

**TEXT OF A SINGLE VOICE “POSITION STATEMENT” to be placed on the website and to act as an indication of how we are taking things forward in the light of Prospectus responses**

In November 2008 the Single Voice issued a consultation Prospectus on Self-Regulation. This document set out what had been achieved between 2006 and summer 2008 through the work of the Self-Regulation Project Team, and invited responses to proposals to develop self-regulation further as an integral part of the government’s planned reform of the further education and skills system. An analysis of the responses has been posted on the Single Voice website as a matter of record: it can be accessed at <http://www.feselfregulation.org.uk>

At the same time as that consultation was taking place, LSIS convened a series of seminars designed to result in a number of propositions which will further inform development of a new regulatory framework for FE. Discussion to date, under the title *The emerging consensus* is on the LSIS website and can be accessed at <http://www.lsis.org.uk/Libraries/Documents/Self-regulation-theEmergingConsensus.sflb>

Responses to the Prospectus and discussion at the LSIS seminars have both generated valuable feedback, and demonstrate strong sector support for greater regulatory freedom for providers. It is clear that there is widespread support for greater responsibility being taken by the FE sector, both by providers individually and collectively; it is also clear that there is still a journey needed to achieve the desired goal of a new regulatory framework. In particular, earlier proposals need to be refreshed, refocused and re-energised to take into account the reforms to the system currently being implemented.

The Single Voice Board continues in its ambition progressively to achieve shared responsibility for the further education and skills system as a respected and trusted partner of government. We are committed to taking forward development work on regulatory matters, and expect the following components to take priority in our future actions:

- continued dialogue - with the sector, with central government (DIUS, DCSF, DWP) and its agencies (LSC and successors, OFSTED), and with the local government (via LGA) – which will focus on the specific roles and accountabilities to be held in a system where responsibilities are progressively shared
- identification of further areas where unnecessary bureaucracy can be reduced or stripped out or avoided when new arrangements are put in place
- identification of opportunities where responsibility can be handed over to the sector and its constituent providers

- continued development of provider influence on how support resources are deployed, including further development of a sector-owned LSIS through agreement on an electoral system for its Council
- continued development of a single common performance assessment framework, with an eye to both simplification and appropriateness
- contributing, alongside LSIS, to establishing criteria against which provider self-assessment is validated through peer review
- supporting LSIS work to strengthen governance across the sector
- planning for a phased roll-out of these and other key developments, synchronised to the wider implementation of new post-MoG arrangements.

LSIS will be in a position to hand over a final report on its seminars at the end of March. The Single Voice stands ready to finalise its forward agenda in the light of that material, and will, in coming weeks, be translating these priorities into a formal workplan. The Single Voice Board will also be considering the best way to resource an agreed programme of work to reflect and support our ambitions for shared responsibility, and timescales for delivery. We expect to be providing an update on actions taken in early summer 2009.

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February 2009

The Board of the Single Voice includes senior personnel from AoC, ALP, 157 Group, HOLEX, Landex, MEG, NATSPEC, NIACE and SFCF, and is chaired by Sir George Sweeney