

## **National Occupational Standards Governance Group – Quarter 4 Report**

### **Covid19**

We are currently facing significant challenges to the way in which we work and live and the National Occupational Standards (NOS) Governance Group are aware of the impacts that this may have on current and future development activity with NOS and related products.

During this unsettling time, Devolved Administrations and NOS Governance Group members have restructured the group to meet on a regular and virtual basis to help maintain their commitment to the upkeep and refresh of the NOS Database and wish for our suppliers to continue to take forward contracts and the priorities already identified as far as is practically possible in these unprecedented circumstances.

Additional guidance will be provided to suppliers via email from our Managing Agent, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), and updates will be shared on the [NOS website](#) to highlight flexibilities in the system to facilitate different ways of working, for example how alternative methods of consultation and means of communication could be used with stakeholders so as to avoid face to face meetings in the short to medium term.

The group welcome the quick measures and responses that have already been put in place however if suppliers are experiencing challenges in terms of capacity to deliver against their contract, SDS is fully available to offer support and discuss potential solutions. Please direct any queries to our mailbox [nos@sds.co.uk](mailto:nos@sds.co.uk) in the first instance to discuss further.

### **Procurement 2019/20 Update**

There were 6 rounds of Mini-competitions released which covered NOS, Welsh NOS, Scottish Qualification Products (SVQ/CBQ) and Apprenticeships (Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales). These resulted in the tendering of around 200 products with a value in excess of £1 million and were awarded to 20 suppliers. Please see below a snapshot of the 2019/20 activity:

- 51 NOS Suites
- 31 Welsh NOS Translations
- 49 Scottish Qualification products
- 18 Scottish Modern Apprenticeships
- 30 Northern Ireland Apprenticeships
- 5 Welsh Apprenticeships.

The NOS Governance Group is thankful to all involved in this work and the tremendous effort from all suppliers and approvers to ensure that the majority of the products were brought forward for approval.

### **Supplier Events**

We had intended to run the annual supplier event during April this year, but in light of the current circumstances, we are investigating ways of running a series of shorter more focussed virtual workshops. Once the topics and arrangements have been fully explored, our managing agent, SDS will be in contact to issue invitations. Subject to public health advice, it may be possible to arrange a face-to-face supplier event later in the year.

## **5 year plan**

The 2016 York Report provided an evidence base for the development of a 5 year transition plan for NOS. This plan has recently been reviewed and updated. You can find the current version of the plan here

(<https://www.ukstandards.org.uk/NewsUpdates/Documents/NOS%205-year%20plan%20March%202020%20.pdf>); you can see what has already been achieved within the first three years and the work that is ongoing.

## **Leadership Change**

As we look to 2020/21 the NOS Governance Group's leadership will rotate from Scottish Government to Welsh Government official, Natalie Williams-Hunt in line with the current terms of reference. Natalie has been a member of the NOS Governance Group since it was established.

## **NOS Strategy**

NOS Governance Group commissioned the Edge Foundation to review current evidence base and to carry out further exploratory work to inform a refresh of the 10 year NOS Strategy. A survey was carried out with a range of external stakeholders on the purposes, benefits and challenges of NOS. The Edge Foundation also facilitated a series of workshops across Devolved Administrations to explore how and where NOS currently fits within, or could further align to, the wider skills/standards architecture, and how this may evolve over time. Impartial input from the Edge Foundation has been extremely useful; we await a full list of recommendations and a key summary report by the end April.

Beyond April, the NOS GG will be looking to commission a NOS Strategy consultant to review all available research materials on the NOS system and to convene a series of virtual NOS Strategy Steering/Working groups. The consultant will be asked to draft the refreshed NOS Strategy and ensure that this receives UK-wide sign-off and is published by the end of 2020/21.