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## Skills Development Scotland consultation on a new Career Management Skills Framework for Scotland: CES submission

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**Note:** those making submissions were invited to respond to a series of questions in the consultation survey. We chose not to follow this format and instead made our submission under the general comments section.

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### Submission text

We have not completed the earlier questions since we consider that they are too constraining and, in some cases, fail to address the critical issues concerning the Career Management Framework. An example of this is the first substantive question which is 'How clear are the aims and objectives of Career Management Skills in the document?' This misses the more fundamental question: 'How *appropriate* are the aims and objectives of Career Management Skills as described in the document' following which questions might follow on clarity, format and use. Accordingly, we include all our comments in this general comments section.

Our comments can be categorised under the following headings:

### Principles

We broadly welcome the CMS framework as described in Annex B of the document. It is detailed and largely comprehensive and relates clearly to other international frameworks for career management skills. The four headings – self, strengths, horizons and networks – are appropriate and identify a standard to be aspired to. We particularly welcome the broad definition of 'career' as encompassing life, learning and work. Also welcome is the fact that this Framework is for all-age career development. It is aspirational and describes the fullest possible range of skills needed for career management. We feel, however, that more might have been said about the influences and importance of family, social and community contexts for career management, a particular issue for younger people.

## Relationship to strategy and policy

There is a disjuncture between the two sections of the document. Compared with Annex B the main document focuses on a narrower definition of career in its frequent use of 'work' and 'skills' (see diagram for the section 'Where Career Management Skills are Acquired' and the introduction to Annex B). Furthermore, the document includes a substantial section on Curriculum for Excellence as part of the policy context, quoting Building the Curriculum 4 as *'highlighting career management skills as relevant to all children and young people and the responsibility of all practitioners'* but later in the same section it makes clear that its focus is on secondary school and *'particularly the Senior Phase'*: this ignores the fact that younger children are also going through a career development process and contradicts the all-age focus set out for the CMS Framework.

This leads to a more fundamental question, that of the role of education in the strategy for developing Career Management Skills. In many ways, this document suffers from a flaw in the CIAG strategy: the marginalisation of the role of cohesive and progressive career learning in Scottish schools (both primary and secondary), supported by teachers. This contrasts with the position in England which calls its strategy 'Career Education, Information, Advice and Guidance' (our italics). Without career education it is difficult to see how Career Management Skills can be achieved at any significant level by young people. My World of Work, of course, is likely to contribute to such career learning for young people but this will generally be on an individual basis so that some pupils will develop their career learning while others will not, in effect resulting in inequality in provision and support. It is easier to ensure comprehensive and equitable experiences and outcomes when provision to help pupils develop career learning is included as part of the curriculum.

## Use of the document in schools

The document will be a very useful guide to those working with adult and mature learners, and to those involved in workforce development.

However, it is difficult to see how those working with children and young people, who are not career professionals, will be able to use the CMS Framework. Practitioners who are part of the career professional workforce (ie career advisers/coaches) should generally be able to use their professional training and expertise to interpret the headings within the context of the limitations of adolescent career planning, but those whose professional discipline is different, particularly teachers, are likely to struggle.

Curriculum for Excellence leaves flexibility for teachers to design a curriculum which will deliver the experiences and outcomes in a way which meets the needs of their pupils. While it may be more straightforward for, say, a physics teacher with specialist knowledge and expertise to be left with considerable professional discretion to design such a curriculum in physics, much clearer guidelines are needed for a non-career specialist to design an appropriate curriculum to support the development of CMS. It is our view that this document will not be easy for teaching staff to use, given that none of the programmes of Initial Teaching Education in Scottish Universities covers career education/learning. Even if the CMS skills are linked to the Experiences and Outcomes of CfE, planning how these are to be delivered will be a major challenge for school staff unless additional training and support materials are provided.

## Use of the CMS framework for assessment

As we have said earlier, the CMS framework is aspirational: given the fact that it has a broad definition of career as life, learning and work the development of the skills to manage these will be a 'work in progress' throughout life. We are very concerned that 'Opportunities for All' expects 75% of pupils to have attained Career Management Skills by the end of S4: *'SDS seeks to register all S3 pupils on My World of Work to encourage them to start developing their Career Management Skills. By S4, with online, email and text support from SDS approx. 75% have developed CMS.'* (para 25). As researchers with both professional and academic experience of adolescent career development we find this to be an extremely surprising statement: the evidence on which this is based needs to be published since it contradicts much of what is known about the process of young people's career development.

A fundamental issue is how these skills are to be measured. How might a 16 year old demonstrate *'Understanding how my self-concept/awareness has an impact on achieving my personal, social educational and vocational goals and decisions?'* Or even more simply *'Knowing who I am (in terms of my strengths, skills, experiences etc)'* when the adolescent self-concept, skills and interests are still developing and changing? This is a critical issue as it seems that the level to which young people have attained these skills will determine their access to CIAG services. It also has implications for the quality assurance of services: how can they be evaluated against the attainment of skills which cannot easily be assessed?

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