

**25 JULY 2008**

For immediate release

## **HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS IN THE UK**

If you had to write an end-of-term report on the UK's current employment and skills systems, what would it say? 'Progressing well'? Or 'Could do better'? And what recommendations would you offer to improve performance?

The new UK Commission for Employment and Skills would like to hear your views, and your ideas for improvement.

Established by the governments of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in April this year, the remit of the UK Commission is to monitor the UK's progress towards challenging competitiveness and employment goals, and to provide well-informed and independent advice to government at the highest levels across the UK on employment and skills strategies, targets, policies and practice.

The Commission recently produced its first year's business plan, containing information about its planned activities for the period April 2008 to March 2009. Now, it needs to develop its longer-term thinking, with the production of a five-year strategic plan aimed at ensuring that the UK's employment and skills systems play a full role in keeping the UK on course to remain economically strong and become even more socially inclusive by 2020.

As part of this, the Commission is seeking views and opinions on the following questions:

- What are appropriate future goals for the employment and skills systems for the next five years to 2014?
- What strategies will enable us to achieve these goals?
- What changes does the current system need – some of which might be changes to the 'demand side' (eg employers and individuals) and some may be to the 'supply side' (education and training providers, employment services, qualifications bodies etc).

**Chris Humphries CBE, Chief Executive of the UK Commission, said:**

"We want to see more people in the workforce with more of the right skills. That's easy to say, and it's a goal shared by employers, politicians and the general public alike. Putting strategies

in place which will achieve this goal is much more difficult, but it's essential if the UK is to succeed, both as an economically competitive, and socially inclusive, nation.

“We may have to implement some creative and radical changes, and that's why I'd encourage anyone with an interest in the skills and employment system to feed into this consultation process. It's vital that we get this right.”

The initial closing date for responses is 15 August 2008. Submissions should be no longer than four sides of A4 and should be emailed to [strategic.plan@ukces.org.uk](mailto:strategic.plan@ukces.org.uk)

A further opportunity to comment on the emerging strategic options will be available in September. All responses will be treated as public documents and may be published in whole or in part unless the submission is clearly marked as private.

For more information, visit [www.ukces.org.uk](http://www.ukces.org.uk) and click on 'strategic plan'.

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Further information from Alex Curling, Head of Press and PR, 01709 774890, email [Alex.curling@ukces.org.uk](mailto:Alex.curling@ukces.org.uk)

### ***About the UK Commission for Employment and Skills***

The remit of the UK Commission is to provide vigorous and independent challenge, advising government at the highest levels across the UK on employment and skills strategy, targets, policies and progress towards the challenging competitiveness goals set by Lord Leitch, including the vision of an 80% employment rate by 2020. It has already been asked by the government to report on crucial issues, such as the employability skills employers need for future economic success, how UK employers can use skills to become more globally competitive, and whether further institutional change is required to deliver better integrated employment and skills services.

The Commission's business plan is available at [http://www.ukces.org.uk/PDF/UKCES\\_Business\\_Plan\\_Brochure\\_for%20web.pdf](http://www.ukces.org.uk/PDF/UKCES_Business_Plan_Brochure_for%20web.pdf)

It is led by Commissioners including:

Sir Mike Rake, Chairman, British Telecom (Chair)  
Lord Victor Adebawale, Chief Executive, Turning Point  
Jeremy Anderson CBE, Head of Financial Services, KPMG Europe  
Sarah Anderson CBE, Director, Simple Solutions Ltd  
Brendan Barber, General Secretary, Trades Union Congress  
David Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, AstraZeneca

Murray Coleman, Chief Executive Officer, Bovis Lend Lease  
Prof Alan Gilbert, President & Vice Chancellor, The University of Manchester  
Philip N Green, Chief Executive, United Utilities  
Larry Hirst CBE, Chairman, IBM EMEA  
Chris Hyman, Chief Executive, Serco Group plc  
Julie Kenny CBE, Managing Director, Pyronix Ltd  
Sir Robert Kerslake, Chief Executive, Homes and Communities Agency  
Richard Lambert, Director General, CBI  
Charlie Mayfield, Chairman, John Lewis Partnership  
Ioan Morgan CBE, Principal, Warwickshire College  
Dave Prentis, General Secretary, Unison  
Liz Sayce, Chief Executive, RADAR  
Grahame Smith, General Secretary, Scottish Trades Union Congress  
Valerie Todd, Managing Director, Group Services, Transport for London  
William Roe, Chair, Skills Development Scotland  
Sir Adrian Webb, Chair, Wales Employment and Skills Board

The principal roles of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills are:

- To develop an independent view of how employment and skills systems can be improved to increase employment retention and progression, skills and productivity
- To provide advice to inform strategic policy development and the exchange of good practice to shape these systems to meet the needs of employers and individuals.
- To express our advice at the highest levels of government in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- To manage the performance of Sector Skills Councils, including advising Ministers on their relicensing.