

An introduction to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills

The first year of any organisation's life is always an exciting one. The first year of a UK-wide organisation charged with ensuring our economy grows ever stronger in the face of global competition, whilst maximising the talents and opportunity of all our people, brings particular challenges.

The UK Commission has been tasked with ensuring that our national employment and skills systems optimally serve those twin goals of economic competitiveness and social cohesion. As a strategic advisory body, the Commission has influence rather than authority, and will only contribute effectively to the achievement of these goals through the calibre and credibility of our Commissioners, through the quality of our research and argument, through our in-depth understanding of delivery, and through effective partnership working with other organisations.

Over the coming year we will initiate a series of changes and progressive improvements in our employment and skills systems that will ensure our employers become ever more productive and competitive, and the talents of all our people are unleashed.

Please contribute to and support the Commission in this, our first year work programme, and also in the development of our longer-term strategy to build a strong and competitive society for 2020.



Chris Humphries CBE
Chief Executive
June 2008

Future benefits from UK Commission action

- **Employers benefit – from a better skilled workforce, a more successful business, and a simplified skills and employment system which responds to their needs**
- **Individuals benefit – from improved advice and choice, better access to learning and greater individual opportunity**
- **Society benefits – from a more efficient and motivated workforce, a strong and sustainable economy, and greater equity and social cohesion**

The genesis of the UK Commission – Lord Leitch's recommendations

In his 2006 Review, Lord Leitch listed clear recommendations on how we should make the skills system more demand-led, with a strong voice for employers. Leading his action list were:

- 1) Strengthen the employer voice through the creation of a powerful, employer-led UK Commission for Employment and Skills
- 2) Increase employer engagement and investment in skills through reformed, re-licensed and empowered Sector Skills Councils

Implementation of this dynamic two-tier package is the key to transforming the competitive performance of UK industry and commerce.

The UK Commission was formally launched on 1st April 2008.

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UK Commissioners

UK Commissioners are leaders in their fields who contribute their expertise and resource to the full range of Commission activities.

- | | |
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| Sir Michael Rake
Chairman UKCES,
Chairman BT Group | Julie A Kenny
Managing Director,
Pyronix Limited |
| Lord Victor Adebowale
Chief Executive,
Turning Point | Sir Robert Kerslake
Chief Executive,
Homes and Communities Agency |
| Jeremy Anderson
Head of Financial Services,
KPMG Europe LLP | Richard Lambert
Director-General,
Confederation of British Industry |
| Sarah Anderson
Director,
Simple Solutions Ltd | Charlie Mayfield
Chairman,
John Lewis Partnership |
| Brendan Barber
General Secretary,
Trades Union Congress | Ioan Morgan
Principal,
Warwickshire College |
| David Brennan
Chief Executive Officer,
AstraZeneca PLC | Dave Prentis
General Secretary,
UNISON |
| Murray Coleman
Chief Executive Officer,
Bovis Lend Lease UK | Willie Roe
Chair,
Highlands & Islands Enterprise |
| Professor Alan Gilbert
President and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Manchester | Liz Sayce
Chief Executive,
RADAR |
| Philip N Green
Chief Executive,
United Utilities PLC | Grahame Smith
General Secretary,
Scottish Trades Union Congress |
| Larry Hirst
Chairman,
IBM Europe, Middle East & Africa | Valerie Todd
Managing Director Group Services,
Transport for London |
| Chris Hyman
Chief Executive,
Serco Group plc | Sir Adrian Webb
Chair,
Wales Employment & Skills Board |

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Clear, Visionary Aims

The UK Commission aims to raise UK prosperity and opportunity for all by improving employment and skills – vital actions in a fast-changing global economy.

We want every citizen to benefit from improved employment and skills systems so that the UK remains among the most productive and successful countries in the world. We also want a fairer society through high employment.

Achieving more effective use of skills in work is of supreme importance to our role, while the complexity of current systems demands we simplify them.

Informed, Experienced Guidance

The Commission is guided by a panel of Commissioners (see over). Most are leading employers, since employers bear final responsibility for greater productivity. Others are trades unionists, academics and leaders in the voluntary sector.

Our Responsibilities

- Assess progress towards making the UK a world-class leader in employment and skills by 2020.
- Work effectively across the four UK nations to support the world class employment and skills agenda.
- Advise Ministers in the four nations on the strategies and policies needed to increase employment, skills and productivity.
- Monitor the contribution of each part of the employment and skills system in creating sustained employment and career progression.
- Advise on how employment and skills related services can best work together to deliver an integrated service that meets the needs of employers and individuals.
- Promote employer investment in people and the better use of their skills at all levels.
- Fund and manage the performance of the Sector Skills Councils, including their re-licensing.

Challenging Programme

The ambitious projects in our first year business plan will lead us to develop, in collaboration with stakeholders, a five year strategic plan. We will gather evidence showing what works well and what doesn't, at home and abroad. And we will develop and implement a range of ideas, projects and investigations to help ensure successful UK progress towards our key 2020 outcomes and targets.

Our full range of projects are described in the 2008 Business Plan, which can be found on the UK Commission website www.ukces.org.uk.

One key annual output will be a 'UK State of the Nations' report which will review how well the UK is performing, together with the contribution of our employment and skills systems, and offer advice to the four UK governments on strategies and policies needed to improve employment, skills and productivity.

Rapid Progress

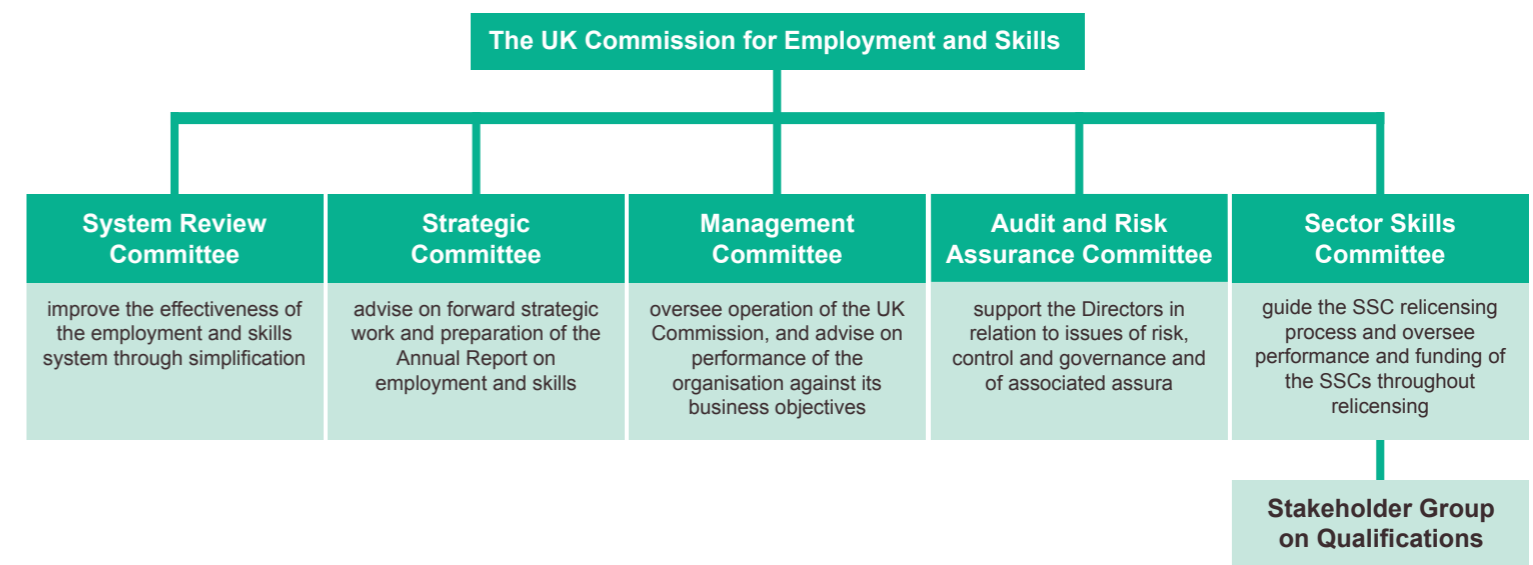
The UK Commission is well on schedule to establish itself as a vital driver for progress in UK employment and skills. 2008 is our foundation year – we have been formally operational since 1st April. We have published our first Business Plan, and are well advanced in finding out what is really going on in the employment and skills worlds. Our longer term, five year Strategic Plan is in development and will be published by Q2 of 2009.

Recognising Four Nations

The policies and priorities for education, skills, employment and business support vary between the four countries of the UK. The Commission will take these differences into account when making regional assessments and recommendations, and seek to learn from successful policies and practices across the different systems.

Committee Structure

The UK Commission is led by Commissioners drawn from the highest levels of the private, public and voluntary sectors, and trade union leaders. The Commissioners oversee the work of the UK Commission through the committees listed below.



Directorates

The UK Commission is structured into six Directorates, covering the two principal external roles plus departments that assure its capability to deliver. Two of the Directorates, 'Research and Policy' and 'Strategy and Performance', are focused on the advisory role. 'Qualifications' and 'SSC Performance and Relicensing' perform the executive functions. These four Directorates are supported by the remaining two, which also have key roles to play in establishing the organisation, stakeholder management and ensuring its capacity and capability to deliver.

