

Executive Summary

Introduction

This summary provides the background to, methodology for, and overall conclusions and recommendations of a review of the current demand and supply of Further Education (FE) provision in Scottish Further Education colleges. The review was commissioned by the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC), and carried out between November 1999 and June 2000 by a team of researchers drawn from the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU), the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, Glasgow Caledonian University/University of Stirling, and the Applied Statistics Group, Napier University. The research team is indebted to the many people in colleges and the wide range of agencies who co-operated with the review and provided detailed information and considered responses on supply and demand of FE in Scotland.

Review specification

The Council instigated the review to address the current demand and supply of FE provision in incorporated colleges and in Orkney College, Shetland College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig and in Newbattle Abbey College. The review is intended to assist the Council in its determination of the 'adequacy' of FE college provision in Scotland including helping to identify any gaps in or duplication of FE provision. The review maps FE college provision by individual colleges, by travel to study area, by region, and at national level. In addition the review attempts to measure the level of demand at college, regional and national level as well as the level of need as identified by relevant bodies. The review also assesses the role of private training providers in meeting supply and demand.

Outcomes and methodology

In addition to this Executive Summary, the outcomes of the review are:

- Project Overview
- Review of Policy and Research
- College Profiles of Supply and Demand
- Regional Profiles of Supply and Demand
- National Profile of Supply and Demand
- Travel to Study Areas
- Analysis of Labour Market Data
- Background papers
 - Comparison of qualification data from the Scottish Executive FES database and the SQA database
 - Analysis of SQA and City and Guilds Awards Data
 - Clustering of Students
 - Definitions Used in Statistical Analysis.

The project aimed to establish a foundation of information on supply and demand which could inform policy decisions at national, regional and local levels and which could lead to further research and developmental activity which may be appropriate to supply and demand in Scottish FE.

The review sought to gather information on the adequacy of FE college provision. For the purposes of the research we defined adequacy as the extent to which supply matches current and anticipated demands and needs. We teased out dimensions of adequacy by exploring the following areas:

- **Current provision**

- The amount and range of supply in terms of programmes and qualifications.
- The amount and range of supply of different modes of provision and the accessibility of provision.
- The extent to which supply is meeting the needs of particular groups of students (different age groups, males and females, and socially excluded groups).
- The extent to which colleges define and respond to local, regional and national markets.
- The extent of the contribution of private training providers.

Data was gathered and analysed on student enrolments and SUMs; enrolments by level and type of qualification; age, gender and subject groupings; student clusters (see definition on page 3); mode of study by gender; fee type by gender; flexible and online learning; travel to study; commentary from users; private training provision.

- **Gaps and changes in provision**

- Areas where there is overprovision, insufficient or no provision.
- The extent to which provision is being developed to meet anticipated and emerging changes in local, regional and national markets.

Data was gathered and analysed on areas of current and anticipated increase in demand; areas of current and anticipated decrease in demand; gaps in current provision; and labour market information.

- **Collaboration**

- The forms and extent of collaboration amongst providers.

The research also sought to gather information on other issues which impact on FE colleges' ability to meet demands and needs for education and training.

We gathered evidence – some qualitative, some quantitative – in order to reach conclusions on the adequacy of supply of FE provision at regional and national levels using the framework of dimensions identified above. More detail about the sources and methods employed follows.

The present supply of the 47 individual FE colleges, and recent changes in this, was profiled through analysis of FE statistical data (FES 1 and 2). Colleges also provided additional quantitative and qualitative data via a questionnaire on supply and demand issues. These sources of data were used to produce statistical and descriptive profiles at college, regional and national levels.

These profiles were supplemented by qualitative data related to a similar set of issues and gathered from key stakeholders and partners at regional and national levels. At regional level, senior people from Local Enterprise Companies (LECs), Employment Service District Offices, Careers Services and Adult Guidance Networks were asked to complete a questionnaire. To give greater depth to the regional analysis, stakeholders and providers in two contrasting regions – Glasgow and Grampian – provided further qualitative data. At national level, interviews were conducted with senior people from national agencies covering a wide spectrum of interests in FE.

To gain insight at regional and national levels into variations in patterns of travel to study, we looked at the travel patterns for students on five different types of provision: part time NC provision in Care, full time NC provision in Care; part time HNC/D provision in Mechatronics, full time HNC/D provision in Mechatronics; part time provision in Building.

Labour market data were also gathered and analysed at national and regional levels. The data comprised number and percentage of employees by industry, percentage of people in occupational classifications, percentage of working age in employment, participation in education and training, and claimant counts.

And finally, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and City and Guilds of London Institute, Scotland (CGLI) data on private training providers were analysed to allow us to assess the contribution to the supply of education and training from the private sector.

It should be noted that, with the exception of the study of private training providers, the research was focused exclusively on provision from FE colleges. Apart from private training organisations there are considerable areas of college provision which overlap with that of other providers for the same groups of students. These are: Higher National courses in colleges and sub degree courses in HEIs, National Qualifications in colleges and school provision for S5/S6 students, and community-orientated courses in colleges, community education services and voluntary sector services. A more complete analysis of the relationship between supply and demand for Further Education would have to take account of the extent to which the supply from these other education and training providers in the overlap areas contributes to the adequacy of the totality of FE-type provision.

Brief descriptions follow of each of the main components of the review.

Project Overview and Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This provides the background to, methodology for and overall findings, conclusions and recommendations of the review.

Review of Policy and Research

The review documents the policy environment of FE in Scotland, reports on labour market issues in Scotland and the UK, reports on how colleges are developing and expanding provision, and summarises literature relating to supply and demand issues in education and training. The review provides a context and background for the study.

College, Regional and National Profiles of Supply and Demand

The **college profiles** of supply and demand were produced through analysis of FE statistical data (FES 1 and 2) held by the Scottish Executive and SFEFC and through analysis of information supplied by colleges in response to a questionnaire. The questionnaire was reviewed by a number of college senior managers and revised in the light of comments received before distribution. Each profile contains a section derived from the statistical data and a more descriptive section derived from the questionnaires.

The statistical section of the college profiles includes detailed data on: the location of the main centres of FE provision in the area; student enrolments; student characteristics by age, sex and subject; mode of study; fee type; and travel to study area. A *clustering* method has been used to classify the students from each college into five broad types. The descriptive section includes: detailed data on college structure; forms of provision; provision serving regional or national markets; collaboration with other colleges, Higher Education Institutions, schools and other organisations; changes in provision; gaps in provision; anticipated changes in provision.

The data on individual colleges were aggregated to contribute to **regional profiles** of supply and demand. In this context 'regions' correspond to LEC areas for Scottish Enterprise LECs and to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) area. The data for all colleges with their main site(s) located within a regional boundary – both statistical and descriptive – were aggregated. In addition, regional profiles contain labour market data for the region and a report on regional agency perspectives on FE provision in the region.

The data on individual colleges were also aggregated to contribute to a **national profile** of supply and demand. The first part of this profile was generated from college data. This has a short statistical section and an extended descriptive section which includes a final part covering sectoral issues, including the structure of the FE sector, and relationships between the sector and other providers. In addition, the national profile contains national labour market data, a report on national agency perspectives, a report on Careers Service and Adult Guidance Network perspectives, and a report on Enterprise and Employment Agency

perspectives.

Travel to Study Areas

A microanalysis of travel patterns for students on selected types of course was carried out. This allowed the mapping of individual lines between a student's home and the college where they are studying. Five different types of provision were analysed to gain insight into the variations in travel patterns. National patterns by area for all students were also considered. This allowed the definition of regions within our report and the definition of local areas for each college.

Analysis of Labour Market Data

The analysis of the labour market data provides information about the patterns of employment with respect to industry and occupational groupings for Scotland within each of our regions. Information is also provided on percentages who are employed, length of time unemployed, and levels of qualifications achieved. An analysis is provided in which national patterns, and regional variations are identified, and the implications for education and training are outlined. The data on which this is based has been drawn from the Annual Employment Survey, and the Labour Force Survey, and has been accessed through the NOMIS database.

Conclusions, recommendations and issues for further research

This section sets out the conclusions and recommendations of the review, drawing on the findings from the wide range of strands of the research. In the conclusions we comment on current provision, gaps and changes in provision and collaboration amongst providers to assess the adequacy of FE college provision at national and regional level.

Conclusions

Current provision

The number of student enrolments on courses in Scotland's 47 further education colleges has increased in the three year period from 1996 to 1999. The steepest increase over this period was in non-vocational courses. The numbers of men and women enrolling are approximately the same although mature students are most likely to be women. Subjects studied are heavily patterned by age and gender: IT is popular with older students; Science and Technology is predominantly studied by men; Care and Business are more likely to be studied by women. The increasing participation in FE is related to the wide range of locations for provision that colleges offer, not only on main campus sites but also in the communities and enterprises they serve.

Almost all colleges are currently providing flexible learning; over two thirds are providing online learning. Currently flexible learning is considerably more significant than online learning. Almost all colleges intend developing these forms of provision in the future. Most colleges are offering programmes for local, regional and

national markets although there is considerable diversity in the numbers of students attracted from outwith local catchment areas. Two factors seem to be important in determining the extent to which colleges engage with regional and national markets. These are good transport links and provision which is specialist in nature and therefore not widely available throughout the country. This suggests that colleges are both responding to and stimulating demand.

National and regional agencies generally perceive colleges to be providing a very good range of programmes and qualifications which allow people to enter and progress at different levels. They judge that colleges are effective in meeting the needs of different student groups and that the student body is representative of the wider community. They also value the student-centred approach which aims to meet individual needs. While agencies recognised that colleges have made significant improvements in service provision, they are seeking further improvements: provision outwith the main college campuses and the standard college year is still seen as limited; there is unsatisfied demand for short, 'taster' courses and courses for continuing professional development; performance within and between colleges can be inconsistent and variable in quality; the interface between colleges and employers and employees should be stronger; and especially for younger, more disadvantaged students (especially males) there are concerns about retention and achievement rates. Improvements are also sought in the general standard of college premises, the childcare facilities, and the provision of student destination data. Agencies also identified a significant gap between people's perceptions of colleges and the reality of their role and range of services.

Although the number of private training providers in Scotland far exceed the number of colleges their provision is much more specialised, focussed on VQ provision, and students numbers are much lower. National and regional agencies perceived them to be more flexible and responsive but also commented that quality can be variable.

We have found that colleges, through their main campuses and the many other locations they use, provide a broad range of programmes and qualifications, which allow people entry and progression at different levels. In terms of overall effectiveness, the general thrust of feedback from respondents suggests that the improvements sought are for colleges to do more of, and in better ways, what they are already doing – or starting to do.

There are, however, significant regional variations in the profiles of current provision which suggests varying levels in some dimensions of adequacy for which we offer a few examples.

- In terms of student enrolments, our regional analyses found that in Lanarkshire and Grampian the proportion of enrolments in HNC/D and other HE courses is considerably higher than the national proportion whereas in Borders and Dumfries and Galloway the proportion of enrolments is considerably lower. Indeed Borders enrolments are 65% below the national proportion.
- For non-vocational courses the regions which have the highest proportion of

enrolments are Dunbartonshire and Borders whereas Fife and Renfrewshire have the lowest proportion of such enrolments. Dunbartonshire's enrolments are over 200% higher than the national figure.

- When we looked at student clusters we found that Highlands and Islands proportion of full time students is 34% higher than the national proportion; Ayrshire's proportion of part time students is 38% higher than the national proportion; Grampian's proportion of evening/weekend students is 63% higher than the national proportion; Lanarkshire's proportion of distance/open learning students is 84% below the national proportion; and Dumfries and Galloway's proportion of short, part-time students is 162% above the national proportion.
- The extent to which private providers contribute to regional provision also varies. For example there were 47 private training organisations with over 8,000 candidates in 1998/99 in Glasgow and no private providers in Borders.

Gaps and changes in provision

Analysis of the data at national level found evidence of gaps in provision. These gaps related either to provision which was not meeting total demand or to demand which was not being met at all. However the data relating to gaps should not be considered in isolation. There is, in fact, a correlation between the gaps identified and the areas of current and/or anticipated growth. There is also a reasonable degree of consistency between colleges and other agencies about gaps and changes in demand when data is aggregated at national level.

Colleges identified ICT covering a range of courses from basic word-processing to web design and e-commerce; Sport, Leisure and Recreation; Care; Business, Administration and Management; and Beauty Therapy/Hairdressing as programme areas, both full time and part time, which had been experiencing growth. Gaps where demand was not fully being met included ICT, Beauty Therapy, Sports Studies and Hospitality and Tourism. As well as these subject areas some colleges also highlighted demand for work-based SVQs as outstripping supply. Other groups of respondents, for the most part, concurred with these.

Areas identified by particular colleges where there was no provision included aspects of ICT, e-commerce, Animal Care and Call Centre training. It was also noticeable that these gaps were discussed much more in terms of the mode of provision – particularly work-based, distance, part time and short course – and the level of provision – such as NC or SVQ. Again this was echoed by respondents in other groups. Finally, colleges anticipated growth in the areas already experiencing increases in demand and in areas where there is no supply at present. Anticipated growth from other groups of respondents included all of those identified by colleges and then, in some cases, this was extended. Some LECs also spoke of a need for a greater range of provision related to leisure activities as a hook to start people on the Lifelong Learning path. This was clearly more to do with supply stimulating, rather than responding to demand.

The evidence suggests that supply is and will continue to adjust to growing and emerging demand. Colleges should further develop this ability. One of the aims of

SUfl is to make learners more discerning and more demanding. There is considerable potential and opportunity for the FE sector to work with SUfl in both stimulating and meeting this demand. What may be more problematic for the sector is in adjusting to decreasing demand. The evidence shows that this is not just about subject provision. Indeed it is, to a far greater extent, about traditional methods, modes and places of learning and this has important and far-reaching implications for the structure of college provision in the future.

Overall then, colleges are showing considerable success in understanding and responding to changes in demand. However, the aggregation of data masks both differences and similarities in the perspectives of colleges and users on gaps in provision and changing patterns of demand at regional level. In fact we found considerable variation in these perspectives within individual regions. Our regional analyses also showed that this is the level at which the data more usefully assists in informing developments in provision. For example, we highlighted above, regional variations in supply. What cannot be fully determined with the available data is the extent to which the regional pattern of supply is reflecting the needs of the region in terms of the local labour market, the population and the geography, or evidence of inflexible supply which is not appropriate to the range of needs.

Collaboration

Colleges have a wide range of interfaces: with employers and employees; schools and education authorities; higher education; and the community and community organisations. Working collaboratively and in partnership enables colleges to be proactive and to sustain and grow the range of services on offer. Colleges more strongly endorsed collaboration than formal partnerships. The comments about these suggest that the principle of partnerships is a vital one and that the framework had been developed. The imperative, expressed by both colleges and other agencies, now was to move beyond the rhetoric of joined-up thinking and working and make it reality. Only then would partnerships add real value and become truly effective. The commitment to do this had to come from all the partners. One college pointed out that no other sector or organisation was being exhorted to consult and work with FE in the way that FE was being exhorted to consult with and work with everyone else. This issue of reciprocity is an important one in all of the interfaces between colleges and their partners.

The issues of collaboration, partnerships and the range of college interfaces cannot be disentangled from issues of location and distribution. Indeed, one respondent argued that these were already changing the structure of FE and we just hadn't noticed it yet! The implications for the structure of FE, arising from changes in what is provided where, are only one part of the story. The need to stimulate demand, so as to comply with policy imperatives such as encouraging greater participation, widening access and reaching out to non-traditional learners are further variables which will have an impact. They can also bring about, rather than alleviate tensions.

One option for widening access is simply to significantly increase the number of places where learning and teaching can take place. This could lead to

unnecessary duplication of provision and enhanced competition as more and more 'satellites' orbit around main campus sites. A proliferation of sites, specifically and exclusively owned and used by individual colleges, is one model of development in provision. At the opposite end of the continuum are mergers. Mergers, it was argued by some respondents, would sever the vital link between college and community and the perceived resource benefits from economies of scale were not yet fully proven. However, this should not be construed as an argument for preserving the status quo. A few colleges expressed support for rationalisation in terms of subjects, programmes and resources. Some developed this idea further into notions of joint portfolio planning by groups of colleges, and centres of excellence.

Rationalisation was also discussed in terms of post-compulsory education. The FE sector is only one part of this and other providers of education and training in the private, public and voluntary sector and the HEIs should be part of strategic planning. Similarly some rationalisation of tertiary education could be accompanied by harmonisation of the various funding streams for the providers of education and training. The final rationalisation issue which was raised related to the various ways in which quality is assured in colleges and other education and training providers.

Colleges considered that they were fulfilling their remit to make adequate provision but that their capacity to delivery adequate services can be constrained by external factors outwith their control. These often related to funding issues, and the need for greater coherency between funding mechanisms and policy imperatives was a persistent theme throughout the research.

Recommendations

This section makes recommendations on development activity related to supply and demand issues and identifies areas for further research.

The research indicates that almost all colleges have both a **local** and a **regional** role. This emerges from participation data, travel to study data, college responses, and agency responses. Some colleges also have a **national** role, and this is a major element for a number of colleges.

The **local role** is important in providing a responsive educational service to the local community. This is of particular importance for the widening access agenda. It can be enhanced in a number of ways:

- **Improved community-based provision**, which is very important in widening access, and in providing geographically accessible learning opportunities in dispersed rural areas. However this is at present patchy, being very good in some colleges/areas, but limited in others. Funding policy should be designed to encourage and support this provision.
- **Improved liaison with other educational providers in the local area** – this will include schools, Community Education and other agencies to ensure that

there is an effective strategy to make the best use of the resources available. While there is evidence of this type of collaboration, it can usefully be enhanced, and established as a more central element of planning and provision.

The **regional role** is important both in ensuring that resources are used effectively, and in ensuring that the colleges respond to local and regional labour markets. While it is clear that many students chose to go to their local college, there is also evidence that many travel within regions, and to neighbouring regions to participate in the programme of their choice. If this regional role is to be developed in the most effective way there is a requirement for a higher level of joint planning and collaboration than currently takes place. Whilst almost all colleges report that they take part in a great deal of collaborative activity, there is little evidence of effective collaboration in the planning and delivery of programmes. Fife region seems to be the major exception in this respect, and there is evidence there, substantiated by the local agencies, of real co-operation to meet regional needs in an effective fashion.

This will require a higher level of co-operation, not just between colleges, but with other organisations such as LECs, universities, education authorities, schools and Community Education. While there is evidence of collaboration of this kind it is uneven and patchy.

Associated with this is the **need to establish more effective ways of establishing local labour market needs**. The research shows that there are often major differences in the assessment of need between agencies, such as LECs and Careers Services, and between agencies and the colleges. It is unclear which is the more accurate or reliable as a guide to provision and indicates that more effective collaboration in assessing needs and planning responses would be useful. The new Labour Market Intelligence Unit being established by Scottish Enterprise may be an important source of data for local planning groups.

All of this points to the need to establish stronger structures to encourage joint planning and collaboration, not just between colleges, but with a range of other educational providers, and other agencies.

Thought is also required as to how college strategic and operational planning and funding mechanism can be used to encourage this type of collaborative activity so that it becomes a central element.

There is evidence that **workplace and work-based provision** is patchy, and there is a need to consider how this can be effectively encouraged and supported. Provision of **distance learning and online learning** is also variable. This is a particular issue in areas, such as the Highlands and Islands, with dispersed rural communities. **There is therefore a need to consider how funding policy can be used to encourage and support more extensive provision of these types, particularly in areas of key need.**

The issue of whether college provision is sufficiently **flexible** is raised by many of the agencies. Issues here are associated with flexibility in starting dates, provision during the summer, and issues associated with outreach and online learning which

have been raised above. There are resource and planning implications associated with introducing change of this kind which must be recognised and addressed if real progress is to be made on a number of these issues.

In view of the foregoing, our recommendations are as follows:

- **The current model of planning and delivery of programmes through self-governing institutions working to meet the demands and needs of their particular markets should continue to be the basis for ensuring adequacy of further education college provision. However, this should be set in the context of stronger arrangements for planning and collaboration at local, regional and national level.**
- **The Council should work with the sector, groups of colleges, and individual colleges to establish mechanisms for portfolio planning and delivery of provision through groups of colleges working in concert and, where relevant, centres of excellence.** Groups may vary in their purpose and composition. A group may be colleges within one region and related to the full range of the colleges' portfolios, or related to selected subject areas where a group approach to portfolio planning is judged to be particularly beneficial. A group may also be a national group for specialised provision such as Agriculture, training for the petrochemical industries and Veterinary Nursing offered by a small number of colleges in the country as a whole. Joint portfolio planning should be underpinned by effective links with stakeholders and other providers as appropriate to the provision being planned. For example, provision related particularly to the Social Inclusion agenda and the needs of local communities could be planned in conjunction with the local authority, Social Inclusion Partnership and other local agencies; provision related particularly to the profile of skills needed in a region could be planned in conjunction with the LEC, local authorities, other providers and employers; provision related to skills where supply is available from a few specialised colleges could be planned in conjunction with national enterprise agencies, employers and other providers.

Joint portfolio planning at group level should aim to maximise the returns from the available funding through matching staff skills, accommodation and equipment to student needs. This should avoid duplication of provision where this is unnecessary, and aim to improve the range of learning opportunities available in the area served by the group. Where student numbers would not sustain dispersed provision this could be concentrated within one, or a number, of colleges within the group. For example all colleges in the group may offer FE level courses in a subject area, eg. Engineering, but only one or two may offer HNC/D provision in this subject area. The group as a whole, rather than the individual member colleges, could undertake a range of joint activities in the subject area(s) concerned, for example in market research, curriculum development, staff development and liaison with key users and stakeholders. Leadership and direction of the group may be the responsibility of key personnel from one or two colleges within the group. Aligned to this concept, a centre of excellence would be a node within the group where provision in the subject area(s) is most fully developed.

The exact nature of these groups and their modes of operation would vary from region to region. For example, in urban areas where there are several colleges, individual colleges can have more particular missions and portfolios whilst ensuring that the totality of provision across the area meets the full range of demands and needs. In contrast, in rural areas where there is a single college serving the needs of a wide geographical area, that institution will carry the responsibility for the totality of provision across a wide range of demands and needs.

- **The planning of FE provision and issues of adequacy should be set in the wider context of post-compulsory education and training, both at national and regional level.** Particular account should be taken of the provision which is jointly offered by colleges and the other sectors, for example, National Qualifications for 16-18 year olds offered by colleges and schools, Higher National Qualifications and their equivalents offered by colleges and HEIs, VQs offered by colleges and other training providers, and basic skills and community orientated courses offered by colleges and other agencies working in the community. At national level, this strategic planning should involve the two Funding Councils, appropriate departments in the Scottish Executive, and the Enterprise Agency network. A related issue is how best to harmonise the various funding streams available to the providers of post-compulsory education and training.
- It can be difficult for colleges to reconcile the need to maintain financial stability with the desire to commit resources to innovative development with uncertain returns. This can relate to provision in new subject areas; developments to enhance access to provision, such as community and work-based learning and flexible and online learning; and collaborative activity to enhance the planning and delivery of programmes. **The Council, in consultation with colleges, should consider developing mechanisms to give further incentives to colleges to (a) generate new provision which responds to unmet social and economic needs and widens access, and (b) plan and deliver programmes in collaboration with other providers.**
- **The sector, working with partners, should implement a programme to highlight the distinctive role and value of Scotland's FE colleges to individuals, communities and the economy.** One aim should be to positively change the perceptions of particularly influential groups, such as education authority and school senior managers, HEI principals, and elected members on the value of the FE route.
- **This review begins to lay a foundation of information to inform decisions at national, regional and college level to ensure the adequacy of FE provision throughout Scotland. The Council should continue to build on this data, to maintain its currency and extend its scope.** One area for extension, for example, is comprehensive information on FE student destinations. The recommendations for further research which follow point up

data which could be added to this baseline data.

Areas for further research

We recommend two key areas for further research. The first relates to a more comprehensive picture of supply and demand and the adequacy of FE provision. The second relates to greater insight into identifying and understanding need and therefore the appropriate responses.

- **The Council should commission research to extend the baseline established by this review.** In order to have a more comprehensive profile of supply, demand and need of FE college level at regional and national level further research would encompass a detailed analysis of the socio-economic characteristics and of all the provision post-16 up to and including year one and two of degree provision (or equivalent). This would include schools, HEIs, Community Education and the full range of other providers.
- **The Council should commission further research into aspects of need for further education and training** with particular emphasis on the following:
 - Long term trends and regional differences in the labour market, and their implications for education and training
 - Detailed information about unfilled and hard-to-fill vacancies
 - The education and training needs of part-time and flexible workers
 - The education and training needs of the 50+ age group
 - Barriers to participation.