



Better Skills  
Better Jobs  
Better Health

**Skills for Health**

**Sector Qualification Strategy  
Action Plan 2009 - 2011  
for  
Wales**

***Final Version***

## **PART A**

### **1. Scope**

This Action Plan refers specifically to the health sector in Wales; it follows on from, and therefore is not intended to replicate, the Skills for Health UK wide Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS) and the 2008 Action Plan. It is one of a suite of Action Plans which have been developed, one for each of the four UK countries.

The Action Plan aligns with the Skills for Health Operational Plan for Wales, and the Sector Skills Partnership Agreements for Wales.

It is inclusive of all parts of the health sector in Wales, as described in section 2.1 of the SQS and therefore includes services provided by the National Health Service, the independent sector and the voluntary sector. Broadly speaking the scope of the action plan is:

- Primary care, including General Practitioner services, Public Health, dental care, opticians and pharmacies
- Secondary care, including physical and mental health services and specialist provision through hospitals,
- Other community-based services for example, drug and alcohol services
- Complementary health care

Since completion of the SQS in 2007 there have been some additions to the health sector footprint and this Action Plan therefore also includes:

- Therapeutic counseling (transferred from ENTO)
- Optical manufacturing (transferred from SEMTA)
- Optical retailing (transferred from SEMTA)

Skills for Health is mindful that many occupations of those working in health services fall outside of our occupational standards footprint but that the services provided by these staff are critical to the delivery of healthcare. Examples include estates and facilities staff and those providing catering, third sector management and IT services. Skills for Health remains committed to working in partnership with other sector skills councils and standards setting bodies to represent a voice of these staff groups in developing appropriate qualifications.

In 2007 the main focus of the SQS was those vocational and vocationally related qualifications delivered through further education, with consideration given to how these qualifications articulate with school based qualifications and higher education. In addition this Action Plan will also include qualifications for delivery as part of schools based provision where applicable.

The SQS Action Plan for Wales sets out the priorities, methods and outcomes which will be actioned in Wales from June 2009 until June 2011. All identified plans will be active for at least some part of this timeframe; longer term actions which demonstrate strategic importance to the sector may not be completed within this timescale but may be evident in this plan. It is also recognised that many of the plans cannot be completed in isolation but will form part of UK wide initiatives, thus this plan should be considered in the context of the full SQS and Action Plans for the three other countries.

#### ***Key Stakeholders***

Skills For Health welcomes the opportunity to work with a wide range of stakeholders as detailed in section 6.2 of the SQS. Those specifically applying in Wales are included in italics:

- Employers- NHS Trusts and organizations, independent and third sectors
- Education commissioners/contractors including the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) and the Wales Centre for Health

- Funding bodies
- Welsh Assembly Government-Department for Children Education and Lifelong Learning (DCELLS) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- Other sector skills bodies – Skills for Care and Development, Skills for Justice, Council for Administration, Asset Skills, People 1st, Skills-Third Sector
- Statutory Qualification Regulator- Ofqual, DCELLS
- The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)
- Awarding bodies
- Unions and professional bodies
- Statutory professional regulators
- Learning providers

### **Key Policies and Drivers**

**Wales: A Better Country September 2003** sets out a vision for a sustainable future for Wales where action for social, economic and environmental improvement work together to create positive change.

**One Wales: A progressive Agenda for Government in Wales** which sets the broad direction for government including building a strong and confident nation, a healthy future, prosperous society, living and vibrant communities, a learning a growing community with a fair and just society, sustainable environment and rich and diverse culture.

The broad policy context for reform of public services in Wales, of which education and social care are important elements, has recently been articulated by the Welsh Assembly Government in **Making the Connections** and **Delivering the Connections: from Vision to Action 2005, Making the Connections: Delivering Beyond Boundaries: Transforming Public Services in Wales** 2006 the response to the Beecham Review (2006). The key principles of the Making the Connections agenda are responsiveness, accessibility, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

**Wales Spatial Plan** is intended to ensure that the Assembly, its partners and agents develop policy in ways which take account of the various challenges and opportunities in the different parts of Wales. The social care sector will contribute to this by taking forward the Skills and Employment Action Plan to ensure that it provides people with training in the skills that employers need.

**Iaith Pawb a National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales** is the Assembly's strategic plan to achieve its vision of Wales as a modern bilingual society with increasing opportunities for people in all areas of Wales to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives.

In May 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government released its strategy for the future of health and social care in Wales **Designed for Life**. The strategy encapsulates the government's vision of transforming the NHS "from the national illness service it currently is into a "truly national health service".

**Designed to Work Strategy** 2005 is the workforce development strategy and implementation plan for NHS Wales.

**Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities** February 2007, describes how modernized social services will contribute to a better Wales and to improving the lives of its citizens

### **Education and Learning**

**The Learning Country** maps aspirations and targets for education and learning in Wales for the period until 2010.

**The Learning Country 2: Delivering the Promise**, highlighted the considerable progress that has been made in skills development in recent years.

**Reaching Higher: Higher Education and the Learning Country** identifies the desire for Higher Education to play its part in meeting workforce development needs in “health and other services that matter most to people lives in Wales.”

In Jan 2008 Welsh Assembly Government published **Skills that Work for Wales: Employment and Skills Strategy** which supports the raising of skills and boosting productivity; meeting skills need for sectors; delivering integrated skills and business support; putting money behind the right skills to support sector development; ensuring quality skills provision and extending the supply of people and skills to support the development of a prosperous economy. This was followed by the Skills the Work for Wales: Employment and Skills Action Plan in July 2008 to ensure delivery of the strategy.

**The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales Delivering the Promise-Implementation Plan 2009-2014**, DCELLS, 2009

## **2. Methodology**

This Action Plan has been developed at a time when there is whole scale change to the vocational qualifications landscape across the UK. The closure of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to vocational qualifications by December 2010 and its replacement with the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) offers both great opportunity and great challenge to be faced in the lifespan of this Action Plan. Skills for Health intends to utilise the characteristics of the QCF, particularly in relation to the flexibilities offered through the allocation of credit at unit level, to fully meet the aspirations of the health sector described in the SQS.

Whilst it is acknowledged that these changes to regulatory frameworks do not apply directly to Scotland, Skills for Health is mindful of the peripheral impact of such changes across borders; the principle of transferability must remain an uppermost priority.

In preparation for the closure of the NQF, Skills for Health consulted on the approach to re-developing qualifications for the QCF for the health sector. This took place during 2008 and a working draft completed by the close of 2008, to include a timeline of activities based on groupings of qualifications by subsector.

Skills for Health will ensure the links between the QCF, the CQFW and the European Qualifications Framework. The QCF is the core regulated pillar in the CQFW wider framework.

The following description of the methodology to collect intelligence to inform the content of this Action Plan was done so with our approach to developing qualifications for the QCF and the associated timeline already in working draft.

The SQS is main stream business activity and Skills for Health undertakes dialogue with employers and other sector stakeholders on a continuous, inclusive and iterative basis. This Action Plan has therefore been developed following continuous consultation with sector stakeholders over an 18 month period since the development of the SQS and publication of the 2008 Action Plan.

Additional targeted and focused engagement activities were conducted in Wales in the period November 2008 to May 2009.

These activities included:

- Two specific SQS Consultation Events held in Cardiff and Rhyl in May 2009. These were

attended by DCELLS, NLIAH, NHS Trusts, partnership agencies, funding bodies, and voluntary sector representatives.

- Feedback on the SQS was invited by email and website format
- Network meetings with the voluntary sector, and the Welsh Vocational Qualifications Group.
- Joint events were organized with the Care Council for Wales (CCFW).
- Interviews and small focus groups with sector employers
- Feedback from the Wales SQS Steering Group
- Harvesting intelligence from Skills for Health staff
- Dedicated agenda items were tabled at both the March 2009 and June 2009 Skills for Health Awarding Body Forum meetings. The Forum is held quarterly and is regularly attended by those Awarding Bodies with whom we work; actions arising from the SQS form a central theme to these meetings and we will continue to work closely with awarding bodies in achieving these plans. A full list of those awarding bodies can be obtained from [qualifications@skillsforhealth.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@skillsforhealth.org.uk).

Focused engagement activities afforded the opportunity to verify with stakeholders those qualifications strategy activities already underway. Questions were designed to:

- test whether or not stakeholders agree that the overall vision of the SQS still holds true
- ascertain stakeholder opinions as to the nature of 14-19 qualifications which will best support entry and progression of young people into the health sector

and using the timeline of activities for re-developing qualifications for the QCF to

- identify any additional gaps in qualifications, including 14-19 provision, for the sector with potential drivers being local or national skills gaps or policy drivers
- contribute to development priorities for 2009-2011

The process harvested a large amount of information which was analysed and compared to information from across the UK prior to drafting the Action Plan. This cross country comparison was an important step in identifying common themes and country specific needs to inform the approach which will be taken to many of the identified developments.

Draft Plans have been through a number of stakeholder reviews to assure the content.

### **3. Summary of outcomes**

Stakeholders were unanimously in agreement with the vision expressed in the Sector Qualifications Strategy for Health (2007). As such they re-affirmed the principles on which Skills for Health has been working to develop qualifications since the completion of the SQS and on which the outcomes listed below are based. These principles, known as the Learning Design Principles state that learning and qualifications should be:

- Developed using robust intelligence gathered in response to employer needs
- Transferable across the UK using National Occupational Standards as the currency
- Constructed of units and assembled into educational pathways to allow maximum flexibility
- Be responsive to accommodate the fast changing landscape in healthcare delivery, best practice and new roles

A full description of the Learning Design Principles can be found in Section 6.1 of the SQS.

#### ***Outcome 1: Qualifications for the Health Informatics Workforce***

A review of Health Informatics National Occupational Standards will be complete by March

2010. Concurrent to the review of the NOS, Skills for Health will scope current educational provision for the Health Informatics community and where gaps exist will seek to work collaboratively with partner SSCs, including e-Skills, and awarding bodies to develop units to populate the Health Informatics educational pathway. By March 2010 units will be assembled into new qualifications or incorporated into existing qualifications to best meet the needs of the Health Informatics workforce.

***Outcome 2: Educational Pathway for Therapeutic Counselling***

The development of Psychological Therapies National Occupational Standards will be complete by October 2009. These new NOS will then be used to inform the review and development of units which can be used to assemble counselling qualifications which will meet emerging regulatory frameworks. This development is likely to cross all levels of education to build into an educational pathway for therapeutic counselling.

***Outcome 3: Fit for Purpose Dental Nursing and Dental Technician Qualifications***

Skills for Health will respond to the outcomes of the review of educational curriculum for dental health professionals currently being undertaken by the General Dental Council. National Occupational Standards and corresponding vocational qualifications will be revised accordingly to ensure they remain fit for purpose in line with GDC registration requirements.

***Outcome 4: Fit for Purpose Qualifications for the Optical Sector***

The National Occupational Standards for optical manufacturing and optical retail are newly transferred into the Skills for Health footprint. Skills for Health will work with the Optical Sector Steering Group and other optical sector stakeholders to redevelop existing NQF qualifications for the QCF.

Skills for Health will work with the optical sector to develop a fit for purpose apprenticeship framework.

***Outcome 5: Fit for Purpose Pharmacy Service Qualifications***

Based on new National Occupational Standards Skills for Health are working in partnership with Awarding Organisations, the professional regulatory bodies and employers to develop both competence based and underpinning knowledge qualifications for the QCF for pharmacy support staff including Pharmacy Technicians, Pharmacy Assistants and Dispensers including GP Dispensers by 2010.

***Outcome 6: Progression Routes for New and Emerging Roles eg Assistant Practitioners***

Skills for Health recognises that New and Emerging Roles eg Assistant Practitioners are of growing importance in the re-configuration of health care delivery across the UK. There is however, great variation in the scope of these roles and therefore it is not possible to identify a single curriculum.

Skills for Health will seek to work with all partners to develop unit level education from which qualifications can be assembled to reflect the educational needs of the diverse health care workforce and which will support progression into and through higher education. Assigning a credit value and level to the units will support New, Emerging and Transferable Roles in selecting those elements of learning which most closely match their role and will support progression routes from Support Worker to higher level roles across appropriate academic levels through development along an educational pathway. The higher level vocational routes will be supplemented by additional underpinning knowledge qualifications where applicable.

These examples are provided to illustrate this outcome:

Maternity Roles: In response to policy drivers across all four countries of the UK Skills for Health is reviewing the educational pathway for support worker roles in maternity services. There will be new underpinning knowledge units to complement units to assess competence in the

workplace. Units will be packaged into qualifications and assigned a credit value and level for the QCF to show clearly where the units sit in the educational pathway for the maternity workforce.

Allied Health Professions: Skills for Health will work with stakeholders from across the UK to develop units which can be incorporated into qualifications to form progression routes for new and emerging roles within the Allied Health Professions sector and into professional education programmes in higher education.

Healthcare Science: Skills for Health will work with stakeholders from across the UK to develop units which can be incorporated into qualifications to form progression routes for new and emerging roles within Healthcare Sciences and into professional education programmes in higher education.

### ***Outcome 7: Transferable and Transparent Qualifications Routes in Health, Health and Social Care and Support Services***

Skills for Health will be working with awarding bodies to re-develop vocational qualifications in Health, Health and Social Care and Support Services for accreditation to the QCF by December 2010. Skills for Health remains committed to qualifications which attest to occupational competence and which have transferability and transparency across the UK through the use of National Occupational Standards on which these qualifications will be based. The Learning Design Principles will ensure that the resulting units and qualifications offer the workforce flexibility and progression opportunities which can match emerging career pathways and national transferable roles.

These examples are provided to illustrate this outcome:

Existing vocational qualifications in Health and in Support Services will be integrated into one Health and Support Services qualification thus giving greater flexibility and supporting transition between the clinical and non-clinical support workforce. There will be new higher level units/pathways available for non-clinical support services staff, particularly focussing on first line supervisory management and leadership skills. Where appropriate and in response to the emerging health workforce priorities there will be new units and pathways developed for the children and young person's health workforce and for the emergency care workforce.

A review of Intraoperative Cell Salvage NOS will be complete by March 2010. These NOS will be re-considered for development into units for inclusion into qualifications suitable for the continuing education of peri-operative care practitioners.

Skills for Health will work collaboratively with Skills for Care and Development including the Care Council for Wales in re-developing the vocational qualifications in Health and Social Care for the QCF. There is a commitment to continue to recognise the cross sector nature of these qualifications in supporting the growing number of services and roles which operate across the health and social care boundaries. The construction of these qualifications will reflect a 'core' of requirements identified for all workers in the health and social care sector (eg recognition of dignity for service users, communication, infection control) and changing models of service delivery. There will be new units focussing, for example, on self care, dementia care, mental health and children and adolescent mental health services, forming sets of units embedded within the new vocational qualifications. Further joint work to support the development of the workforce will also lead to NOS and qualification review.

### ***Outcome 8: Fit for Purpose Apprenticeship Frameworks***

Skills for Health will continue to review current Apprenticeship Frameworks in line with amendments to qualifications which comprise the framework. Where there are national changes to a framework template arising from the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for Wales (SASW) consultation led by DCELLS, Skills for Health will respond accordingly.

Where there is evidence that new Apprenticeship Frameworks are required Skills for Health will work with sector representatives to ensure that new frameworks are developed. Where these requirements sit outside of Skills for Health remit we will work collaboratively with other Sector Skills Councils to influence the contents of Apprenticeship Frameworks to ensure they meet the requirements of the health sector.

Where Governments set targets for the uptake of Apprenticeship Frameworks within the health sector Skills for Health will work with employers and other partnership arrangements to support their implementation.

These examples are provided to illustrate this outcome:

Skills for Health will seek to work with e-Skills to ensure that the qualifications outputs arising from the population of the educational pathway for Health Informatics/Information Technology staff may be incorporated into the e-Skills Apprenticeship Frameworks.

Skills for Health will develop guidance materials and tools to support employers in accessing Apprenticeship Frameworks developed by other Sector Skills Councils.

Skills for Health will continue to work with DCELLS, employers and training providers to promote increased take up of Apprenticeship Frameworks in Wales within the health sector.

***Outcome 9: Clear progression routes from schools' curriculum into the health sector.***

Skills for Health will continue to review and develop qualifications for young people within full time education which will facilitate entry into the health and social care sector and encourage progression within the sector.

Skills for Health will undertake this work in a way which takes account of Welsh Assembly Government policies and initiatives and, in so doing, will work collaboratively with partner Sector Skills Councils and other stakeholders where appropriate to ensure that the needs of the health sector are met.

Qualifications for young people will be developed in a way which takes account of the wider vision for health sector qualifications and the Learning Design Principles. In addition, qualifications for young people will be developed so that their learning can be recognised when they progress into the health sector, thereby avoiding duplication of learning.

Skills for Health will work with relevant partners, including employers, to support and implement national Government targets relating to young people's entitlement to access specific qualifications and/or progression.

Skills for Health will continue to support the aims of the Learning Pathways in Wales for 14-19 year olds through the development of qualifications for this group. Learning Pathways are intended to fulfil the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to transforming and widening education and training opportunities for young people.

This will be achieved in partnership with the Care Council for Wales and the further education institutions through the learning pathways offering a vocational learning route to level 2 sector based qualifications for young people who choose to pursue more practical skills based learning.

The importance of high quality Information Advice and Guidance is recognised and Skills for Health will work with stakeholders to ensure that clear, accurate and consistent information is easily accessible to young people and their advisors so that informed choices about qualification and progression routes can be made.

The following is illustrative of this outcome:

### ***Implementation of the Society Health and Development (SHD) Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification***

The **Welsh Baccalaureate** is an exciting qualification for students in Wales that adds a valuable new dimension to the subjects and courses already available for 14 to 19 year old students. It combines personal development skills with existing qualifications like A levels, NVQs and GCSEs to make one wider award that is valued by employers and universities. The Welsh Assembly Government introduced the Welsh Baccalaureate to transform learning for young people in Wales. It gives broader experiences than traditional learning programmes, to suit the diverse needs of young people. It can be studied in English or Welsh, or a combination of the two languages.

Skills for Health are the lead SSC with Skills for Justice, Skills Active (PlayWales) and the Care Council for Wales in the work stream developing the Principal Learning, Project and Extended Project qualifications; building on the vocational aspects of the English Diploma in Society, Health and Development (SHD) within the format of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) from September 2010. The collective qualifications offer an exciting option for learners to undertake a sector based and applied learning programme in conjunction with the other components of the WBQ as they offer a different route for those students wishing to gain an understanding of a range of occupational sectors using applied learning approaches in conjunction with core and additional learning.

The Principal Learning Qualification (PL) will be available as an option within the Welsh Baccalaureate framework and the Project Qualification (PQ) at Levels 1 and 2 and the Extended Project at Level 3 will be available either as a standalone qualification or as a proxy for the Individual Investigation as part of the Baccalaureate core learning for young people aged 14 -19 years.

A Society Health and Development Welsh Baccalaureate Employer Steering Group has been established to provide an employer perspective to ensure (and therefore endorse) the curriculum and learning outcomes for the qualifications as contextually appropriate and fit for purpose in meeting the future skills and knowledge needs of Welsh employers .

### ***Outcome 10: Develop an ongoing relationship between Skills For Health and qualification implementation and designers within the three pillars of learning of the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (CQFW).***

In Wales the **Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales** has been operating since 2003 and the move towards a unit and credit approach to qualifications is welcomed by the sector.

Skills for Health will work with key partners and organizations including the Welsh Assembly Government (DCELLS and Department of Health and Social Care) in the implementation of educational pathways and learning opportunities across all three pillars of the CQFW. This will support the CQFW to implement a fully operational credit and qualification framework for Wales to enable all forms of learning to be recognized by 2013. (Skills that Work for Wales 2008)

Skills for Health will assist the three pillars of the CQFW as follows:

#### ***1. Higher Education***

- Skills for Health will encourage a wider development of the good practice developed in the Higher Education Project exemplar site in North Wales, *Designed for Competence* which is currently demonstrating an FE/HE interface in developing educational pathways to meet employers' needs. This model encourages partnership working between

employers, Higher Education Institutions and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) in developing flexible leveled and credit rated learning and based on the Skills for Health Learning Design Principles (LDPs) and National Occupational Standards (NOS).

## **2. General and Vocational training (GVET) through regulated Awarding Organisations in the Qualification and Credit Framework, National Qualifications Framework and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.**

- The **Qualification and Credit Framework** is the main core regulated pillar in the CQFW wider framework and Skills for Health are working with awarding organizations, employers and regulators to redevelop new and existing qualifications to meet the December 2010 target date. The QCF will allow for mobility and transferability of qualifications across the UK.
- Skills for Health will continue to work with Skills for Care and Development and the Care Council for Wales in the development of health and social care qualifications.

## **3. Quality Assured Life Long Learning (QALL)**

- **NHS Wales Accredited Learning Panel**- The Panel approves units for use within the NHS in Wales which are submitted to the CQFW Quality Assured Life Long Learning Pillar (QALL) for assigning credit Skills for Health will continue the excellent partnership working with NLIAH in supporting the NHS Wales Accredited Learning Panel .Skills for Health and NLIAH will continue to populate the DCELLS QALL pillar of the CQFW with appropriate life long learning sector specific units for use within the NHS Wales. This will maximize use of credit within the QALL Pillar and its added value in the wider CQFW framework
- Skills for Health will continue to work with NLIAH, awarding bodies and employers in Wales to develop appropriate protocols for potential qualification and unit development and link with the Skills for Health Learning, Innovation and Development Group (LIDG) see section 4.2.

In addition Skills for Health will maintain links with:

- The CQFW Common Credit Accord
- The European Qualification Framework (EQF) National Coordination Point (NCP) in Wales

Skills for Health will also continue to influence the use of the Welsh language within the CQFW and qualifications.

## **4. Partner engagement and working arrangements**

In implementing this Action Plan, Skills for Health will continue to engage with partners through a number of existing groups and established working arrangements. Many of these forums are not specifically convened for the purposes of implementing the SQS but rather the SQS will underpin and influence these forums with the Action Plan becoming embedded as core business.

### **1. Skills for Health Awarding Body Forum**

These meetings are convened quarterly and form a central forum for discussion with all awarding organisations operating within the health sector footprint. Should it become

necessary, an awarding organisation may also request a one to one meeting to address a specific item. Thus Skills for Health maintains a good working relationship with awarding bodies.

### **2. Skills for Health Learning, Innovation and Development Group**

The purpose of this group is to offer guidance and potentially Skills for Health support in educational developments within the sector. Submissions are considered which may be at any academic level and for use in any part of the education system within the health sector footprint. Its broad remit means that it is a mechanism which allows Skills for Health to influence the nature of educational developments on behalf of the sector and is a route by which the principles of the SQS can be embedded into developments. It is also a route by which Skills for Health can collect emerging priorities. Core membership comprises of Skills for Health staff, however additional stakeholders and other partners are frequently asked to join panels to provide guidance and opinion according to their status.

### **3. Skills for Health Wales SQS Steering Group**

This group informs the development, supports the implementation and champions the SQS in Wales. It meets twice a year and its membership comprises representatives from DCELLS, NHS organisations including the Wales Centre for Health and NLIAH, employers, the third sector and CCFW.

### **4. Care Sector Liaison Group (Wales)**

The main purpose of the group is to act as a channel for communication between the CCFW, Skills For Health, sector specific public bodies, employer representatives, regulators, Work Based Learning Providers and awarding organisations in Wales. The group focuses on cross sector issues particularly the jointly owned health and social care qualifications. This provides feedback on and contributes to the implementation of the SQS in Wales in both sectors.

### **5. Society Health and Development Welsh Baccalaureate Employer Steering Group**

The Welsh Baccalaureate (SHD) Employer Steering Group has been established to bring together employer representatives and educational and qualification design professionals to forward preparations for the delivery of the SHD Principle Learning Qualification as an option within the Welsh Baccalaureate from September 2010. The primary role of the steering group will be to quality assure the SHD Principal Learning Qualification from an employer's perspective and therefore ensure its fitness for purpose across the occupational sectors. It meets 3 to 4 times a year.

### **6. The Wales Centre for Health Workforce Development Group**

This group provides information and guidance on NOS and workforce development issues.

### **7. Public Health Higher Education Steering Group**

This group meets to support HEIs in working collaboratively in the delivery of the new employer led agenda advocated by the Learning Design Principles.

### **8. Substance Misuse Workforce Development Group**

This group is a partnership between the Welsh Assembly Government and other SSCs to ensure a coordinated approach to the development of qualifications and workforce development strategies within the drugs and alcohol field.

### **9. Children's Workforce Development Strategy Groups**

Skills for Health works with partners in Wales to ensure that any recommendations arising from the development of the strategy are reflected appropriately in qualifications, learning and NOS to support the children's workforce.

### **10. Various groups specific to clinical areas**

Many groups exist to ensure the coordination and development of workforce development components e.g. Cardiac Workforce Planning and Development Group. Skills for Health will utilise these as a vehicle to identify and inform the development of specific qualifications for these areas.

### **11. Wales Centre for Health Workforce Development Group**

This group works to support the mapping of National Occupational Standards to support the capacity and capability in health protection and public health and their links into higher

education progressional pathways.

In addition to these existing working arrangements, Skills for Health has put in place specific arrangements which will be more focussed in delivering the SQS Action Plans:

The Skills for Health Internal SQS Steering Group will play a key role in operationalising the Action Plans within the organisation. It will explore, identify and prioritise Skills for Health work streams arising from the Action Plan, facilitate feedback into the wider corporate agenda and internally monitor progress against the Action Plan. The group will receive intelligence and make decisions relating to new priorities as they emerge.

Skills for Health will convene project groups to deliver on specific outcomes detailed in the Action Plan. These groups will have responsibilities and accountability mechanisms appropriate to the work undertaken and will report to the Internal SQS Steering Group and other internal Executive Groups. Skills for Health will ensure that the membership of project groups will include relevant partners and stakeholders.

## **5. Risks and assumptions**

### **Assumptions**

Skills for Health footprint remains constant

Skills for Health is re-licensed as an SSC

Resources are available to complete projects

### ***Risks & contingencies***

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Likelihood (H, M, L)</b>	<b>Impact (H,M,L)</b>	<b>Contingency</b>
Insufficient internal capacity to deliver	Skills for Health currently employs a team of 10 staff with varying responsibilities dedicated to supporting the development of qualifications and associated agenda, including the requirements to meet our SSC license. Staff turnover and competing priorities would compromise delivery of the Action Plan.	L	H	SfH operates a matrix working structure and will draw on the input and expertise from across the organisation. Succession planning and talent management are central to maintaining internal capacity. Skills for Health would consider utilisation of external contractors/consultants where appropriate. Skills for Health will ensure Executive sign off and monitoring of SQS Action Plans to balance competing priorities.
Failure to engage partners	Skills for Health cannot deliver the SQS Action Plans without successful engagement of partners and stakeholders.	M	H	Maintain open dialogue with all stakeholders and partners using wide variety of engagement mechanisms. Build on national engagement networks and inter-reliance with other

				workstreams. Review membership and terms of reference of all groups regularly. Early escalation of first signs of partners disengaging
Insufficient capacity within partner organisations to deliver	Skills for Health is sensitive to capacity issues and competing priorities currently facing partner organisations, particularly awarding organisations	M	H	Maintain open dialogue with all stakeholders and partners to remain cognisant of these challenges. Remain open to amendments in timescales to align with business requirements of partner organisations.
Qualifications not receiving public funding	Skills for Health is aware that access to funding for qualifications is an issue which impacts on take up and completion across the sector	M	H	Maintain open dialogue with all stakeholders and partners using wide variety of engagement mechanisms. Ensure that level 2 and level 3 definitions are appropriate for the health sector and DCELLS is advised accordingly.

## **6. Monitoring arrangements**

Skills for Health will monitor progress against the 2009-2011 Action Plans on a regular and continuous basis, ensuring that the plans remain fit for purpose and aligned with the changing landscape in which they will be delivered.

Formal monitoring will take place quarterly as part of the core business of the Skills for Health Internal SQS Steering Group. The group will identify appropriate performance measures and will access reporting mechanisms from projects and programmes of work put in place to deliver these plans. Group membership will continuously feed information into the Action Plan in order that it will reflect any changes or emerging priorities.

Other stakeholders and partners will be included in monitoring progress through a number of mechanisms already described, including:

- The Skills for Health Awarding Body Forum
- UK Commission for Employment and Skills and DCELLS liaison meetings.
- Project groups convened to deliver specific outcomes eg revision or development of a particular qualification
- Country specific groups as above
- 14-19 specific groups including the Welsh Baccalaureate (SHD) Employer Steering Group

## SQS ANNUAL ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

### PART B

<b>1. Provision of information to funding bodies</b>
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Skills for Health will make recommendations to DCELLs on defining fullness thresholds for Level 2 qualifications in the QCF by Autumn 2009. Relevant information will then be populated in the IT database.
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<b>2. List of non-qualification outcomes.</b>
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<i>This has been completed in the separate web-based tool.</i>
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<b>3. Qualification Actions and Planned Outcomes</b>
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<i>This has been completed in the separate web-based tool.</i>
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