

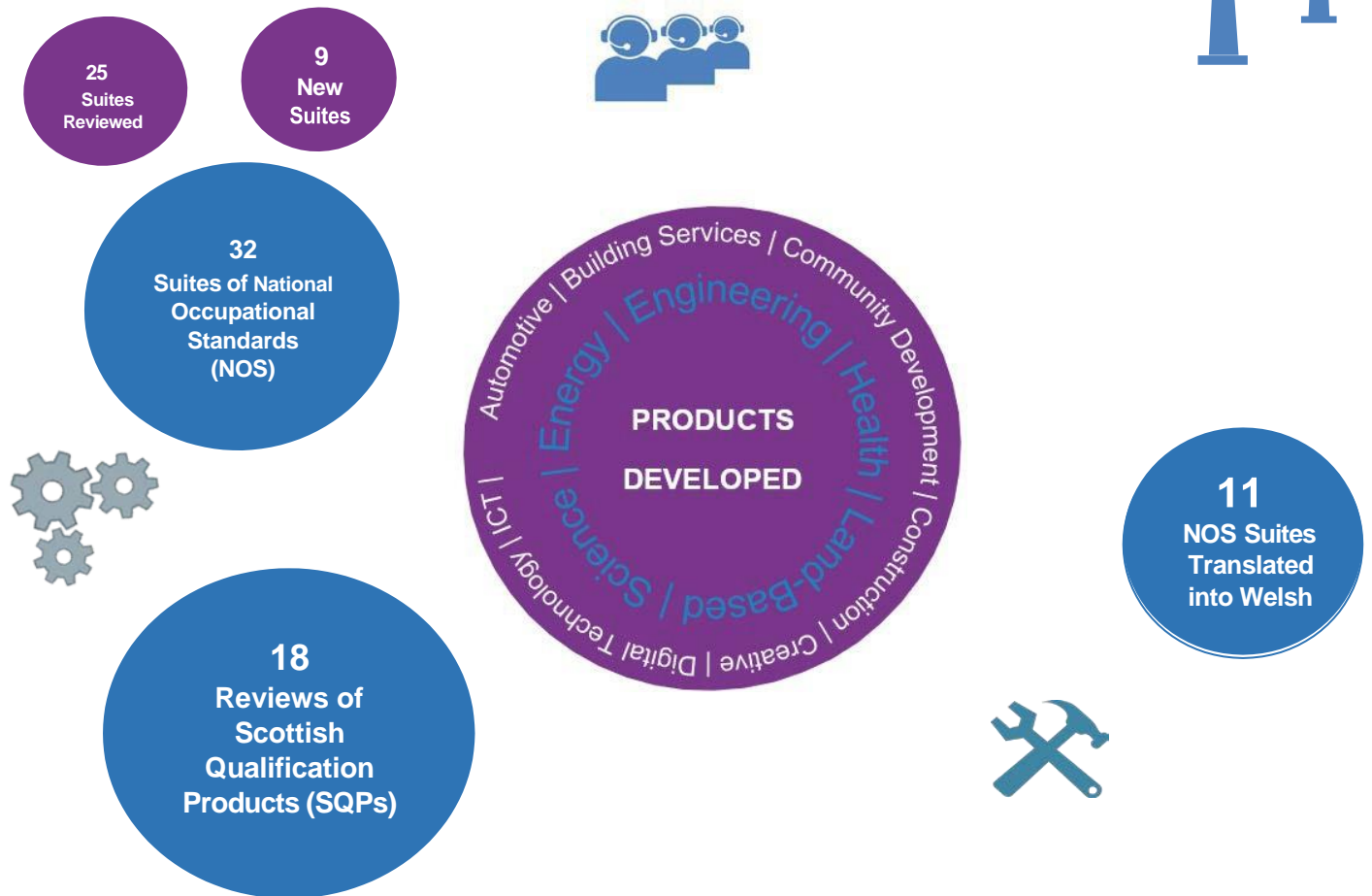


# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024



# Standards and Frameworks

## 2023 / 2024



**\*161,976 million hits | 12,859 unique users**

### Top 5 Searched Sectors

Health and Social Care | Civil Contingencies |  
Hairdressing & Barbering | Management and Leadership |  
Beauty Aesthetics

\*stats are for the period 14 Aug 2023 (when data was available following site redevelopment) to 31 March 2024

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Occupational Standards Governance Group (NOSGG) launched the [new strategy](#) in autumn of 2022 and 2023 saw the work continue to advance the vision of a NOS system which has an employer centric approach, and which will support the transferability of skills through the identification of pan and multi sector NOS.

Key to this are NOS that are built on trustworthy Labour Market Intelligence which will ensure that NOS remain relevant, recognised, and accessible. The four key principles which underpin the strategy will ensure that NOS remain:

- **Responsive**-Being employer -centric and a UK-wide product with a focus on pan and multi sector NOS which enable the transfer of skills and mobility of labour.
- **Recognised** -through compelling communications, for their role and purpose in underpinning the UK skills systems and inclusive, presented in a way that allows for multiple access and different uses.
- **Relevant and Current**-reflecting new skills demands and aligned to other standards and qualifications architecture.
- **Robust**- having evidence of impact and usage and systems and processes which are accessible, agile and trusted.

Following publication of the NOS Strategy seven Key Priorities for action were identified.

### **Priority 1 - Refresh the NOS Database/website to improve accessibility and appropriate presentation of NOS products.**

In May 2023 we successfully transferred the NOS database to a new Microsoft platform. There has been a period of 'bedding in' the new system and fixing data glitches. An issues form has been added to the administrator site to allow developers and approvers to quickly report any issues. Search and filtering functionality has been improved and SDS will be working with the developer to continue to make improvements to the site and database during 2024. A phase 2 programme of work will be scoped and consulted on before being undertaken in 2024.

### **Priority 2 - Enable transferability of skills across sectors through the definition of pan/multi sector NOS.**

In March 2023 the NOS GG published on the NOS website its [position statement](#) on Pan and Multi Sector NOS and its aim to establish and publish a set of pan/multi sector NOS alongside its intention to review and rationalise the number of NOS on the database.

The NOS GG will shortly be publishing a list of the relevant NOS which are duplicates and which will be removed from the NOS database or replaced with pan/multi sector NOS. Similarly, a list of legacy NOS which will be archived from the database will be published. Stakeholders will be encouraged to consider the impact of this on their products/services.

### **Priority 3 - Make better and more consistent use of LMI and other data sources in NOS development to support economic recovery and growth.**

In the autumn the NOS GG were supported by SDS to look at the priority sectors and identify the various LMI sources across the devolved nations and their uses. This will be reviewed with recommended sources and their uses being advised to stakeholders to enhance the annual process to identify priority NOS requiring development and review

A core aim of the NOS GG is to rationalise the large volume of NOS into broader clusters and transferable units. Recently the NOS GG has commissioned work to look at using AI machine learning to read across NOS to identify duplication as well as the potential for technology/AI to better assist NOS developments, largely within the scope of supporting rationalisation and standardising of NOS statements and text..

This initial test of concept will focus on the construction sector NOS. The output of the project will enable the NOS Governance Group and SDS to identify if this approach could be applied and scaled across all NOS sectors in support of the NOS Strategy.

### **Priority 4 - Ensure the continuous improvement of the end-to-end NOS process.**

The NOS GG made the commitment to further enhance the use and applicability of NOS as a primary benchmark of competence across the UK. Central to this is continuing to ensure the validity and currency of NOS as they relate to respective occupations across each sector, and maximising potential for NOS to be shared across multiple occupations and sectors.

To support this, several sectors were approached as part of a pilot to map existing current NOS to occupations within their sector to the most relevant Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC), 4-Digit Code and Title. In addition, sectors were asked to provide further information on factors affecting occupations across the sector more generally that the NOS GG should be considering. The outputs of this work are being reviewed and analysed and will help inform the demand process for NOS developments in the future.

In August this year we published the updated [Nos Quality Criteria 2024](#) which is designed to support and guide what SSOs must do to ensure that quality NOS are available and that their full benefits are realised. These Quality Criteria have been developed by the Standards and Framework Panel, which operates on behalf of the Devolved Governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and ensure all NOS meet the quality assurance requirements.

The NOS GG has committed to reviewing the NOS development approach, and in particular how this differentiates the development of Pan, Multi, sector and job specific credentials. Revised processes are aiming to be in place for commencement of the 24/25 annual demand cycle process.

### **Priority 5 - Develop and implement a robust evaluation and monitoring process.**

Recognising the need for greater harmony with and stronger links to the NOS strategy we looked at how we can build value and currency for both employers and learners alike. During 2023 we asked SSOs to consider their sector occupational priorities as part of an exercise to identify key areas for development.

In addition, we looked at labour market sources commonly used across the nations and at the

identification of shared and common areas across devolved governments.

We also looked at the coverage of individual SSCs and the utilisation of NOS across qualifications in each of the devolved governments.

This work will support the NOS Governance Group with a 'top-down' approach to planning and prioritisation.

### **Priority 6 - Develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy to support the delivery of the NOS strategy and action plan.**

The NOSGG is keen to embed a strategic approach to communications to ensure deeper, more meaningful messages reach the right audience at the right time. The NOSGG has developed a [Communications strategy](#) which uses the principle and priorities of the NOS strategy on which to build key messages. It clearly identifies the priority audiences for NOS through the creation of a stakeholder map helping deliver targeted messages.

Additionally, a range of communication [resources](#) have been developed using the principles outlined in the strategy which are available on the NOS website, for a variety of stakeholders to use.

### **Priority 7 - Continue to pursue clearer alignment with respective four nation and international occupational standards policy.**

During 23/24 the NOS GG continued to enhance understanding between NOS and other skills and standards frameworks available across the UK. This includes progressing the alignment between Scottish apprenticeship developments and NOS through two pilot initiatives and further commitment in 24/25 to align NOS and Scottish apprenticeship standards in select areas.

## **NOS GG – Stakeholder update: Quarter 2**

### **Progress on S&F procurement 23/24**

A total of 32 NOS Suites were commissioned for review/development this year: within occupations ranging from Sales, Electric & Hybrid Vehicle, and Water Treatment Processing and Control to Physical Special Effects and Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures. The full list of Suites under review is available at Annex 1.

12 contracts were issued for NOS that have been identified for translation into Welsh, within roles ranging from Fisheries to Pharmacy Services. Other nation-specific products, including SVQs and Apprenticeships for Northern Ireland, have also been commissioned.

### **NOS Database update**

The new NOS Database is currently in the bedding in phase: identified functional changes have now been made, including the issues identified when using the NOS Search function. In addition, all identified changes have been made to the developer and administration portal. There remains further work to cleanse some of the data and ensure that searches return the most recent versions of NOS. This work has already commenced and will be prioritised by SDS over coming weeks. Identification of a new hosting solution for the NOS Database is now underway, being overseen by SDS Procurement. Any further issues either to functionality or

data, should be reported to SDS directly via the following email address: [nos@sds.co.uk](mailto:nos@sds.co.uk)

### **LMI workshop findings**

NOS GG members met to look at the current process map for the inclusion and use of LMI in the NOS system. Members recognised there is lots of good practice already, however, commitments have been made in the NOS Strategy and the accompanying 5-year plan to improve on what is there. NOS GG identified the pros and cons of the current LMI approach, and identified key areas to improve, these included upgrading the triangulation of LMI evidence from a range of sources and the need to obtain a more comprehensive evidence base for NOS developments, to increase credibility in the demand statement process. NOS GG agreed that a more detailed demand statement template is required, with mandatory new fields including a more robust rationale. The three key stages on generating and utilising LMI were identified:

- The triangulation of LMI (July to September).
- The demand statement (October to December).
- The tendering process (January to March).

### **Pilot activities**

Following on from the LMI workshop, it was agreed that the NOS GG should commission several pieces of work this autumn, to improve the evidence base:

- An impartial summary of existing data and messages from high level “top down” LMI that is UK-wide, national, and regional.
- A one-off sector-wide activity to gather information on Sectoral Occupational Priorities (SOPs).
- A pilot by Lantra and Enginuity, will be undertaken using existing Scottish apprenticeships standards as a basis for reviewing the relevant NOS and providing guidance on what would be required to satisfy the quality criteria for NOS development.

The two bodies will be asked to chronicle their approach and findings, and to provide a template on how this may also work for other sectors in future.

An update on all pilot activities will be provided in the next quarterly newsletter.

A new draft template/rationale for the NOS demand statement will also be developed and circulated for immediate pilot usage; feedback will be invited from current suppliers. New fields will be added to the template document to generate more information on the NOS Suites in question, the occupations they underpin, and the source of evidence of demand from employers and other stakeholders within the sector.

### **Welsh Language NOS**

The Welsh Govt has recently commissioned Merfyn Morgan, Welsh Language NOS consultant, to establish any gaps in the current Welsh NOS provision, and to consider the translation of NOS for specific occupations. Merfyn and officials have been working closely with Qualifications Wales; gaps have been identified and translation costs and priorities are being determined. Officials and Merfyn will be engaging with the Qualifications Wales Awarding Body Welsh Language Support , to promote the availability of Welsh NOS and benefits of using

Welsh NOS when developing Welsh-medium qualifications, as an alternative to directly translating the English qualifications. Welsh NOS offer accurate and consistent translations of sector specific technical terminology. Using Welsh NOS can avoid repetition/duplication of translation efforts and ensure the content of Welsh-medium qualifications are of a high quality.

### **Pan/Multi sector NOS**

Work has been progressing on the identification of pan/multi sector NOS and analysis has been undertaken on NOS units which are deemed to be duplicates/near duplicates.

### **Annex One**

<b>NOS Development 2023-24</b>
Sales
Risk Management
Electric & Hybrid Vehicle
Storage of Hydrogen Product
Hydrogen Fuel Cell Manufacturer
Carbon Capture
Explosives Substances and Articles
Hydrogen Usage
Installation and maintenance of battery storage systems
Smart metering
Wind Turbine
Water Fittings Regulations/Byelaws Enforcement
Treatment Processing and Control in the Water Industry
IT (Database design and implementation)
IT support (service management and delivery)
IT (Data Science)
IT (Network Engineering)
IT (Solution development)
IT (Cloud engineering)
Energy Efficiency Assessment & Advice
Electrical Battery Manufacture
VFX
Physical Special Effects
Creative Media Generic
Radio and Audio Content Creation
Rail Engineering Permanent Way
Rail Eng Overhead Line Equipment construc 2013 Suite 2 and 3
Rail Engineering Signalling 2015 Suite 2 & 3
Rail Engineering Telecoms 2015 Suite 2 & 3
Rail Engineering Traction Rolling Stock Suite 2 & 3
Non-surgical Cosmetic Procedures
Multi Utility Network Construction (MUNC)
Engineering -Pilot
Trees and Timber- Pilot
<b>Qualification Title</b>



SVQ in Community Development at SCQF Level 5
SVQ in Community Development at SCQF Level 6
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations: Food Manufacturing Excellence at SCQF level 5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations: Food Manufacturing Excellence at SCQF level 6
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Craft Bakery Skills) at SCQF level 5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Dairy Skills) at SCQF level 5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Brewing Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Distribution Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Fish and Shellfish Processing Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Food Sales and Service Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Livestock Market Droving Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Meat and Poultry Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Food and Drink Operations (Production and Processing Skills) at SCQF L5
SVQ in Beauty Therapy at SCQF Level 5 (GL6Y 22)
SVQ in Beauty Therapy at SCQF Level 6 (GL71 23)
SVQ in Nail Services at SCQF Level 5 (GL70 22)
SVQ in Nail Services at SCQF Level 6 (GL72 23)
SVQ in Hairdressing and Barbering at SCQF Level 4

Welsh Translation of NOS
Energy Sector
Incident Management in Land-based Sector: Part 1
Fisheries Management: Part 1
Fisheries Management: Part 2
Incident Management in Land-based Sector: Part 2
Production Workflow
Live Events & Promotions
Set Crafts
Providing Independent Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advice and Advocacy Part 1
Providing Independent Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Advice and Advocacy Part 2
Pharmacy Services
Digital NOS
NI Apprenticeships
Travel Services L2
Travel Services L3

## Annex2