

The Single Voice

**Analysis of responses to the
consultation Prospectus for self-regulation**

19 January 2009

Contents

Part 1	Introduction
	Summary: the sector's response
Part 2	Analysis of responses

Part 1 Introduction

In November 2008, the Single Voice published a Consultation Prospectus for Self-Regulation, reporting on two years of work and inviting responses from the further education sector on the elements of the proposals. These proposals arose from the sector's strong desire to take responsibility for its own destiny, and the need to reshape and simplify the landscape in which it operated so that providers could better serve their learners, communities and employers.

The elements were:

- A Framework for Performance for Performance Management and Improvement, setting out individual and collective provider responsibilities
- A Framework for Accountability, setting out the sector's responsibilities
- A 'Further Education Authority', with a Further Education Code, licensing system and a system of intervention and support for tackling under-performance
- A Further Education Accord, setting out an agreement on regulatory matters between government and the sector
- A single Common Performance Assessment Framework, with new Key Performance Indicators

A great deal of water has gone under the bridge since the Single Voice began its work. Machinery of government changes are radical, with new organisations with new roles, new funding and commissioning relationships, and a new lighter touch inspection regime. There is a new 'localism' with an increased emphasis on local planning, meeting the needs of local people, and on a provider's vital role in local regeneration during an economic downturn. The sector's considerable contribution to re-skilling and training the country has perhaps never been so well recognised or valued as during the current economic downturn.

In Part 1, this analysis summarises the main points from the sector's responses to the Single Voice proposals, and links these to the government's response. In Part 2 it provides a more detailed look at responses under the question headings used in the Prospectus.

Re-framing self-regulation: the first priority

The Single Voice gives first priority to re-framing self-regulation to fit this new world. It will build on the wise advice it has received through responses to the Prospectus to take forward those elements of its proposals which make best sense in the new landscape. It will work with newly established organisations including LSIS and SFA, and with Ofsted and other partners to agree who will do what in relation to those elements. It will develop a detailed plan showing how self-regulation can move from where it is now to where it needs to be post-MOG. It will also take account of feedback from participants in the LSIS self-regulation consultation seminars which end early in March this year.

Government's response

The response from Siôn Simon, Under Secretary of State for Further Education, in a letter to Sir George Sweeney, Chair of the Single Voice, helps shape the next stage of the self-regulation journey, in conjunction with responses from the sector. The government's response highlights six components of the next steps toward self-regulation. These are:

- Improving the quality of governance in individual providers, thereby strengthening their capacity for self-regulation
- Individual and collective responsibility for quality through the formation and development of LSIS
- Reducing the specificity and prescription of planning and funding methods
- Continued 'bureaucracy busting'
- Giving more influence to providers through their self-organised networks
- Identifying opportunities to hand over functions to the sector

Providers' responses identify very similar priorities for the Single Voice, meaning that it can move forward with confidence supported both by the sector and by government.

Summary: the sector's response

There were sixty-six responses from the sector to the Prospectus, with fifty-three from individual providers, twelve from representative organisations, and one from a government organisation. The majority of responses were from colleges. The response was characterised by the high number of thoughtful, perceptive, and detailed replies from Chairs of Governors, Clerks to Governors, Chief Executives, Principals and senior managers who had taken the time to address the proposals seriously and at length, bringing to bear their direct experience of running a college, training provider or organisation in the new 'post-MOG' world. The Single Voice is grateful for these experienced and wise responses from the sector.

Reducing bureaucracy

Almost all responses included heartfelt descriptions of the increasing bureaucracy with which providers lived. The point was made time and again that there appeared to be no real reduction in bureaucratic demands, indeed they were growing as new organisations were established. Although there was commendation for the progress made so far, there was a strong view that the Single Voice should make reduction of bureaucracy a key priority in its next stage of work. It is within this context of ever-increasing bureaucracy, as well as the new sector landscape that providers and organisations gave their views.

Sector's capacity

There is overwhelming agreement that the sector has the capacities for self-regulation and self-improvement, and a strong desire that the push to self-regulation should continue, with funding from government to support the work. Some respondents argued that the starting point for self-regulation should be '*assumed* autonomy', rather than 'earned autonomy', indicating that the sector should act as if it were already autonomous.

Values and beliefs

The values and beliefs were widely considered as reflecting those of providers and their representative organisations, and warmly endorsed by many respondents. Some wished to see equality and diversity and high quality teaching and learning added to those listed. Others wished professionals to figure more highly as essential partners for self-regulation.

Re-framing self-regulation

Proposals and actions for self-regulation must be re-framed to fit the post-MOG further education landscape, and to take account of the roles and functions of newly-established organisations. Some of the elements proposed in the Prospectus had already been picked up by new organisations. The main thrust of self-regulation must continue, but reshaped. The Single Voice should secure government funding in order to continue its important work.

Benefits of self-regulation

Respondents agreed with the description of benefits, but almost all added that these would only become real when external regulation was minimised. The move away from regulatory frameworks was positive and empowering, and providers particularly welcomed the 'mission-driven' approach, which recognised and respected their different contexts. Respondents cited other benefits including more effective influencing of government policy, stronger stimulus for systematic collaborative working, greater transparency about provision so that learners and employers could make better informed choices, and greater empowerment of professionals. Some particularly thoughtful responses pointed out that self-regulation and self-improvement are not the same thing and that although there is a relationship between them, they should not be conflated.

A diverse sector

Many respondents commented on the diverse nature of the sector, drawing attention to the different concerns and legitimate agendas of different groups of providers or professionals within the sector. For example, research undertaken by the Northern College into adult and community learning providers' responses to self-regulation highlighted their differences in structure, staffing, funding, experiences of inspection, and so on. There was no lack of willingness to be involved but rather a realistic appraisal of the different journey that some ACL providers would need to take toward self-regulation. There are different concerns too for private training providers, land-based colleges, sixth form colleges, and for specialist colleges. Respondents wanted the Single Voice to give extra thought to the diversity of the sector, intensifying its efforts through provider representative organisations to bring all the parts of the sector 'up to speed'. The Prospectus and LSIS consultation seminars were seen as welcome indicators that the fuller debate and consultation process were well underway.

Responsibilities and capacities of governors/board members

The roles and responsibilities of governors/board members and their capacities to undertake them were considered as central to the success of self-regulation for the individual provider and for the sector as a whole; respondents wanted more attention to be given to how governors/board members might best develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they needed to undertake their new roles; many respondents thought it was time to consider the idea of paid governors/board members. The sector's view of the importance of governors'/board members' central role in driving up the individual provider's capacity for self-regulation and self-importance is also reflected in the government's response to the Prospectus.

Elements of the proposals

There was broad agreement in principle with some elements of the proposals, namely:

- i) *The Framework for Performance Management and Improvement* was viewed as a 'sound, simple, sensible' outline of provider responsibilities

under self-regulation, which built on current best practice, although there were some reservations about the sector-wide responsibilities especially in relation to the support governors/board members would need to undertake these. Respondents wanted the Framework to include more on teaching and learning. They also wanted to know how the Framework related to Ofsted's requirements.

- ii) *Collaborative self-improvement* was valued highly by most respondents, although they were divided on whether it should be a mandatory or voluntary activity; some respondents wanted a more systematic approach with quality standards, objective measures of success, and guidance on how partnerships should be selected and formed. Other respondents were concerned that larger providers would dominate partnerships. Many responses commented on the time and resources it takes to establish effective partnership.
- iii) *The Framework for Accountability*; The Further Education Code, licensing system, and approach to risk management, were viewed as sensible and relevant to the post-MOG world; respondents wanted to know how the arrangements would work in practice, and most importantly advised that new organisations would now take up responsibility for some elements and functions assigned in the proposals to the Single Voice or to the 'Further Education Authority'. The power to remove a Licence was supported, although there were concerns about what then happened to the provider. Respondents commented that the licensing function would now lie with SFA. The FE Code was welcomed because it set out what could be expected of a good provider, although respondents were divided on whether it should be mandatory or voluntary. The majority of respondents wanted the Framework as a whole to be reframed in the light of MOG changes and new organisations' roles, whilst keeping some of the elements.
- iv) *The FE Accord*, setting out the responsibilities and relationships between the government and the sector on regulatory matters was considered to be essential to the efficient running of a self-regulatory sector. It would help clarify for providers who was doing what in the new landscape.
- v) *The 'Further Education Authority'* was the most contentious of the proposals, and considered to be another layer of unwanted bureaucracy by most respondents, with its proposed functions already taken by new organisations; it was viewed as costly and adding more complexity to an already increasingly complex landscape; one representative comment was 'yes, if it's instead of everything else, but not if it is in addition to...'
- vi) *Common Performance Assessment Framework and Key Performance Indicator*; the pursuit of a single assessment framework and new KPIs

was welcomed by most respondents; simplification and appropriateness were the main concerns. New KPIs should be simple, easy to understand, easy to measure and to monitor externally. Many respondents wished to see learners' and employers' perceptions and equality and diversity included in KPIs. Any new single assessment framework should fit the diverse missions of providers as well as allowing comparisons between providers and across the sector. Respondents wanted the Single Voice to work with Ofsted, LSIS, and provider representative organisations to help bring about a new single assessment framework.

Other points made included:

'Localism'

Many respondents said that self-regulation proposals need to take greater account of the new 'localism', including the commissioning roles of local authorities, local area agreements, Children's Trusts, safeguarding responsibilities, school/college/training provider partnerships and other 14-19 initiatives.

Sixth form colleges and school sixth forms

Sixth form colleges considered they were not yet located clearly enough within the self-regulation framework; the new relationship between sixth form colleges and local authorities was still emerging. GFE colleges were keen to see the same self-regulatory requirements made upon sixth form colleges and school sixth forms as upon themselves.

Smaller providers

Specialist colleges, small training providers and smaller land-based colleges pointed out that the costs to smaller colleges of self-regulation, changing existing processes and procedures, and of collaborative self-improvement were disproportionate to them in comparison with the costs to larger providers. They were keen to do what was needed but wanted government to be aware of what it cost them.

Ofsted's role

The majority of respondents said they valued strongly the independent, rigorous, qualitative judgements made by Ofsted, and wished to see a well-defined role for it within self-regulation. Providers considered Ofsted's external evaluations gave them credibility over and above that provided by collaborative self-improvement.

Support for the self-regulation journey

There continues to be strong sector support for the journey toward self-regulation. The sector shares the Single Voice's vision of a sector of 'respected, autonomous, responsive organisations acting individually and collectively within a self-regulating system to deliver high quality provision for the benefit of learners, employers, communities, and the nation – a respected partner of government'. The great

concern is that other demands should cease so that self-regulation has space and opportunity to grow, and so that it does not become something 'additional to' rather than 'instead of'. The sector welcomes many elements of the proposals, but wishes them to be reframed and re-prioritised to match the new further education landscape.

A more detailed analysis of responses follows next, using question headings from the Prospectus. The analysis includes:

- the most-often made responses
- points of concern particular to one part of the sector or to particular providers
- priorities for further work by the Single Voice and its partners, suggested by respondents

Part 2 Analysis of responses

Q1 Values and beliefs

Responses included:

1. Values and beliefs are consistent with those of the majority of respondents
2. Should include 'high quality teaching and learning' and 'putting learners' interests first'
3. Should include equality and diversity
4. Starting principle should be 'assumed autonomy' rather than 'earned autonomy'
5. Each organisation knows best how to meet its own needs, unless evidence shows otherwise
6. Self-regulation framework must be flexible enough to adapt to changes in political and economic landscape
7. Emphasise providers *and professionals* acting together
8. Renewed commitment to meeting learners' needs should include increased attention to the faith and belief needs of learners and staff

Points of concern:

- Would a new government honour what has been agreed so far?

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Explore self-regulation arrangements in higher education

Q2 Benefits of self-regulation

Responses included:

1. Proposals should be reframed in light of MOG and other changes
2. Benefits will only be real if external regulation is minimised
3. Most respondents do not believe there is any lessening of external regulation
4. Move away from regulatory frameworks is positive and empowering
5. Welcome 'mission-driven' approach
6. Maintain the focus on improvement
7. Other likely benefits include:
 - more effective influencing of government policy
 - stronger role for provider representative organisations
 - stronger stimulus for systematic collaborative working
 - stronger reputation for excellence
 - greater transparency and information about provision for learners, employers, communities
 - more effective benchmarking using data generated by sector: 'collect once and use often'
 - greater empowerment of professionals
8. Self-regulation and self-improvement are not the same thing; there is a danger of conflating them
9. Parts of the sector, eg adult and community learning providers, do not feel as involved in the debate as they want to be

Points of concern:

- Need to define 'FE sector'; no single homogenous sector
- Successful self-regulation depends on stable government policies and commitment to non-intervention by government – what evidence of these are there?
- Ever-more complex requirements from LSC
- Unnecessary bureaucracy has disproportionate impact on small providers
- Voices of individual providers may be lost
- Costs to providers of self-regulation and peer review
- Private providers are already accountable in some of the ways proposed – what benefits are there for them?

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Describe in detail how learners, employers, communities will benefit from self-regulation
- Spell out in more detail the benefits to professionals
- Describe what proposals will look like 'in action' for providers
- Examine and include the benefits of colleges awarding their own qualifications
- Examine self-regulation in other countries' education systems, and in other UK sectors

Q3 What we have done so far

Responses included:

1. Welcome the progress made so far, and opportunities presented by LSIS seminars to debate proposals
2. Welcome delineation between funding and regulation
3. Landscape must be simplified if proposals are not to add to the current complexity
4. Need to take full account of MOG, including changes for sixth form colleges and school sixth forms, and reframe the proposals in light of these changes and the responses
5. Need to identify how the Single Voice relates to LSIS, Ofsted and SFA; check proposed functions do not overlap
6. Take greater account of role of local authorities, their commissioning function, Children's Trusts, safeguarding duties, and 14-19 reforms
7. Local accountability is a key aspect of self-regulation
8. Need to see practical progress on simplification
9. Need to tackle issues for private providers

Points of concern:

- Appears 'college driven'; debate needs to include all parts of the sector
- Not clear how school sixth forms and sixth form colleges fit into self-regulation
- What level of understanding has been reached with Ofsted and LSIS?
- Have local authorities signed up to self-regulation?
- How far can colleges self-regulate when they are delivering high volumes of cross-phase provision?

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Secure government funding for the Single Voice to continue its work
- Reframe proposals to take account of MOG and other changes
- Focus on how landscape can be simplified by securing less regulation, fewer regulators, and influencing existing and new regulators
- Clarify relationships and functions with new bodies
- Examine position of local authorities
- Examine how school sixth forms and sixth form colleges fit with self-regulation

Qs 4-11 Framework for performance management and improvement

Responses included:

1. Majority of respondents view the Framework as a 'good and simple' outline of responsibilities which can be used by providers because it builds on their own best practice
2. Most providers have in place systems and procedures to support the Framework
3. Further consultation is required on proposed sector-wide responsibilities and how these will operate in practice; some of these responsibilities now lie with other organisations
4. Vital to maintain and underline the distinction between governance and management
5. Self-regulation will make rigorous demands on governors who will require training and support to meet them effectively; governors' experiences and contributions are much valued and should not be lost; may be time to consider idea of paid governors
6. Framework should say more about core business of teaching and learning
7. Needs more on the involvement of professionals, and examination of their development needs as part of a self-regulatory sector
8. Mixed responses on whether involvement in collaborative activities should be mandatory or voluntary, though majority value highly the benefits of such activities and see them as essential to tackle under-performance
9. Include in responsibilities: financial probity; acting in best interests of learners; core priorities and values

Points of concern:

- Who will judge compliance with the Framework?
- What will be relationship between a provider's responsibility to act on under-performance, collaborative action on under-performance, and sector-wide responsibilities for managing under-performance?
- Will data collection and monitoring systems be effective enough to support the Framework?
- Will a single Code of Practice cover the diverse FE workforce?
- Providers must be benchmarked by an external independent agency to have credibility
- Will local authorities use the proposed licensing system?
- Need to emphasise more the important roles of professionals' representative organisations
- What happens to an organisation that loses its licence?

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Show how Framework would operate, perhaps through provider case studies, focusing on themes identified in responses, and covering the diversity of providers
- Examine further responsibilities of governors for individual provider capacity, and sector-wide actions, and consider how governors could be best supported to prepare for self-regulation
- Expand on the responsibilities of professionals and the whole workforce
- Show how the Framework would fit with Ofsted's requirements

Qs 4-11 (cont)

Responses included:

10. Need more about how Framework will operate in practice, and how it will relate to Ofsted's requirements
11. Welcome opportunity for provider organisations to be more involved in the regulation of under-performance

Points of concern:

- Specialist colleges and private trainers operate in effect within a 'licensing system' now; how will things change for the better for them within this Framework?
- 'Mixed economy' providers want a 'read across' of sector-wide responsibilities to HE measures and expectations so they do not have to operate two different systems

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

Q12 New focus for collaborative self-improvement

Responses included:

1. Majority of respondents view collaborative self-improvement as an essential element of self-regulation
2. A protocol is required, setting out a robust definition for peer review, the processes to underpin it, and quality standards including how partners are selected
3. Argument that self-improvement and self-regulation are not the same thing and should not be conflated
4. Divided on whether collaborative self-improvement should be mandatory responsibility for providers, even though providers report valued and successful experiences of peer review and other shared activities for improvement
5. Concerns include that peer review does not always have sufficient rigour, can be 'cosy', and be based on 'partnerships of convenience' rather than 'partnerships of purpose'
6. Collaborative self-improvement takes time and resources, including time to develop trust and confidence in partners
7. Need to evaluate objectively the impact of current peer review activities
8. Providers in Wales have evidence of the benefits of collaboration through success rates and inspection grades
9. Collaboration can be difficult in a competitive environment

Points of concern:

- Larger providers may dominate collaborative self-improvement activities
- Distinguish between under-performance in one particular aspect and a failing provider
- Will government resource peer review, evaluation and validation activities?
- Costs of collaboration to small providers
- Weaker providers may be less willing to take part

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Further debate on mandatory collaborative self-improvement as part of self-regulation
- Development of a protocol or framework for peer review/collaborative self-improvement activities

Q13 Capacity for self-improvement

Responses included:

1. Overwhelming majority of respondents agree that the sector has the capacity for self-improvement and to tackle under-performance
2. Need for more debate on how proposals can achieve systematic tackling of under-performance
3. More details needed on how sector-wide responsibilities will be established and accepted, especially in relation to under-performance
4. Need to support sector's perception of effectiveness of collaborative activity with objective analysis of Ofsted's inspection grades for 'capacity to improve', rather than evidencing mainly the *amount* of collaborative activity
5. Self-improvement/peer review were not substitutes for rigorous, objective evaluation by Ofsted, whose role is highly valued by providers
6. Strong desire to retain Ofsted's capacity to make *qualitative* judgements based on observation of teaching and learning, and discussions with learners and staff

Points of concern:

- Providers need to respect the process and understand its resource implications
- Need to clarify differences between types of groups, eg working groups, networks, coalitions, partnerships; decide which assist self-improvement

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Expand on sector-wide responsibilities for under-performance
- Objective evaluation of impact of collaborative improvement activities on a provider's capacity to improve
- Work with Ofsted to clarify its place within a self-regulation framework

Qs 14-15 The 'Further Education Authority' FE Accord, and 'FE Code'

Responses included:

1. There is little support for a '**Further Education Authority**' which is viewed as another unwanted layer of bureaucracy making demands on providers
2. Efforts should continue on minimising requirements and prescriptions for the sector, rather than on developing another new body
3. The proposed 'Authority' duplicates functions now to be undertaken by SFA, LSIS, and Ofsted
4. If a single 'Authority' were to replace a number of other organisations, then responses might be more favourable: 'instead of, not as well as'
5. The relationships between the Single Voice and the 'Authority' was not clear. Any such body would have to be publicly accountable in order to be credible
6. An '**FE Accord**' setting out an agreement on regulatory matters between government and the sector 'makes more sense' than an 'FE Authority', and was generally welcomed as essential for a self-regulatory system
7. Majority of respondents wished to see an '**FE Code**', but were divided over whether it should be mandatory or voluntary
8. The 'FE Code' was seen as useful as one of a suite of codes to underpin management and governance, and in setting out what is expected of a good provider
9. The 'FE Code' should not add to reporting and assessment requirements
10. Idea of 'highest levels of statutory compliance' presents difficulties: why would providers have to exceed what is required?

Points of concern:

- An 'Authority' convened by AoC and ALP would leave many sector members on the periphery: important that all Single Voice members are involved
- To whom is the 'Authority' responsible?
- How impartial would the 'Authority' be?
- An 'Authority' would cost providers
- Risk of litigation if corporations/ companies view a non-statutory body taking action which cuts across their legal duties and powers
- Adherence to the 'FE Code' must be evidenced and measurable
- 'FE Code' needs to include effective use of public funding
- 'FE Code' and 'Licence' may duplicate data processes undertaken for the SFA
- What would be the impact of removing a Licence if the provider was the only/main one in an area?
- How long would the processes for tackling under-performance take?

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Review the proposal for an 'FE Authority' and licensing system in light of MOG and functions of new organisations
- Work with government and SFA to ensure fewer prescriptions and requirements for the sector
- Develop and refine the idea of an 'FE Accord and FE Code' and demonstrate how they would operate

Qs 14-15 (cont)

Responses included:

11. Majority of respondents support the '**Licence to Practice**' though many indicate the licensing function will now be undertaken by SFA
12. Some comments that the Code within the context of the Licence is a strong lever to influence provider behaviour
13. The role of local authorities within a licensing system needs to be addressed as part of re-framing the proposals for the post-MOG world

Points of concern:

- Who are the parties to the proposed Accord and Frameworks?

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

Qs 16-17 Common Performance Assessment Framework and Key Performance Indicators

Responses included:

1. Majority of respondents welcome the goal of achieving a **single framework**, and would welcome a new Common Performance Assessment Framework as long as it replaces Framework for Excellence rather than adding to the plethora of frameworks
2. Measures in Framework for Excellence are viewed as too crude, and do not allow for different provider's circumstances
3. Simplification is what is most required; any new Framework could only be implemented if other regulation is reduced
4. Some respondents consider there to be no need for new frameworks, and that SFA's and local authorities' systems will address the same issues
5. A new framework should be 'aspirational' in intent, and serve as a tool for improvement for providers
6. A new framework should be applicable right across the sector, taking account of its diversity and the different contexts of providers
7. Very strong support for Ofsted's role; its rigorous independent and objective judgements are considered vital for the sector's health and credibility
8. **Key performance indicators** must take account of providers' diverse missions
9. KPIs must enable performance between providers to be analysed in ways that can help guide learners' and employers' choices
10. KPIs should take into account:
 - value-added
 - learners' perceptions
 - employers' perceptions
 - equality and diversity
 - professional development

Points of concern:

- Will greater autonomy and increased emphasis on meeting local needs, more diverse missions and different funding sources mean that providers no longer fit with the Single Voice's proposed Frameworks?
- What would a simplified framework replace and/or fit with?
- More sector involvement is needed in the development of KPIs
- KPIs must take account of Local Area Agreements and Multi-Area Agreements
- KPIs need to relate to local authority indicators

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Consider how best to work with partners toward a new single framework within the new post-MOG landscape, taking account of Ofsted's consultation 'A focus on improvement: proposals for further education and skills system inspections from September 2009', and help ensure KPIs fit the post-MOG sector and suggestions made by respondents

Qs 16-17 (cont)

Responses included:

11. KPIs should allow for comparisons between sectors, eg school sixth forms and GFE colleges
12. KPIs should be simple, easy to understand, easy to measure and to monitor externally
13. Some respondents wish to see providers able to set additional KPIs relevant to their provision
14. **Minimum Levels of Performance** do not provide an improvement mechanism; only challenging targets do this
15. Most agree that the **Licence to Practice** should be removed from a failing provider
16. Responses are divided over '**special**' designations for outstanding providers: some believe there are already enough of these, others believe promoting excellence and aspiration is always good but want to see designations time-limited

Points of concern:

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

Qs 18-20 Framework for Accountability

Responses included:

1. Responses are divided on the Framework for Accountability; many view it as 'top heavy' and as another layer of bureaucracy, whilst others consider it to have potentially the right elements to work effectively
2. The majority of respondents want to see the Framework re-thought in the light of MOG changes and the new organisations' roles
3. The National Apprenticeship Service, National Employer Service, Sector Skills Councils and Commission for Education and Skills would need to relate to the Framework
4. Respondents like elements of the Framework, including the approach to risk, the Licence to Practice, the removal of the Licence where required, and the Code, but do not like the 'FE Authority' proposal
5. Some respondents consider that although Framework for Excellence is not perfect, it is a step toward transparency and comparability; the Single Voice should take account of FfE
6. The risk-based approach was considered 'sensible' and comprehensive; providers wanted a unified approach that was applicable across the differently-funded range
7. More development was required of the Licence to Practice and managing under-performance proposals, particularly in relation to the roles of other organisations post-MOG, for example SFA and removal of Licence, and LSIS and intervention for under-performance
8. Many respondents wanted the Framework to include financial probity and value for money

Points of concern:

- Is there government commitment to slimming down the roles of other organisations?
- Who does what within the Framework, eg who leads the case conference?
- Do providers have the capacities and resources to implement the Framework? Who will pay for it?
- How does the proposal fit with SFA's accreditation arrangements?
- Timely support is essential for providers experiencing difficulties
- Does intervention apply to amber-rated as well as to red-rated providers?
- Strong groups of licensed providers might operate as 'cartels' thereby lessening healthy competition

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners:

- Re-think the Framework in the light of MOG changes and new organisation's roles, deciding how to further develop the elements supported by respondents

Qs 18-20 (cont)

Responses included:

9. Many respondents wanted clarification of where Ofsted would fit into the Framework
10. Provider representative groups should play a stronger part in the Framework
11. GFE colleges wanted to know if school sixth forms would be subject to the same requirements
12. Proposals need to take more account of the new 'localism'; they must be applicable locally
13. Welcome the greater involvement of learners, employers, and communities in shaping and reviewing provision; need to hear more about their roles

Points of concern:

- A few respondents did not think it appropriate for peers to intervene if a provider were failing
- A licensing system could exclude new providers, eg training organisations

Suggestions from respondents for further work by the Single Voice and its partners: