have an even lower attainment rate, with an average tariff score of 35. The table also shows that the next lowest attaining sub-groups are pupils traditionally classified as having special educational needs, pupils who are entitled to free school meals and pupils who live in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

The following table quantifies the number of S4 pupils within each of the sub-groups.

Sub-groups	Pupils with Record of Needs/ Individualised Education Programme	Looked-after children	Pupils registered for free school meals	Pupils living in the most deprived areas
Number of S4 pupils 2005–06	2,428	742	8,599	9,928

Of the S4 pupils living in the 15% most deprived areas, 25% achieved a tariff score of less than 75, which is well below the national average of 172.

An individual may belong to one or more of the sub-groups. The figures relate only to the S4 year group — young people at risk of becoming NEET will span all year groups from S1–S6. The number of young people requiring early intervention from S1–S6 is considerable, and it is very difficult to quantify the actual number of pupils in any given year group that will progress to being NEET, as there is no available data that quantifies the number.

Exclusions and absence from school also provide early indicators of low attainment rates. Pupils with the highest exclusion rates in 2005–06[8] were those registered for free school meals, pupils with additional support needs, and pupils looked after by the local authority. Where a pupil had all three of these factors, the exclusion rate was 15 times that of other pupils.

During 2005–06 there were 42,000 exclusions, an increase of 2% from 2004–05. The number of exclusions has risen each year since 2002–03.

Among pupils with additional support needs, exclusions were generally more common in mainstream classes than in special schools. Pupils in special classes within mainstream schools had the lowest exclusion rate. Pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties had the highest rates of exclusion.

During 2005–06 the overall rate of attendance was 93.1%, slightly up from 93% in 2004–05, with attendance decreasing steadily through to S4 (88.8%) before increasing slightly in S5 and S6.[9]

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[8] Exclusions from Schools 2005/2006, Scottish Executive National Statistics Publication
[9] Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools 2005/06, Scottish Executive National Statistics Publication

The following factors increased the likelihood of absence:

♦ Deprivation increased the likelihood of being absent due to sickness.
♦ In general, schools with higher levels of deprivation had higher levels of absence, with the effect being greater in secondary schools. Pupils who were registered for free school meals were absent on average just less than 10 days more than those who were not.
♦ Pupils with a Record of Needs or Individualised Educational Programme in mainstream schools were absent on average four and a half days more than other pupils in those schools. Of these, pupils with social and emotional behavioural difficulties have the highest rate of absence.
♦ Children looked after by local authorities were absent on average 10 more days more than other pupils, with those looked after at home missing on average just above five and a half weeks of school.
♦ Where a child had multiple risk factors (registered for free school meals, has a Record of Needs and is looked after) they were absent for just below five and a half weeks.

These figures demonstrate that the sub-groups of pupils with the highest exclusion and absence rates are also the pupils identified as having the lowest attainment rates. These are pupils who:

♦ live in areas of higher deprivation
♦ are registered for free school meals
♦ have a Record of Needs or Individualised Education Programme
♦ are looked-after children

These factors are confirmed by HMIE in *Missing Out*. It confirms that the lowest-performing group of pupils includes:

♦ a higher proportion of males than in the population as a whole
♦ over twice the proportion of pupils registered to take free meals
♦ a higher proportion of looked-after children
♦ a higher proportion of pupils with undeclared ethnicity
♦ a higher proportion of pupils recorded as having an Individualised Educational Programme or Record of Needs
♦ a relatively high proportion of pupils in the 'missing' category — pupils who are so disengaged from the school system that the school may not hold any information about them

Missing Out also recognises that deprivation and low achievement are inextricably linked, and that this link persists over time and across generations. A multiplier effect comes into play too. The greater the number of risk factors, the greater the likelihood that low attainment will get worse. Consequently, *Missing Out* argues that approaches that target resources to where they are most needed should continue to be adopted.

Implications for SQA

The above analysis has identified the likely characteristics of many children and young people who may find themselves in the NEET group post-school and some of the barriers they face in achieving their potential. However, as noted elsewhere in this report, no assumptions should be made about the needs of individuals at risk of becoming NEET as their needs are likely to be individualised.

Key issues

Key issues for SQA in considering how best to meet the learning, assessment and qualifications needs of the pre-NEET group are:

♦ The diversity of the individuals in the group — from young people with social, emotional and behavioural issues, to those with learning and physical disability and special educational needs.

♦ The diversity of their individual circumstances, eg looked-after children and those without effective family support networks.

♦ The diversity and complexity of their guidance, learning and support needs, which may need to be addressed by a range of individual organisations and professionals, as well as providers of learning opportunities.

♦ The need for a very individualised approach to curriculum, assessment and certification for the pre-NEET group — keeping within developments in a Curriculum for Excellence, Assessment is for Learning, and the need for recognition of wider achievement that both of these developments are addressing for all pupils.

♦ How best to target developments to meet the needs of individuals in the lowest attaining groups without creating stigma.

♦ How best to ensure equality of access to and consistency, coherence and quality in learning and certification.

Priorities

The fact that schools themselves are likely to be best placed to identify early the pupils with the potential to become NEET is an important consideration for SQA. The organisation will need to know where and how to promote the take-up of any new or revised qualifications it decides to develop.

A priority that SQA may wish to consider is a consultation with its key partners on the way that the pre-NEET group's learning, assessment and qualifications needs are catered for. This could include all local authorities and community planning partnerships, as well as sampling the views of schools/colleges/training providers and other organisations, such as Careers Scotland, Communities Scotland, enterprise agencies, social work and Sector Skills Councils. Such a consultation would:

- ♦ identify the number of pupils that schools recognise as at risk of becoming NEET, and identify the priority target group for marketing any new qualifications in individual schools
- ♦ find out where the pre-NEET groups are likely to be concentrated, in terms of catchment areas, and mainstream or special schools
- ♦ establish what is currently being done, by way of early intervention and alternative curriculums, programmes or qualifications, to address the learning and support needs of the pre-NEET group (including use of SQA Units and qualifications, non-certificated programmes that could potentially be accredited through SQA, or use of other awards or programmes certificated through other bodies, but not accredited by SQA or covered by the SCQF)[10]

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[10] Since this report was written, SQA has undertaken research to explore the various programmes currently in place to support pupils categorised as being at risk of not being in education employment or training.

3 Learning, training and qualifications needs of the pre-NEET group

The report so far has identified that an individualised approach is needed to meet the needs of those at risk of becoming NEET. All of the reports reviewed for this study suggest that this individualised approach needs to apply to:

♦ assessing and identifying the learning and support needs of young people at risk of becoming NEET

♦ removing barriers to individual achievement of potential

♦ planning to meet those needs and designing an appropriate individual curriculum that motivates and is relevant to the needs of the individual

♦ delivering learning programmes for individuals, taking account of their preferred learning styles

♦ recognising and accrediting the learning that occurs in a wide range of formal and informal settings, facilitated by a range of teachers/trainers/coaches/mentors and advisers in a variety of contexts

Determined to Succeed and Young People at Risk of Becoming NEET[11] recognises that the support needs of the pre-NEET group have to be addressed in different ways, and that provision needs to be both flexible and diverse. This includes ensuring that a variety of organisations, as well as teachers with the skills and expertise to address individual needs, are involved in the provision of support and learning opportunities. Schools, with other providers and agencies, should work closely together to provide a continuous and consistent service to this vulnerable group of young people.

The *Determined to Succeed and Young People at Risk of Becoming NEET* study *(DtS)* has confirmed many of the findings of previous research on good practice. In particular, it has shown that the key factors enabling disaffected learners to become re-engaged and achieve successful outcomes include:

♦ offering them activities that are meaningful and relevant to them and which they can participate in on a voluntary basis

♦ delivering learning in an alternative environment that is not like school

♦ providing one-to-one support that is tailored to the young person's individual needs and circumstances

♦ employing project staff who have the skills and qualities to develop meaningful and supportive relationships with the young people, many of whom have had negative experiences of adults and people in authority

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[11] Determined to Succeed and Young People at Risk of Becoming NEET, Scottish Executive Social Research undertaken by NFER, February–October 2005

- establishing strong links with schools and other agencies to support young people's transition beyond their involvement in the project or activities

As you will see in the Appendix, these are features of many existing programmes and initiatives that appear to be successful in meeting the learning and certification needs of those at risk of becoming NEET and/or who have become disengaged from learning and education.

As well as recognising the importance of providing learning opportunities with the above features for the pre-NEET group, the literature review for the above *DtS* report also identified the importance of recognising achievements of young people via nationally recognised or less formal certificates or qualifications.

The report notes the importance of being responsive to the participants' needs and recommends 'that achievements are celebrated and that assessment is undertaken primarily as a process that can be used to aid the development of young people'.

This is in keeping with the strand of Assessment is for Learning that relates to the use of assessment as a learning tool: 'Projects need to recognise ... that many disaffected young people have been put off qualifications and exams and that too much emphasis on these early on could have a negative effect.'

Like many of the other reports reviewed for this study, the *DtS* report also emphasises the need for partnership working between schools and other agencies in provision of support for learning and to address other issues that may be barriers to learning for those at risk of becoming NEET.

A number of other factors influencing successful outcomes for those at risk of becoming NEET identified in *DtS* include:

- being in a different environment from school (because of negative experiences at school, including instances of bullying, lack of achievement, boredom and dislike of particular teachers)
- positive relationships with staff and being treated more like adults; being trusted; and having more respect and freedom from in the school setting
- more one-to-one attention than is possible in many schools
- appropriate activities, many of which are more practical and vocational and more in line with pupils' preferred learning styles
- effective communication links between external providers/agencies and schools allowing improved understanding of individual pupils' support needs

The HMIE report, *Count Us in — Achieving Inclusion in Scottish Schools*[12] is based on a survey of good practice in Scottish schools. It acknowledges that significant numbers of young people leave compulsory education without the intellectual and social skills that are necessary for adult life, but also that there is evidence of successful collaboration amongst agencies and imaginative practice in addressing these challenges.

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[12] Count Us In — Achieving Success in Scottish Schools, HMIE December 2002

The HMIE report suggests that to be inclusive, which would include meeting the needs of the pre-NEET group, schools have to embrace the following principles:

♦ having high expectations of all their pupils

♦ all pupils should experience success

♦ inclusion requires a flexible, dynamic response to the needs of individuals

♦ inclusive education can be delivered through a variety of settings

♦ inclusive education relies on schools working with others ─ schools should support the whole child

♦ inclusion requires effective leadership

There are points of convergence between this earlier report, the *DtS* report on the pre-NEET group, and other reports mentioned elsewhere.

Key issues for SQA

Key issues for the SQA to consider in light of these identified curriculum, learning, assessment and qualification needs for those at risk of becoming NEET or who may be disengaged are:

♦ how formative assessment can be non-invasive and support learning and achievement, especially if the learning opportunities are less traditional, informal and very learner-centred

♦ how summative assessment of learning achievements can be robust, rigorous, reliable and valid without being off-putting for learners.

Priorities

In the light of the needs identified above, the following are suggested as priorities for SQA to address:

♦ A survey of schools and relevant partner organisations to identify the relevance or development needs of existing SQA qualifications to meet the needs of the pre-NEET group.

♦ As part of this, identify good practice in use of SQA qualifications and formative and summative assessment that is non-invasive and supports learning and achievement, particularly if the learning opportunities are less traditional, informal and very learner-centred

♦ Identify the range of contributors to formative and summative assessment, and the staff development needs arising if such approaches were to be adopted more widely.

4 Barriers to meeting the needs of the pre-NEET group

Many of the barriers faced in meeting the needs of the pre-NEET group are reflected in section 2, which shows the characteristics of the lowest attaining S4 pupils. The report, *Missing Out*, a report on children at risk of missing out on educational opportunities produced by HMIE in 2006, identifies the same kind of characteristics of low-attaining young people and the risks and barriers they face.

Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice[13], the result of widespread consultation related to the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act 2004*, has the aim of creating a better, stronger system for supporting children's learning. Whilst the Act covers additional support for learning of a range of young people with physical or learning disabilities, it also covers many of those young people with characteristics such as those discussed in section 2.

This Act aims to ensure that all children and young people receive the additional support required to meet their individual needs and to help them make the most of their education. This framework is based on the idea of 'additional support needs'. This new term applies to children and young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, long or short term, to help them make the most of their school education.

According to the *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice,* children and young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons, including:

- motor or sensory impairments
- being bullied
- being particularly able or talented
- having experienced a bereavement
- being looked after
- having a learning difficulty
- living with parents who are abusing substances
- living with parents who have mental health problems
- having English as an additional language
- not attending school regularly
- emotional or social difficulties
- being on the child protection register
- being a young carer

Many of the children and young people who may need additional support identified above are also included in the groups of young people at risk of

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[13] Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice, Scottish Executive 2005

becoming NEET. However, the needs of each individual pupil should be considered and no assumptions made about their support needs.

The *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* identifies four main categories of factors or barriers that can hinder effective learning:

♦ Learning environment — unsuitable learning and teaching, ethos or curriculum; poor relationships; low attainment and associated stigma; and lack of incentive to invest effort in further educational gain.

♦ Family circumstances — deprivation and poverty; parental health problems or drug/alcohol misuse; young carers; young parents; looked-after children; and weak family support networks.

♦ Health or disability — sensory impairments; language difficulties; autistic spectrum disorders; learning difficulties; mental health problems; and drug/alcohol/substance abuse.

♦ Social or emotional factors — bullying; discrimination; challenging behaviour; offending; and truanting.

Although developments in Curriculum for Excellence and Assessment is for Learning, and other initiatives, are addressing barriers to achievement and progress, other barriers to young people not benefiting from effective learning, including those at risk of becoming NEET, might still include:

♦ a lack of understanding of the complexity of individual needs resulting from attitudinal barriers

♦ inappropriate learning and teaching approaches to motivate and sustain commitment to learning

♦ some inflexibilities in the 'system', including timetabling constraints and lack of opportunities for team teaching and enhanced guidance and support

♦ inappropriate or un-motivating curriculum content — although this is being addressed through such developments as Skills for Work and the Curriculum for Excellence

♦ a lack of clear and consistent progression pathways that would enable young people to progress from school, ie to clearly defined vocational pathways such as via National Progression Awards (NPAs)

♦ a lack of understanding of the importance of, and effective practice in, 'joined-up working' across agencies that have a role in supporting the client group

The kinds of additional support for children and young people identified in the *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* are:

♦ a particular approach to teaching: for example, as used with children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia or sensory impairments

♦ deployment of personnel from within the school and education authority, as well as from other agencies: teachers, support for learning assistants or auxiliaries, health, social services or voluntary agency staff

♦ provision of particular resources: including information and communications technology (ICT), and teaching materials

Examples of additional support provided from within education services to children and young people are:

♦ a class teacher helping a child by following a behaviour management programme drawn up in consultation with a behaviour support teacher
♦ tutorial support from a support for learning teacher to help with a reading difficulty
♦ designated support staff working with Gypsy/Traveller children on their site to help them improve their literacy and numeracy skills
♦ in-class support provided by an English as Additional Language (EAL) teacher for a child whose first language is not English
♦ a child at the latter stages of primary school receiving support to access the secondary mathematics curriculum
♦ use of voice recognition software by a child with dyslexia

As well as identifying additional support for learning approaches and mechanisms used in schools, the Act recognises that some children and young people will require additional support from agencies from outwith education services if they are to make progress. Some examples identified in the *Code of Practice* are:

♦ social work support to help a young person remain drug-free
♦ communication programme drawn up by a speech and language therapist and teacher, for implementation in the classroom
♦ an anger management programme delivered to a group of young people by staff from a voluntary agency
♦ counselling provided by a voluntary agency for a child coping with bereavement
♦ psychiatric support for a child with mental health difficulties
♦ specialist equipment support from physiotherapy or occupational therapy
♦ group or individual career support to engage choices for education
♦ training or employment in preparation for leaving school

Although, as noted elsewhere, no assumptions should be made about the needs of individual pupils at risk of becoming NEET, it is likely that some, if not most of them will need these kinds of individualised support to overcome individual barriers to their achieving their potential. If this is the case, then this has implications for the design/delivery and assessment of qualifications to meet their needs and certificate their achievements.

The *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice* states: 'Children who are looked after should have the same opportunities as all other children for education, including further and higher education, and access to other opportunities for development. They should also, where necessary, receive

additional help, encouragement and support to address special needs or compensate for previous deprivation or disadvantage.'[14]

As we saw in section 2, the lowest average tariff scores for S4 pupils in 2005–06 were for looked-after children, at just 58 against a national average of 172. Yet HMIE's *Interim Report on the Implementation of the Education, Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004*[15], said:

♦ 'Staged intervention approaches needed to take sufficient account of the broader definition within the Act of additional support needs and intervention strategies extended to encompass wider groups.'

♦ 'There is a need for further development of joint assessment and recording procedures combining care plans and Individualised Education Programmes for looked-after children and young people and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.'

This suggests that much more needs to be done to support the holistic learning needs of young people in care and others at most risk of entering the NEET group. This also suggests that there is an opportunity for SQA to consider the most appropriate means of providing qualifications for, and recognition of the wider achievements of, young people with complex learning and support needs.

Missing Out shows that individual schools and intervention programmes do make a difference to raising the performance of low-achieving pupils and increasing their life chances. It concludes that it is essential that we identify vulnerable children and young people at the earliest possible stage in order to address their needs and break the downward spiral of under-achievement.

However, *Missing Out* also notes that the relationship between the group of pupils with the lowest record of attainment and the post-school NEET group shows that the issues are not straightforward, as some pupils do not currently get credit for their successes. (We'll explore this further in Section 5, which looks at the relevance of current learning opportunities).

The report notes that many pupils with additional support needs attain well against their personal objectives at school but do not necessarily gain high tariff scores. This is because the tariff scores do not count successes in NQ Units that are not part of National Courses, and do not take account of some award-bearing courses, such as Right Track, the Princes' Trust XL, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network courses, and Duke of Edinburgh Awards. No account is taken of other broader areas of achievement such as work experience, residential experiences, arts and cultural activities or enterprise activities. To have such award-bearing courses recognised, it will be important to have these placed appropriately on the SCQF.

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[14] Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice, Scottish Executive 2005
[15] Interim Report on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, HMIE 2006

The report also notes that the NEET group contains many gap-year young people who will not pose long-term problems, and that the composition of the NEET group can be fluid, particularly in the first year after people leave school. This makes it difficult for education authorities to find reliable statistics to describe the group.

Key issues for SQA

Key issues for SQA concerning additional support needed for barriers to learning to be overcome include:

♦ working with other organisations to identify where to target take-up of any new or revised qualifications

♦ the possible contribution of a range of personnel from different agencies to provide formative and summative assessment

♦ the staff development needs of this wider group of contributors to assessment, to ensure assessment is robust and reliable

♦ a wider range of approaches to assessment for school pupils, including assessment in a wider range of contexts (eg workplace, community, voluntary sector)

♦ recognising broader areas of achievement, such as work experience, residential experiences, arts and cultural activities or enterprise activities, by inclusion in the SCQF

Priorities

Priorities for SQA might be to identify:

♦ gaps in SQA provision that, if addressed, would help to meet the learning and qualifications needs of the pre-NEET group

♦ inherent barriers to engagement and certification of young people at risk of becoming NEET in existing units, modules and qualifications

♦ where activities or interventions that are currently non-certificated, such as those provided through Careers Scotland, could be accredited by SQA[16] and certificated by existing or new Units or qualifications

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[16] Some such interventions and programmes are described in Appendix 4.

5 Relevance of current learning opportunities and qualifications

In *Missing Out*, the report produced by HMIE in 2006, schools which were improving the life chances of low-attaining pupils through raising their achievement are reported as using a number of approaches. Some introduced a variety of award-bearing courses to motivate and achieve success. They used curriculum flexibility so that pupils gained awards in courses at colleges of further education, and extended work experience and activities were accredited by voluntary organisations. Few of these awards were recognised, however, through tariff scores and consequently the success of these pupils was being underestimated.

The SQA *Attainment and School Leaver Qualifications in Scotland: 2005–06 Scottish Executive Statistics* covers the attainment rates of National Qualifications (NQs) at Standard Grade, Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher. This document does not provide information on awards some pupils will have achieved including Unit awards, Access 1 or 2 Clusters and non NQ awards (with the exception of Access 2 Cluster awards, which are included for special schools only).

It is, therefore, important to note that although a range of early intervention programmes are currently available, and pupils are attaining skills and knowledge through the programmes, not all of their attainments are recognised within the NQ system. A number of these programmes that have been reviewed for this study are contained in Appendix 4.

Missing Out reported that schools that were successful in raising attainment and achievement for all pupils demonstrated the characteristics described in the next few paragraphs.

Teaching that provided the highest quality learning experiences
♦ curriculum flexibility was used effectively to meet the needs of the lowest-performing pupils
♦ clear and effective policies and practices supported learning, including revision classes, Easter schools, supported study, and other approaches targeted on individual needs
♦ pupils had agreed challenging but achievable individual targets, and their progress and achievements were monitored effectively
♦ the use of formative assessment methods involved pupils more actively in their learning and gave them additional responsibility for it
♦ teaching methods focused on motivating pupils and developing their self-esteem[17]

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[17] Activate is an example of an integrated package of support initially delivered in schools by Careers Scotland staff that is designed to address the needs of young people with issues that may hinder their smooth transition from school to the world of work.

Close partnership working with other agencies

♦ between schools and colleges and sometimes children's services, ensuring prompt intervention when support was needed with difficulties arising

♦ with projects in the community regeneration field to support the development of citizenship and responsibility

♦ consistent and effective approaches were adopted to improving attendance and reducing exclusions

♦ targeted support for families, often through support from home-link workers

Reflection on practice that valued people

♦ staff and pupils were consulted on what works well and why, and pupil views were considered and acted on, giving them greater involvement in decision making

Ethos of ambition and achievement

♦ staff and pupils had high expectations of what they could achieve, and pupils showed self-respect and high levels of self-esteem

♦ pupils' achievements were celebrated at all possible opportunities

♦ an ethos of hard work whilst making learning fun was promoted

Some specific good practice approaches that are identified as effective in raising attainment in *Missing Out* are:

♦ support bases for pupils with learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, where support was aimed at returning pupils to mainstream education

♦ introducing Skills for Work courses[18]

♦ vocational pathways projects which start in school and work well in helping pupils to achieve and allow recognition of achievement in employability and some vocational skills

♦ enterprise activities

♦ ensuring that young people's views, needs and interests were taken fully into account in planning and reviewing outcomes

♦ carefully-chosen vocational courses at colleges of further education

♦ provision of training courses for some of the pupils' time at school

♦ extended work experience at S4

♦ high-quality provision from independent training providers

This evidence, and the review of the range of initiatives included in the Appendix, show that there is already a lot of effective practice in meeting the needs of young people at risk of becoming NEET.

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[18] Skills for Work programmes are described in Appendix 4.

Programme example: *The Enhanced Vocational Programme (EVIP) is an initiative to enable pupils aged 15+ to spend part of their last school year studying for a vocational or nationally certificated qualification together with their Standard Grades. The programme targets pupils who: are looked after or looked after and accommodated; have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.*

However, it may be that access to such provision and certification is not consistent across the country. SQA may wish to consider how best to address this — in terms of learning, teaching and assessment approaches, as well as who delivers the learning/assessment and where — in the design and development of any potential new awards.

The key considerations from *Missing Out* for schools, education authorities and other partners to look at in making learning and qualifications opportunities more relevant are:

Improved measurement approaches
♦ use consistent, valid and reliable measures of achievement which credit and recognise the full range of success
♦ broaden the information available to represent the full spectrum of achievement, including attainment and the development of confidence and self-esteem, taking into account the National Priorities and A Curriculum for Excellence
♦ ensure effective and timeous transfer of information when children and young people move between education authorities and between the various stages in their education

Early identification and prompt intervention
♦ identify and support that group of low-attaining pupils likely to be at risk of missing out on educational opportunities as early as possible
♦ intervene promptly and effectively as soon as things start to go wrong for individuals

Partnership working
♦ provide more focused partnership working and inter-agency support for pupils at risk by mainstreaming practices as highlighted in the *Code of Practice for the Additional Support for Learning Act*
♦ support the most deprived families by, for example, providing home-link support and family learning initiatives
♦ consider the use of secondary school-based social workers and continued development of school-based youth workers
♦ provide targeted staff training on aspects of partnership working, including joint training with partners

Meeting needs through targeted, flexible practices

♦ draw on the best approaches in care and health partnership working, community learning and development programmes, and early intervention initiatives

♦ use the curriculum more effectively to develop core, life and leadership skills, and provide the means to nurture and improve employability skills (ensuring that employers are involved in initiatives)

♦ further develop curriculum flexibility, with the involvement of further education colleges, community learning and development providers and other agencies

♦ enable the more flexible operation of schools to enhance what, when and how they deliver education (for example, consider issues such as the length of the school day, opening schools over holiday periods and providing pupils with more access to pastoral care teams)

Many of these considerations were also identified in *DtS*, which concluded that young people need support from a range of expert staff and organisations working together to enable the target learners to progress further to education, employment or training. It also concludes that the skills and qualities of project staff are vital to re-engaging, motivating and helping disaffected young people to progress, and that they need appropriate support and training to achieve maximum impact.

The 10 provider case studies in the *DtS* report fall broadly into the kinds of good practice identified in *Missing Out* and include:

♦ alternative curriculum projects

♦ vocational education programmes

♦ transition to work programmes

♦ outdoor education projects

♦ volunteering projects

♦ pupil support projects

These had common good practice and effective characteristics with those noted in *Missing Out*, including:

♦ providers working with small groups of young people (no more than 13)

♦ personalised learning opportunities tailored to individual needs

♦ informal, flexible approaches to learning

♦ a focus on practical hands-on activities

♦ a focus on developing skills

♦ elements of choice and autonomy

♦ on-going consultation and discussion

♦ on-going monitoring, review and assessment

Programme example: *The Prince's Trust xlerate with xl covers six curriculum areas. xlerate with xl is accredited through SQA Higher Skill Units in Personal and Social Education. The Personal Awareness and Development, Social Development and Vocational Development Units are the primary accreditation used. The programme is targeted at S3 and S4 pupils facing difficulties in education and works with them on a personal development curriculum that promotes achievement and encourages success.*

The *DtS* study also considered pupil outcomes and qualifications for them. The specific outcomes for young people identified by staff and participants could be divided into the following categories:

♦ achievement of qualifications

♦ personal development

♦ development of skills

♦ impact on future choices

As with the examples of existing programmes and initiatives in the Appendix, young people at these providers were working towards a range of qualifications, including Standard Grades, Scottish Vocational Qualifications, Scottish Progression Awards and Access courses, as well as other awards and certificates, such as the Millennium Volunteers Award, Leadership in the Community, and first aid certificates. Some of the certificates were externally accredited, while others were created by the providers themselves.

Although some of the young people were unsure what specific qualifications they were working towards at the provider, others indicated that they valued their qualifications and other achievements.

It is clear from this, and the range of programmes listed in the Appendices, that there are current learning opportunities available, and that many of them reflect:

♦ enhanced guidance and support

♦ enhanced curriculum choice and flexibility

♦ different learning environments/contexts

♦ enhanced partnership working

Features that would appear to make them relevant to the needs of the target groups in this study are:

♦ individual action planning involving the young people themselves

♦ practical and participative learning, teaching and assessment approaches, including self-assessment

♦ more adult relationships, and more responsibility for the young people

- ♦ an element of vocational learning, or employability and vocational preparation, as the main vehicle for learning
- ♦ Core Skills/workplace literacies
- ♦ personal and social development

Key issues

Key issues for SQA to consider in review of qualifications to meet the needs of the pre-NEET group:

- ♦ Qualifications must be capable of recognising achievement in various settings, including outside the school.
- ♦ The way that achievement and attainment are reported may need to be changed, eg based on pupil profiling, self-assessment, or evidence of achievement in informal and extra-curricular settings, such as in the community, sports, arts etc.
- ♦ Some recognition of achievement through certification/profiling may be useful for motivation from S1.
- ♦ Partner agencies will need to work together to identify schools or initiatives to target, for any new awards that are developed.
- ♦ More vocational preparation/pre-employment programmes and qualifications may need to be developed or revised (eg Skills for Work and/or NPAs) to develop progression pathways to suit individual needs[19].

Priorities

A priority for SQA to consider might be a wide-ranging consultation exercise with schools and training providers already using SQA qualifications to recognise the wider achievements of the pre-NEET group, as well as obtaining the views of those who feel there are gaps in the provision available to meet the needs of their pupils and young people.

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[19] SQA is currently exploring employability in the context of More Choices, More Chances and the development of flexible Group Awards.

6   Recognition of wider achievement

The desk research has reviewed a range of policy and programme information that relates to the young people who may be at risk of becoming NEET. All the documents reviewed point to the need for a flexible, learner-centred approach to the provision of opportunities for learning and recognition of wider achievements. A number of key issues for SQA to consider have emerged, although it may be argued that these considerations should apply to learning opportunities for all school pupils.

Key Issues

Identification of individual needs of learners

♦ Individualised Assessment of Needs, removal of barriers, flexibility in programme design, and recognition of achievement are vital considerations in qualifications development.

♦ Young people have to be involved in decision making about their learning opportunities and action planning to meet learning, support and wider holistic needs.

♦ A wider range of professionals and organisations (eg health, social work, and specialist providers) need to be involved in meeting the learning and support needs of the young people at risk.

♦ Partner organisations need to share more information on learner needs and barrier removal.

Curriculum content

♦ Personal and social development has to be included, as appropriate to individual needs.

♦ Basic skills and support for literacies need to be included as employability skills and as a foundation for progression.

♦ Practical and vocational content appears to be motivating to many of the young people at risk of becoming NEET.

♦ We must capitalise on the interests and motivation of learners in design of individual curriculum.

Programme design and delivery

♦ Programmes should be designed and delivered on the basis of young person's preferred learning styles.

♦ There is a need for flexibility in programme design and delivery to take account of individual needs.

♦ We need to recognise that programmes may be delivered in a variety of different contexts and combinations of contexts within and outside the school

setting eg in the workplace, in voluntary contexts, in the context of music, sport, drama, art.

♦ Learning must be supported, facilitated and delivered by a range of teachers, trainers, tutors, and facilitators, and by team approaches to delivery inside and outside the school.

Formative assessment

♦ Approaches to assessment should support the learning process and engage the young person in assessing progression and next steps.

♦ Young people at risk of becoming NEET can be engaged by self-assessment and reflecting on their strengths/achievements and next steps.

Summative assessment

♦ There should be recognition and certification opportunities for the wider range of achievements through robust assessment of the learning that has taken place. This means considering the quality assurance requirements that will ensure consistent, valid and reliable assessment.

Qualifications

♦ Although there may not be a need for large-scale development of new qualifications, there may be a need to revise existing qualifications to provide bespoke cluster awards to meet individual needs.

♦ We need to consider how coherence, consistency and quality can be assured in such a personalised arrangement.

♦ There are existing developments to build on in creating progression pathways, not only for the client groups considered in this study, but also wider groups of returners to education, employment, and training.

♦ SQA needs to consider whether there is a need for new Units or Courses or whether the qualification needs of those at risk of becoming NEET can be met by using existing qualifications and programmes.

♦ Existing programmes and initiatives could be mapped against existing SQA Units, qualifications etc, and possibly included in the SCQF.

Staff development

♦ If assessment is to be undertaken by a wider range of trainers, teachers and facilitators, potentially working as teams, there may be staff development needs.

♦ There may also be joint staff development needs to provide the range of individualised support required to allow barriers to learning, achievement and qualifications to be addressed.

Priorities

Priorities suggested for SQA to consider so far relate to identifying the possible market for any new qualifications and whether there is a need for such new qualifications or whether existing provision is sufficient, even if it has to be revised. These priorities could be addressed through a large scale survey of schools, providers and other intermediaries, to ascertain the relevance of current SQA provision to the needs of the pre-NEET group.

However, as the research suggests, what appears to be most worthwhile and effective in meeting the needs of those whose wider achievements may currently not be met, is a very individualised and flexible curriculum that could be delivered and assessed in many different ways, by potentially a wide range of people including the learners themselves.

If SQA decides there is a need to develop new or revise existing qualifications on this basis, then, rather than being very prescriptive, SQA will probably need to develop a set of principles to guide centres in the flexible design, delivery and assessment of such qualifications.

7 QCA qualifications strategy for the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT)

As you will see from the Appendices, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) conducted extensive research on many similar issues to those identified in this review before proceeding with development of the Foundation Learning Tier.

Key stages in development of the FLT were:

- research and evaluation of existing entry-level qualifications to identify key issues and where they were not meeting needs
- diagnostic research on what needed to be done on the basis of the key issues identified including:
— identifying market failure in qualifications for adults
— recognising prior learning
— identifying needs at the point of re-entry to learning and/or employment for returners
— ways of ensuring progression routes/pathways
— employability needs
— personal and social development needs
— mapping existing, perhaps fragmented/inconsistent or incoherent provision in the above areas, including vocational provision and provision to support independent living
- development research for the FLT including:
— how to ensure coherence in a very individualised set of provision
— agreeing the purpose of subject-based and vocational qualifications at entry-level
— how to develop the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Units to recognise learner referenced achievements
— adult learning qualifications
— quality assurance of non-formal awards in the QCF
— framework development for the entry-level in QCF
— use of personal and social development Units/qualifications within the FLT
— identifying gaps and exploring/developing Units and qualifications to support coherence in the FLT

All this research and development activity has led to the QCA Qualifications Strategy for the FLT. The strategy has been consulted on once already, and the existing trial and testing version of it will be revised in summer 2007. The strategy includes a draft set of principles for the FLT that is being worked up, with collaboration of providers to support coherence and personalisation. Awarding bodies are being encouraged to audit their existing provision (inside and outside the National Qualifications Framework) against the draft set of principles and other guidance contained in the strategy.

Other on-going developments include:

♦ development of a framework for personal and social development
♦ development of vocational Units and qualifications including guidance on creating a more coherent vocational offer for learners with clear progression routes
♦ development of subject-based Units and qualifications at this level
♦ development of broad-based qualifications for 14–19 year olds at this level

SQA may already have in place (or in the pipeline), similar changes and enhancements to qualifications structures that will help to address the needs of the pre-NEET group and other learner groups who need additional support to achieve their potential in life and work. The QCA process described above may be helpful to SQA in determining its priorities.

Research undertaken by QCA in advance of development of the strategy is summarised in Appendix 6. This, too, may be useful to SQA in identifying priorities.

Appendix 1: Curriculum for Excellence outcomes

The Scottish Executive published a Curriculum for Excellence, following the report of the Curriculum Review Group, and their response to it in November 2004. The aspiration of Curriculum for Excellence is:

> 'to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.'

The outcomes sought to achieve this are as follows:

♦ For the first time ever, a single curriculum 3–18, supported by a simple and effective structure of assessment and qualifications, which will allow the right pace and challenge for young people, particularly at critical points like the move from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary.

♦ Greater choice and opportunity, earlier, for young people, to help them realise their individual talents and to help close the opportunity gap by better engaging those who currently switch off from formal education too young.

♦ More Skills for Work options for young people, robustly assessed and helping them to progress into further qualifications or work.

♦ More space in the curriculum for work in depth, and to ensure that young people develop the literacy, numeracy and other essential skills and knowledge they will need for life and work.

♦ Young people achieving the broad outcomes that we look for from school education, both through subject teaching and more cross-subject activity.

♦ More space for sport, music, dance, drama, art, learning about health, sustainable development and enterprise, and other activities that broaden the life experiences — and life chances — of young people.

Appendix 2: Features of Assessment is for Learning

Assessment is for Learning is based on extensive research in assessment that suggests that learners learn best, and their attainment improves, when they:

♦ understand clearly what they are trying to learn, and what is expected of them

♦ are given feedback about the quality of their work, and what they can do to make it better

♦ are given advice about how to go about making improvements

♦ are fully involved in deciding what needs to be done next, and who can give them help if they need it

For schools and teachers, three main strands of assessment activity now underpin the programme as it is introduced across Scotland:

♦ Assessment for learning — including pupils, staff and parents being clear about what is to be learned and what success is like; provision of feedback to pupils to enable them to improve work; and pupils and staff being fully involved in next steps in their learning and knowing who can help them.

♦ Assessment as learning — including pupils and staff reflecting on evidence of learning, goal setting and practicing self and peer assessment.

♦ Assessment of learning — including using a range of everyday activities as a means of checking pupil progress; staff working together to share standards in and across school; staff using assessment information to monitor their provision and school progress and plan for quality improvement.

Appendix 3: Research summaries

This Appendix lists the reports researched, and summarises their key points.

More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland
(Scottish Executive, 2006)

It calculates that approximately 20,000 young people in Scotland will need additional support to enter the labour market. The strategy will focus on seven NEET hotspot areas. It identifies five key areas of activity:

- pre-16
- post-16
- financial incentives
- support
- joint commitment and action

The pre-16 actions proposed are:

- transforming the learning environment
- flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition
- recognition of wider achievement
- support for learners
- development of employability
- a focus on outcomes — consider the outcomes for all children

For the pre-NEET group the strategy identifies the following priorities:

- Wide-ranging action is needed across the education and wider children's services to improve the educational experience of all children, especially those most at risk of disaffection and under achievement, and of leaving school with few or no qualifications. Learning experiences have to be transformed to ensure they are tailored to individual needs and are designed to enable every child to develop their potential, regardless of their personal circumstances. Action is needed to ensure schools support all children in raising their own expectations of what they can achieve and to fulfil these expectations throughout their school career and beyond.

- Flexible, personalised learning opportunities with appropriate recognition: a radical overhaul of the curriculum and qualifications framework and a new approach to assessment, to support schools in tailoring teaching and learning experiences to the needs of individuals, whatever their circumstances, to ensure they enjoy the opportunities and support their need to develop their potential throughout their school career and prepare them for their chosen career path on leaving school.

- Recognition of wider achievement: giving credit to different skills, abilities and achievements.

- Support for learners: a new framework to ensure that all children who require additional support to benefit fully from school get that support, both from schools and wider children's services.

- Developing employability: to better prepare all young people for the world of work and improve school leaver destinations.

- A focus on outcomes: renewed emphasis on the responsibility of schools and local authorities to consider the outcomes for all children, including appropriate monitoring as part of performance management arrangements for schools and local authorities.

Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG)
(Scottish Executive, 2004)

CtOG is the overarching Scottish Executive strategy to tackle deprivation. Its aims are to:

- prevent individuals or families from falling into poverty

- provide routes out of poverty for individuals and families

- sustain individuals or families in a lifestyle free from poverty

In relation to employability, the targets within the strategy include:

- Target B — reduce the proportion of 16–19 year olds not in education, employment or training by 2008

- Target G — by 2007 ensure that at least 50% of all looked-after young people leaving care have entered education, employment or training

Attendance and Absence in Scottish Schools 2005–06
(Scottish Executive National Statistics Publication)

The report contains results of the attendance and absence survey for 2005–06. Information relates to local authority mainstream grant-aided schools. Its key messages:

- overall rate of attendance was 93.1%, slightly up from 93% in 2004–05

- attendance decreased steadily through to S4 (88.8%) before increasing slightly in S5 and S6

- overall absence 6.9%

- 3.2% days were recorded as sickness

- sickness rates increase suddenly in secondary school, particularly amongst girls

- deprivation increased the likelihood of being absent due to sickness

- pupils registered for free school meals had a truancy rate four times higher that of other pupils in primary — this difference drops along secondary and reverses in S6

- children looked after in local authorities were absent on average 10 more days than other pupils, with those looked after at home missing on average just above five and a half weeks of school
- where a child had multiple risk factors (registered for free school meals, has a Record of Needs and is looked after), they are absent for just below five and a half weeks

Exclusions from Schools 2005–06
(Scottish Executive Statistics Publication Notice)

The report contains the analysis of exclusions data 2005–06.

- During 2005–06 there were 42,000 exclusions and increase of 2% from 2004–05. The number of exclusions has risen each year since 2002–03. Around 22,500 different pupils (3%) were excluded during the year.
- Overall male pupils accounted for 78% of exclusions.
- Exclusion rates peaked in S3, with 198 exclusions per 1,000 pupils.
- Pupils registered for free school meals, pupils with additional support needs, and pupils looked after by the local authority all had higher exclusion rates than other pupils. Where a pupil had all three of these factors, the exclusion rate was 15 times that of other pupils.

Evaluation of Skills for Work (SfW) Pilot Programme: Key Findings from the Initial Phase of the Evaluation
(National Foundation for Educational Research, 2006)

The main aims of the evaluation are to examine key aspects of the SfW course design, including course rationale and purposes, design principles, assessment regimes, timetabling and delivery issues and to obtain the views and experiences, including pupils and teaching staff involved in the pilots. Four different delivery models were identified across the 20 partnerships involved in the survey. The most common approach adopted in half the partnerships involved colleges or training providers delivering the course on their premises, and many saw this as beneficial to students. However, each of the four delivery approaches was found to have their own strengths and weaknesses. Delivery in college was seen to give students access to a new learning environment, while in-school delivery enabled school staff to be more involved in the courses and ensured that students' experiences of SfW were less detached from the rest of the curriculum. The evaluation is continuing and a full evaluation report will be published after completion of all phases of the evaluation in October 2007.

The Statistics Publication Notice 2005–06
(Scottish Executive, March 2007)

This publication presents information on the attainment of National Qualifications (NQs) by pupils attending secondary schools and by school leavers.

♦ In S4, pupils attending schools in rural areas had a higher average tariff scores than pupils attending urban schools.

♦ Pupils registered for free school meals scored less on average than those who were not.

♦ Pupils who live in the 15% most deprived data zones had lower average tariff scores than those in the other 85% of data zones.

♦ Data on looked-after children is incomplete and may not be representative of all looked-after children. However, the information available suggests that looked-after children without a Record of Needs or Individualised Education Plan have a lower average tariff score than pupils who are not looked after but do have a Record of Needs or Individualised Education Plan.

Count Us In: Achieving Inclusion in Scottish Schools
(HMIE, December 2002)

This report is based on a survey undertaken by HMIE of good practice in Scottish schools. It acknowledges that significant numbers of young people leave compulsory education without the intellectual and social skills which are necessary for adult life, but also that there is evidence of successful collaboration amongst agencies and imaginative practice in addressing these challenges. The report advocates partnership working across professionals to overcome barriers to learning, use of flexibility as offered by the national improvement agenda, together with creative approaches to meeting all pupils' needs. Key messages are:

♦ Schools should have high expectations of all their pupils — in relation to attainment and behaviour as a basis for helping them to achieve their potential and maximise their life chances.

♦ All pupils should experience success — including progress towards individual personal goals/targets and recognising them when they are achieved, as well as other forms of achievement such as in personal and social development and participation in school and community activities.

♦ Inclusion requires a flexible, dynamic response to the needs of individuals. This includes introducing a wider range of learning programmes and opportunities to engage and challenge pupils who might otherwise be insufficiently motivated/stimulated; learning/teaching approaches that respond to pupil-preferred learning styles; and pupils being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

♦ Inclusive education can be delivered through a variety of settings. This requires an absolute commitment to equality of opportunity and fairness of treatment regardless of sex, religion, ethnic origin, gender orientation, social,

- Inclusive education relies on schools working with others — especially between teachers and staff of other agencies with a responsibility to provide services to pupils. This includes joint staff development to ensure that the holistic needs of pupils are met.

- Schools should support the whole child — including all their talents and abilities as well as their personality, social attitudes and competences. This requires a high level of knowledge of the pupils' circumstances outside school and a willingness to engage with parents to ensure the pupils aspirations and learning needs are met.

- Inclusion requires effective leadership — to develop a shared vision for inclusive education, ensure consistency in its application and continuous improvement in practice.

Additional Support for Learning Act — Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice
(Scottish Executive, 2004)

The Scottish Executive has a wide range of policies that support the development and well-being of Scotland's children and young people. The broad definition of additional support needs means that application of the Act's provisions requires effective interaction across policies in a number of areas. The following paragraphs describe some of these policy areas. The Act complements Scottish Ministers' high expectations and aspirations for all of Scotland's children and young people. These expectations and aspirations apply across agency, service and professional boundaries. Ministers' aspiration for all children and young people in Scotland is that they should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work. Ministers believe that children and young people should be:

- safe: they should be protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community

- nurtured: they should live within a supportive family setting, with additional assistance if required, or, where this is not possible, within another caring setting, ensuring a positive and rewarding childhood experience

- healthy: they should enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, with access to suitable healthcare and support for safe and healthy lifestyle choices

- achieving: they should have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem to the fullest potential

- active: they should be active with opportunities and encouragement to participate in play and recreation, including sport

- respected and responsible: they and their carers should be involved in decisions that affect them, should have their voices heard and should be encouraged to play an active and responsible role in their communities

♦ included: they and their carers should have access to high quality services, when required, and should be assisted to overcome the social, educational, physical, environmental and economic barriers that create inequality

The Code of Practice identifies that policy on integrated children's services requires local authorities, NHS Boards and other appropriate agencies to work together to meet the needs of all children through Children's Services Plans, Statements of Education Improvement Objectives and Records of Achievement. Integrated Children's Services Plans must include reference to services for vulnerable children and children in need, including arrangements for early intervention and support within universal services and targeted additional support where required. Given the broad concept of additional support needs, there is a need to integrate policies to ensure that factors affecting vulnerable children and children in need do not lead to an adverse effect on their learning.

Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice
(Scottish Executive, 2005)

The Code explains the new duties on education authorities and other agencies to support children's and young people's learning. It provides guidance on the Act's provisions as well as on the supporting framework of secondary legislation. The Code uses the term 'the Act' to include, where appropriate, the secondary legislative provisions, and includes features of good practice on how these can be applied. It also sets out new arrangements for avoiding and resolving differences between families and authorities.

The Additional Support for Learning Act introduces a new framework for supporting children and young people in their school education, and their families. This framework is based on the idea of additional support needs. This new term will apply to children and young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education. Children and young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons and may include those who:

♦ have motor or sensory impairments
♦ are being bullied
♦ are particularly able or talented
♦ have experienced a bereavement
♦ are looked after
♦ have a learning difficulty
♦ are living with parents who are abusing substances
♦ are living with parents who have mental health problems
♦ have English as an additional language
♦ are not attending school regularly
♦ have emotional or social difficulties
♦ are on the Child Protection Register
♦ are young carers

Interim report on the implementation of the Education
(Additional support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (HMIE, 2006)

On 14 November 2005, the system of assessment and recording of children and young people with special educational needs was replaced by a framework around additional support needs. Additional support needs are defined more broadly than special educational needs through the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. The Act aims to ensure that all children and young people are provided with the necessary support to help them work towards achieving their full potential. It also promotes collaborative working among all professionals supporting children and young people. In September 2005, at the request of Scottish Ministers, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) was given a two-year task. The task was:

♦ to monitor and evaluate the consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of education authorities in implementing the new legislation

♦ to ensure that procedures for implementation were in line with the duties of the ASL Act and the Scottish Executive Education Department's Code of Practice

Key messages/conclusions for this study are:

♦ Staged intervention approaches needed to take sufficient account of the broader definition within the Act of additional support needs and intervention strategies extended to encompass wider groups.

♦ Almost all authorities required to involve and consult in a more meaningful way with children and young people, including raising awareness of their rights, seeking their views on provision, and general discussions about the nature of support for learning.

♦ There is a need for further development of joint assessment and recording procedures, combining care plans and Individualised Education Programmes for looked-after children and young people, and those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Missing Out: A report on children at risk of missing out on educational
opportunities
(HMIE, 2006)

♦ Is the gap in attainment between the lowest-attaining 20% and others being measured accurately?

♦ What are the key characteristics of children and young people in the lowest-attaining 20%?

♦ Are schools and education authorities clear about which of their pupils fall within the lowest-attaining 20% nationally, and which approaches to improving their attainment are most effective?

♦ How can we identify these children and young people as early as possible in order to address their needs?

- What approaches are being used in schools and education authorities to improve the achievement and attainment of all pupils, but especially of the lowest-attaining 20%?

- Are any features of the work of schools and/or education authorities restricting improvements in the performance of the lowest-attaining pupils?

Schools, education authorities and partners should work together to seek improvements by considering the following improvement measurement approaches:

- early identification and prompt interventions

- partnership working

- targeted flexible practices

To improve practice in the round, there is now a need to:

- use better approaches to identify the risks and barriers faced by low-attaining pupils, and consequently to identify how best to address and meet their needs

- develop clearer and more helpful measures of achievement for tracking progress and destinations

- have the highest expectations of all young people and provide them with flexible curricular and learning opportunities

- improve communication and partnership working to ensure prompt, targeted and effective support for young people and their families

A Curriculum for Excellence Progress and Proposals
(Scottish Executive, 2006)

The whole school has responsibility for developing the four capacities in every child and young person. This has implications for the contributions of each adult who supports children and young people, and for whole-school policies, planning and partnerships with other organisations.

The revised curriculum framework needs to provide national guidance with clear parameters to enable every teacher to promote the four capacities within his or her classroom. Learning and teaching are at the heart of an effective curriculum. Teachers have recognised and welcomed the professional challenges presented by the four capacities for their learning and teaching approaches. They are aware that it is the 'how' of classroom practice which will support successful learning and promote confidence, participation and responsibility.

Review work shows that space can be found for learning in depth and for wider experiences. The work has shown that this can be achieved by, for example, reducing the number of levels at which outcomes are described, defining targets for learning differently, and removing duplication within and across curriculum areas. A Curriculum for Excellence offers a way of unifying the curriculum. Activities such as enterprise, citizenship, sustainable development, health and

creativity, which are often seen as add-ons, can be built into the curriculum framework.

Determined to Succeed and Young People at Risk of Becoming NEET
(NFER for Scottish Executive Social Research, Department of Enterprise Transport and Lifelong Learning, 2006)

This report recognises that the support needs of the pre-NEET group have to be addressed in different ways and that provision needs to be both flexible and diverse to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils. This includes ensuring a variety of organisations, as well as teachers, with the skills and expertise to address individual needs, are involved in the provision of support and learning opportunities. Schools, in conjunction — where appropriate — with other providers and agencies, should work closely together to provide a continuous and consistent service to this vulnerable group of young people.

Getting it right for every child: Draft Children's Services (Scotland) Bill Consultation
(Scottish Executive, 2006)

Services for children in Scotland are changing so that:

♦ children and young people get the help they need, when they need it, and are central to the process of finding solutions
♦ everyone working with children and young people uses a consistent and equitable approach and works more effectively together to improve outcomes for children and young people
♦ everyone is clear of their personal responsibility to do the right thing for each child and how they contribute to the collective responsibility to do the right thing for each child
♦ parents and children benefit from a collaborative approach, which results in fewer meetings, requires them to give their information only once, and jointly develop with professionals one plan that will meet all of their needs
♦ agencies and professionals are freed up to get on and respond to children and take appropriate, proportionate and timely action with the minimum of paperwork, bureaucracy and duplication

Scottish Ministers are committed to reforming the delivery of children's services to place a greater focus on improving outcomes for children, and to create a Scotland in which every child matters, where every child, regardless of their family background, has the best possible start in life.

Looked After Children and Young People — We Can and Must Do Better
(Scottish Executive, 2007)

This report indicates the Scottish Executive's desire to see a step change in outcomes for looked-after children and sets out the actions which need to be taken to ensure that this happens. The status quo for these young people is simply not acceptable. In taking this work forward, the Scottish Executive recognised the

importance of seeking views from stakeholders — those actually providing and delivering support on a daily basis, as well as those in receipt of that support. The Scottish Executive wanted to hear about real experiences, to establish where we are getting things right and where the strengths of the system are, as well as where there are gaps in provision and more needs to be done.

Qualifications strategy for the FLT
(QCA, 2006)

This consultation describes the overall strategy and processes involved in the development of the FLT by QCA working in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and awarding bodies.

An evaluation of entry-level qualifications (joint project by QCA, ACCAC, CCEA and LSC, May 2004)

QCA worked jointly with ACCAC, CCEA and the LSC National Office to carry out this evaluation of entry-level qualifications. This is the first large-scale evaluation of these qualifications since they were introduced in 1998 following recommendations from Sir Ron Dearing's *Review of qualifications for 16–19 year olds*.

The aims of the evaluation were to find out how extensively the qualifications were being used, how effective they are and where improvements are needed. The recommendations have been used to inform development of the FLT.

Recommendations included:

♦ development of more vocational qualifications at this level
♦ consideration of personal and social skills — analysing how best to record and celebrate achievement in non-formal settings and distance travelled
♦ review of provision at level 1 to ensure enough progression opportunities
♦ reporting on achievements in qualifications at this level and ways of recording data on progression

Appendix 4: Current learning opportunities and qualifications

A range of early intervention programmes are currently available through schools and local authority areas that are not mentioned within this study. Some of this work exists at a local level and is often not widely reported on. A number of these programmes are described below.

Activate, delivered by Careers Scotland

Key activities include:

♦ a job competence programme including enhanced careers guidance

♦ personal development work

♦ enterprise activities

♦ individual mentoring

♦ referral to, and support from, identified specialist agencies

Ongoing careers support is then continued for up to a year after programme completion in the school setting.

The target group is young people identified as having some issues that may hinder their smooth transition from school to the world of work including:

♦ low-self esteem

♦ lack of confidence

♦ poor communication skills

♦ basic skills

Activate is positioned as an early intervention programme to work with these young people to prevent future NEET status by supporting their post school transition.

The numbers of young people who are unemployed/NEET at the end of the programme is 8.7% of all those who took part in Activate. This is significantly lower than the usual 30% expected for this group of young people; lower than both the national Scottish rate for all school leavers; and lower also than the target rate of 11%.

Basix — developed by Standard Life and delivered by trained business personnel

Basix is a series of workshops centred round the world of work and aims to:

♦ develop core and transferable skills

♦ enhance employability skills

♦ develop confidence, personal and interpersonal skills and decision making

♦ engender positive attitudes to work

The workshops cover:

♦ applying for jobs

♦ interviews

♦ personal success at work

Basix is aimed at students in S4, S5 and S6. Outcomes include:

♦ increased confidence and self-esteem

♦ better interpersonal skills

♦ awareness of the world of work

Career Box

Career Box is a flexible teaching and learning career education resource delivered by both teachers and Careers Scotland advisers. Career Box was developed to deliver the four learning outcomes of Career Education in Scotland: A National Framework (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2001):

♦ awareness of self

♦ awareness of opportunity

♦ understanding career decision making

♦ understanding transitions

Career Box provides real-life, relevant contexts and scenarios for learning, and helps to link Core Skills with their use in the world of work.

Career Box provides career education for young people aged 3–18 years. It helps teachers fulfil the requirements of A Curriculum for Excellence in developing the four capacities within pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society within the contemporary world.

Enhanced Resource Pilot Project

Dedicated project careers advisers are trained in use of approved Careers Scotland employability products eg Activate and WorkNet.

The Enhanced Resource Pilot Project delivers an enhanced programme of employability activities and interventions. The project is being delivered in Glasgow, Dundee, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde and Clackmannan ─ seven local authority areas where levels of those who are NEET present a particular challenge.

The target group is S1–S6 pupils in participating schools, who are identified as being at risk of not securing a positive school leaver destination. Project delivery will focus particularly in S3–S6 pupils.

The target for the project is to reduce school leaver unemployment by 50% by the end of the 2007–08 academic session. Project participants are supported to access and sustain positive outcomes.

Schools to Work Programme

Schools to Work Programme was developed by Scottish Power Learning using assessment centre methodologies for assessing the employability of pupils. It is supported by Scottish Power Learning and Careers Scotland.

The programme is designed to:

♦ assess pupils' core employability skills

♦ provide realistic feedback from a business perspective

♦ produce an individually tailored personal development plan for each pupil

♦ provide training for pupils to improve their employability skills

The programme is aimed at S4, S5 and S6 pupils who are preparing to make the transition from school to work and aimed at more vocationally biased pupils. The benefits of the programme include:

♦ an enhanced understanding of the term 'employability skills'

♦ more positive attitudes towards the world of work

♦ the development of social skills

♦ identification of training needs

♦ support of career planning

♦ the development of core skills

Pupils are given a Certificate of Participation. If follow-up training is provided, the pupil will receive a certificate of achievement if they complete any courses.

Work Experience

A one-week placement in the world of work provides opportunities for young people to learn directly about working life and the working environment. The programme involves:

- ♦ one-week work placement with an employer
- ♦ preparation and debrief of pupils, dependent on individual schools
- ♦ the opportunity to develop dispositions, skills and capabilities in the context of a wide range of experiences offered in the workplace

The programme contributes to personal, social and health education and links to various secondary school subjects. The programme is delivered to pupils in their final year of compulsory education — usually S4 (whole year group). Other arrangements may be negotiable, subject to availability of resources including suitable workplace opportunities. The benefits of the programme include:

- ♦ a raised awareness of how rights and responsibilities, equal opportunities, health and safety, and care of the environment apply in the workplace
- ♦ increased motivation
- ♦ links between what is studied in school and its relevance to the world of work
- ♦ opportunities to apply knowledge and skills developed in the classroom
- ♦ the development of important soft skills, personal qualities, dispositions and understanding
- ♦ expanding vocational awareness

Some schools accredit Working with Others — up to Intermediate level 2.

The Prince's Trust xlerate with xl

The Prince's Trust Scotland has partnered with Young Enterprise Scotland to deliver the enterprise element. The programme is funded by the Scottish Executive and the Hunter Foundation, and is part of Determined to Succeed, the Scottish Executive's strategy for enterprise in education. The six main curriculum areas of the xl programme are:

- ♦ personal, interpersonal and team skills
- ♦ citizenship and community awareness
- ♦ a community-based project
- ♦ a residential activity (where possible)
- ♦ enhanced entrepreneurship and enterprise
- ♦ preparation for the world of work/training

An enterprise element in the curriculum teaches club members 10 steps to running a business; it also gives them access to enhanced work placements.

The xlerate with xl programme operates in Scottish secondary schools and targets S3 and S4 pupils facing difficulties in education and works with them on a personal development curriculum that promotes achievement and encourages success.

xlerate with xl is accredited through SQA Higher Units in Personal and Social Education. The Personal Awareness and Development, Social Development and Vocational Development Units are the primary accreditation used in Scotland, although the ASDAN xl award continues to be offered as an alternative. An evaluation of the programme has been undertaken and key findings of the report found that the programme has increased students':

- confidence and self awareness
- communication and organisational skills
- willingness to take responsibility and improved team working skills
- ability to cope with new situations and finding new ways of doing things

Skills for Work

A SfW pilot programme is currently underway, initially involving the piloting of SfW courses in 21 local authority areas in 40 centres, and in phase two, 31 local authorities through predominantly school-college partnerships. Skills for Work courses have been designed to help 14–16 year olds to develop skills and knowledge in a broad vocational area; Core Skills; an understanding of the workplace; positive attitudes to learning; and skills and attitudes for employability. The courses are intended to provide progression pathways to employment, training or further education for pupils of all abilities, with an emphasis on experiential learning.

The target group is 14–16 year olds. Although the main target group for these first SfW courses is for S3 and S4 pupils, some courses were taken by older pupils and some school leavers.

The five courses piloted in the first phase of development from 2005–06 were:

- Construction Crafts at Intermediate Level 1
- Sport and Recreation at Intermediate Level 1
- Early Education and Childcare at Intermediate Level 1
- Early Education and Childcare at Intermediate Level 2
- Financial Services Intermediate Level 2

A further five courses were developed for 2006–07:

- Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering at Access 3
- Rural Skills at Intermediate 1
- Hairdressing at Intermediate 1

♦ Construction Crafts at Intermediate 2

♦ Sport and Recreation at Intermediate 1

Three new courses were launched in August 2007:

♦ Hospitality and Catering at Intermediate 1

♦ Engineering at Intermediate 1

♦ Health and Social Care Higher

The Enhanced Vocational Inclusion Programme (EVIP)

The EVIP is an initiative to enable pupils aged 15+ to spend part of their last school year studying for a vocational or nationally certificated qualification, together with their Standard Grades.

The programme targets pupils who:

♦ are looked after or looked after and accommodated

♦ have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties

EVIP provides access to a range of vocational options in growth employment areas, a programme of core and life skills, and integrated literacy and numeracy support. The programme also includes a two-day residential session.

Barriers being challenged by EVIP are:

♦ antisocial behaviour in school

♦ antisocial behaviour in the community

♦ attitude, motivation and self-esteem

♦ emotional difficulties

♦ poor parental care

Columba 1400 Young People's Leadership Academy

The Columba 1400 Young People's Leadership Academy is the core programme operated by Columba 1400. Key learning areas are explored within topics of leadership and communication — organised under the Columba Code of Responsible Leadership. In addition to these core components, participants bring their personal values into focus, enabling them to recognise success and see their greatness. This learning from the residential component enables, on return to their community, identification of what needs to change, seeking support and utilising personal resources leading to action.

Funding has been awarded by the Scottish Executive to fund 600 young people to attend the Care Leavers Programme at the Columba 1400 Centre. Participants can expect to have:

♦ awareness — increasing awareness of themselves as leaders and better awareness of the potential in others
♦ focus — an understanding of what is important and choosing to act on this
♦ creativity — a belief that cycles and patterns in life can be changed
♦ integrity — greater awareness of their own potential and remaining true to it
♦ perseverance — a sense of resilience in the face of challenges
♦ service — a belief that you can have a positive impact on your community

Appendix 5: Background research for the FLT by QCA and LSC

For more information, see **www.qca.org.uk/flt**

The first phase of the programme of work to develop the FLT involved a thorough analysis of existing provision, via research work and discussions with key partners. The following research reports were produced.

1. *Adult learning, skills and progression to level 2: A study of market failure* (Credit Works, commissioned by LSC)

2. *Characterising first steps learning,* (Credit Works, commissioned by LSC)

3. *A comparative analysis of the NOCN progression qualifications in relation to the FLT and QCF* (Credit Works, commissioned by LSC)

4. *Segmenting adult learning provision* (NIACE, commissioned by LSC)

5. *A study of the implications of the FLT for E2E* (Credit Works, commissioned by LSC)

6. *Research to investigate provision, development and quality assurance in personal and social development phase 1: A mapping exercise of PSD provision* (NfAYPA, commissioned by QCA)

7. *Entry-level provision: Research report into existing provision* (QCA)

8. *Identification of vocational provision at level 1 within and outside the National Qualifications Framework* (Education Relations, commissioned by QCA)

9. *Defining coherence in the FLT workshop and paper* (Workshop and paper organised by QCA, February 2006)

10. *Subject-based qualifications at Entry-level: Moving forward* (paper based on discussions at 'Purposes of qualifications at Entry and level 1' workshop, QCA)

11. Development of a toolkit for designing QCF units to recognise learner-referenced achievement (Credit works, commissioned by QCA, March 2006)

12. Project to explore the concept of an adult learning certificate for use in the QCF (Learning South West, commissioned by QCA, March 2006)

13. Research into quality assurance models for non-formal awards and the QCF (NfAYPA, commissioned by QCA, mid March 2006) Qualifications strategy for the foundation learning tier: Test and trial version 2006/7 © 2006 Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 23

14. Scoping the content of the lower end of the Entry level of the Framework for Achievement (NIACE, commissioned by QCA, March 2006)

15. Mapping independent living skills provision at Entry and level 1 (NfAYPA, March 2006)

16. Taking forward the personal and social development offer in the FLT (NfAYPA, commissioned by QCA — ongoing work)

17. Planning the vocational unit and qualification offer for the foundation learning tier (Education Relations, commissioned by QCA)

18. Exploration and development of units and qualifications to support coherent programmes in the foundation learning tier (ASDAN, commissioned by QCA, March 2006)

19. Exploration and development of units and qualifications to support coherent programmes in the foundation learning tier (ASDAN, commissioned by QCA, March 2006)