# Skills Delivery Independent Review: Call for Evidence

**23 December 2022**

## ***Summary of Logistics UK's view***

- Logistics UK supports the initiative being shown by the Scottish Government to make the skills delivery landscape in Scotland more responsive to the needs of industry. This consultation is a good opportunity for the logistics sector to collaborate further with the Scottish Government, and we hope that this level of collaboration continues in the future.
- Many of the current skill shortages in Scotland, such as those for HGV drivers and warehouse operatives, cannot be solved via apprenticeships alone. Short term solutions like skills bootcamps can be a more rapid and practical solution in these instances.
- There is currently a significant shortage of mechanics who are trained to work on electric vehicles (EVs). These skills will become increasingly important as Scotland transitions towards NetZero, and therefore apprenticeships and other training for mechanics must address this crucial emerging skill.
- The logistics industry would benefit from greater visibility in schools and colleges, and Logistics UK would welcome further collaboration from the Scottish Government on the Generation Logistics programme.

## About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of Britain's largest business groups and the only one providing a voice for the entirety of the UK's logistics sector. Our role, on behalf of over 20,000 members, is to enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of freight movement throughout the supply chain, across all transport modes. Logistics UK members operate over 200,000 goods vehicles - almost half the UK fleet - and some one million liveried vans. In addition, they consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and over 70 per cent of sea and air freight.

Logistics UK's ambitions for our industry is one that is:

- Flexible and resilient
- Recognised for the value it adds to society and the economy
- Optimal in its efficiency
- Progressing towards zero environmental and safety negativities

## *Consultation questions*

## ***Part 1: Scotland's Skills Delivery Landscape***

**Q2. Thinking about the vision in the Terms of Reference for a system that is simple, people-focused and built on collaboration, how well are we doing against that vision just now?**

At present, our members feel that the system is not as simple as it could be. The number of different groups tasked with delivering skills provision within Scotland is large, and this works against the ambition for a simple system.

There is more opportunity for the Scottish Government to collaborate with industry, especially with the aim of solving skills shortages. The logistics industry within Scotland would appreciate more opportunities for collaboration with the Scottish Government. However, as is discussed further in the next answer, it is especially difficult for SMEs to feel that their voice is heard at present.

An action plan which clearly sets out timescales and responsibilities for skills delivery resulting from this consultation would help to demonstrate that this system is built on collaboration.

**Q3. Thinking about the different national agencies and partners involved in skills delivery, are there areas where more clarity is required about roles and responsibilities or where you think the balance of responsibilities should be changed?**

Logistics UK members feel that there is a lack of clarity about the delegation of responsibility for skills provision in Scotland. Some SMEs have expressed a concern that the wide range of groups involved in skills provision makes engagement difficult for them, as they are often unsure who to contact with questions or suggestions. Having a clearer, simpler structure and sets of responsibilities for the various groups involved in skills provision would be a welcomed by the logistics industry, and in particular for the SMEs who are currently struggling to see the benefits of such a protracted system.

**Q4. Thinking about how our economy and society is changing and the Scottish Government's ambitions for a skilled workforce as set out in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, do you have any evidence on where the current skills and education landscape needs to adapt or change and how it could be improved?**

Logistics UK publishes a quarterly performance tracker with evidence obtained from our members. In the most recent report, 95% of our members reported difficulties in filling roles for mechanics. However, we have not seen this shortage reflected in the type and number of apprenticeships being offered in Scotland, nor have we seen any short-term solutions offered. As highlighted later in this response, Logistics UK's members welcome the provision of more apprenticeships for a variety of roles including mechanics, warehouse operatives and forklift drivers.

Apprenticeships are not always the most effective solution in the short term, and therefore the Scottish Government must also acknowledge that immediate solutions, such as skills bootcamps, should also be provided for roles which do not necessitate a full-length apprenticeship programme, such as training to become an HGV driver.

## ***Part 2: Apprenticeships***

**Q7. Do you have any views or evidence on how changes to the operation of apprenticeship programmes could support the ambition for apprenticeship programmes to be an embedded part of the wider education system?**

Logistics UK is highly supportive of the ambition to make apprenticeships a viable alternative to academia, and welcomes moves to embed apprenticeship programmes within the wider education system. We welcome and appreciate the initiative being shown by the Scottish Government to make apprenticeships a more attractive option for young people in Scotland, and we ask that this ambition is maintained going forward.

The logistics sector would benefit from greater visibility at schools and colleges. Logistics UK members have reported that visits to schools and colleges by their organisations have been successful in getting applications for apprenticeships, and that young people have been impressed and excited by what a career in logistics could offer them. Providing students with the ability to interface directly with employers in this manner is therefore important and can give these students a more informed view of the potential benefits of different apprenticeships, prior to them deciding to undertake one.

**Q8. Apprenticeships are often described as being 'demand-led'. Do you have any evidence about how process for developing and approving apprenticeship frameworks responds to skills priorities? Please include suggestions of how the development process could be enhanced.**

Within the logistics sector, there is plentiful evidence to show that the apprenticeship system is not demand-led at present. The industry is experiencing massive shortages in several areas, especially for mechanics and technicians, yet our members say that apprenticeships for these roles have not increased in line with this demand. While we welcome the effort to make apprenticeships a more attractive alternative to academia, some of our members still feel that there is a stigma attached to apprenticeships. Generation Logistics[1] (https://generationlogistics.org), an industry-led initiative, is currently being run and paving the way to changing these perceptions, by boosting the profile of the sector through a public affairs campaign, and by providing advice for both young people and career-changers who are interested in a career in logistics. We would welcome further collaboration with Scottish Government and other skills agencies including SDS on this programme.

Apprenticeships must address emerging and future skills which will become crucial to the sector in the future. Skills in IT and automation should be prioritised as warehouses become increasingly automated. Employees will therefore need a basic level of training when it comes to these systems. Adding modules covering these skills into existing

[1] Generation Logistics

apprenticeships would help to solve this issue. Furthermore, as fleets become increasingly electrified, it is crucial that mechanics and engineers receive proper training to maintain these vehicles, and this could similarly be addressed by adding electric vehicle modules onto existing apprenticeship programmes. Scotland's ambitious targets for the rollout of net zero vehicles are not aligned to the availability of skilled workers to maintain and fix electric or alternatively fuelled vehicles.

## ***Part 4: Upskilling and Reskilling***

**Q14 Thinking about the government's ambition to optimise the existing system for upskilling and reskilling throughout life, do you have any evidence to support how changes to the delivery landscape could help to achieve this ambition?**

Evidence from the Department for Education's (DfE) skills bootcamps in England has shown they have been successful in addressing skills shortages and helping to upskill and reskill existing members of the workforce. For HGV drivers, DfE has extended the bootcamps into 2023 due to their success.

Alongside the HGV Skills Bootcamps, Q2 of this year saw 28,386 people undertake practical HGV tests, an increase of 52% compared to Q2 2019, although shortages do persist for these roles. If the Scottish Government was to provide a similar programme for the most in-demand roles, this would offer an opportunity for greater responsiveness and collaboration with businesses, and therefore help to make the process more demand-led.

The current reskilling process could be improved by considering the distinct priorities held by career changers – potential considerations such as raising a family or caring for relatives can create a barrier to career changes. The logistics industry offers a variety of roles, and our members have made a significant effort in recent years to make working arrangements more flexible for a wide range of part-time and full-time occupations. Careers advice for those looking to reskill should therefore highlight the fact that the logistics industry can offer flexible and accessible work options for those looking to change career.

## ***Part 5: Sector and Regional Skills Planning***

**Q17. Do you have any evidence to indicate how changes to the delivery landscape could better deliver the vision for a system which is agile and responsive to future needs and where labour market insights can inform strategic provision planning?**

In order to be truly responsive, the skills delivery system must acknowledge that current and future skills shortages need to be addressed separately, and that apprenticeships will not be able to solve the skills shortages that many businesses are facing here and now. The system can demonstrate its agility by better compartmentalising these challenges.

In the short term, skills bootcamps are often a better option than apprenticeships because employers cannot wait a year or two to fill roles which are desperately needed right now. As highlighted in the previous answer, these bootcamps have proven successful in England for roles such as HGV drivers and could equally be applied to the present skills shortages which Scottish hauliers are facing. In particular, roles such as forklift drivers and warehouse operatives are currently very difficult to fill. While these roles do require specific training, they do not always require a twelve-month apprenticeship course, and therefore bootcamps or alternative shorter courses are a more efficient and effective option. These roles are especially suitable to those looking to join or re-join the workforce, and funding must therefore be made available to both training providers and those interested in receiving this training.

The Scottish Government can therefore demonstrate agility and responsiveness by addressing the short-term and longer-term needs of industry separately, and accepting that short term shortages require rapid solutions, while future and emerging skills require proper planning in advance.

**Q19. Thinking about the current delivery landscape, how well is it structured to deliver the Scottish Government's ambitions for a just transition to net zero?**

At present, our members feel that the skills delivery landscape is not well structured for this transition. The switch to electrified and alternatively fueled vehicles will require a workforce skilled to fix, service and maintain these new powertrain technologies. In a recent survey, 95% of Logistics UK members responded that they are struggling to recruit for technician and mechanic roles, and as fleets become increasingly electrified, the lack of training opportunities for mechanics to be able to work on electric vehicles (EVs) will only exacerbate this problem. Given Scotland's ambitious Net Zero target of 2045, giving mechanics and technicians the skills to work on EVs should be a much higher priority than it is currently. If Scotland hopes to hit this target, the government must acknowledge that green skills need to be prioritised in certain sectors.

We suggest that a potential short-term solution would be to add EV modules onto existing mechanic training programmes. In the longer term, creation and development of training courses for EV mechanics and technicians will be crucial to addressing this emerging skills gap. Our members also say that EV apprenticeships need to be made more attractive, by making it clear that these are jobs that will be in ever-growing demand, and therefore that this is both a conscientious and secure career path for people to pursue.

Furthermore, the apprenticeship system needs to recognise the fact that 'green jobs' are not a stand-alone category, and highlighting that green skills are an emerging skill in most sectors is a more effective approach.

## ***Part 6: Careers and Young People***

**Q21. Alongside Careers information, advice and guidance, do you have any evidence to demonstrate what additional support young people, including those from marginalised groups, might need to develop their skills and experience to prepare them for the world of work?**

One area in which additional support would be particularly helpful would be in mentoring for young offenders. The Trailblazers Mentoring programme[2] (https://www.trailblazersmentoring.org.uk) has been very successful in England and Wales for reducing rates of re-offending, as well as helping to get young people into the world of work who would not have otherwise had attractive career prospects. Having clear objectives is seen to be the most effective way of getting young offenders onto the right track and given the current workforce participation issues being experienced across sectors, education providers should be encouraged to engage more with programmes such as Trailblazers in order to benefit both young people and the employers.

Another area to highlight is the provision of more training programmes for the visually and hearing-impaired: careers advice for young people with disabilities should better highlight the fact that a career in logistics is an attractive and accessible option for them. Successful work has been done in recent years across the sector to make flexible working arrangements more readily available, and members have also made significant efforts to make the logistics sector more accessible to those with disabilities. For example, Amazon has been running programmes to recruit both deaf and blind employees, and to ensure that the requisite support is available for those employees within their warehouses. Therefore, having dedicated careers advice for those with disabilities would help to encourage further workforce participation from an under-represented group, for which the logistics sector can provide great opportunities.

**Jonas Keat**
**Policy Advisor**
**Logistics UK**
**jkeat@logistics.org.uk**

[2] https://www.trailblazersmentoring.org.uk