

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Question 1 – Are there other areas you think the Partnership Agreement should address?

We would like to see a greater emphasis on the potential workforce that will contribute to the economic regeneration. Our view is that more attention could be paid to the health of the current workforce, the current potential workforce (ie those of working age presently not in work) and the future potential workforce (children and young people). In particular, we have concerns that there is a lack of acknowledgement of the inherent disadvantage of those in the population with “low level or no skills” and their likely health status and how that might impact on their future capacity to gain skills.

Our view is that this requires to be stated explicitly so that there is no room for doubt in relation to the legitimacy of future health –related activity. Tackling inequalities must be a key part of any inclusive growth strategy

Question 2 – Do you think these thematic objectives will best address Scotland’s short-term and long-term challenges?

Our view is that unless the underlying wellbeing of the workforce is adequately addressed, then the thematic objectives will not best address Scotland’s short-term and long-term challenges.

In order to address social inclusion, for example, deprivation and poverty must be tackled by providing a wide range of support for families to create an infrastructure that will allow them to engage in economic opportunities. Social inclusion and capacity building are intrinsically linked so it is difficult to see why one has been prioritised and not the other.

Another long-term challenge for Scotland is the ageing population. These themes make no explicit link to that agenda or any reference to older workers, or the increasing dependency ratio

There is also some concern about how the themes might link. For example, how might Labour Market Mobility for new jobs (Skills and Lifelong Learning) in the caring professions (ageing population) relate to the construction of new energy efficient (Low Carbon) homes (apprenticeships in the building trade – Skills and Lifelong Learning) that might relate to Social Inclusion. Unless these themes are integrated as a whole, there is the potential for disconnectedness.

Question 3 – Do you think there are any other thematic objectives which should be addressed?

We are of the view that there should be some explicit link to the three major social policy frameworks The Early Years Framework, tackling poverty (Achieving Our Potential) and

health inequalities (Equally Well). It is artificial to expect that there will be any significant long-term impact on Scotland's economic regeneration without any link to the social agenda.

Question 4 – Do you think the Scottish Themed Funds will address Scotland's key challenges?

As above in terms of workforce and potential workforce

An additional challenge that has recently developed is that of the impact of welfare reform. Good evidence is being gathered of the impact of welfare reform on people's mental and physical wellbeing, along with the impact it is starting to have on services, especially Primary Care. It would be helpful if health & wellbeing could be explicitly mentioned under social inclusion and local development.

Our suggestion is that there could be many more jobs created to provide money advice as a result of welfare reform, specifically linked to the NHS and its wide range of services.

Question 5 – How do you think the governance and delivery arrangements will impact on your sector?

As a major Community Planning partner, we expect to be involved in the governance and delivery arrangements of ESF, however, we reiterate our concerns about the possibility of losing synergy if the funding strands are managed separately

However, knowledge of this agenda is patchy in the NHS, as it seems to be across the wider population, so there needs to be some awareness raising of the NHS's role in relation to this agenda, within the CP framework

Question 6 – How do you think the governance and delivery arrangements will impact on your organisation?

As above

Question 7 – Are there any unidentified governance or delivery arrangements that could aid simplification of the future programmes and ensure that the

Structural Funds complement each other?

Ensuring that funds can be vired and also that they are clearly linked to the social policy agenda

Question 8 – What other delivery options do you think would be feasible for delivering youth employment initiatives

Large organisations receive funds directly to create x apprenticeships

Question 9 – What other measures could be taken to reduce the audit and control pressures?

Question 10 – Do you have any further comments on the proposals?

Only to reiterate that this needs to be linked to the social policy agenda, as well as the economic agenda