Strand One – Wood Commission

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) welcomes the opportunity to respond Strand One – Wood Commission – of the Education & Culture Committee’s inquiry into educational attainment. At the request of the Committee, in this submission we specifically look to:

1. How we think our work around the Commission recommendations will impact on teachers, schools and pupils.
2. Outline some challenges to be overcome to successfully implement the recommendations.

Within this context, we have sought to answer the questions posed by the Committee in its call for evidence.

SDS is Scotland’s skills body, focused on contributing to the delivery of the Scottish Government’s Economic and Skills Strategies. Our services are further shaped by the Scottish Government’s Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Strategy and the recent refresh of the Youth Employment Strategy, which aligns with the recommendations of the Commission on Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (DSYW). We set out our vision, future development and delivery plans in our Corporate Strategy (2012-15) and annual Operating Plan.

SDS’s key aims include the delivery of support to young people and small and medium sized businesses. SDS has a key role in both supporting people towards and into employment, and enabling individuals to progress within their jobs. SDS is working collaboratively with individuals, employers, training providers and partners throughout Scotland to raise aspirations and create a more skilled workforce, thus contributing to the Scottish Government’s overarching purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth with opportunities for all to flourish.

SDS’s role

The report’s overriding message is the continuing issue of youth unemployment in Scotland and the need to ensure that appropriate measures and interventions are in place to offer opportunities. SDS has a pivotal role to play across all six sections of the report. The key areas where SDS can have an impact are:

1. Provision of earlier CIAG in schools
2. Creation of work-based learning pathways
3. Advancing equalities
4. Extending and expanding Modern Apprenticeships (MAs)
5. Research and evaluation

Given the focus of this inquiry, in this submission we will primarily outline actions we are taking on points outlined in 1-3 above.

Our work in schools increasingly focuses on a more complete pathway, from engaging with young people earlier in their school experience and designing better, wider choices and supporting them through to their entry into sustained employment. Our work is also strongly influenced by our collation of robust market intelligence and our greater interaction with industry to factor in their projected demand for skills. Through our work with schools, we aim to:

- Equip school pupils with career management skills (CMS) from P7 onwards and engage them in CIAG activities to create a foundation upon which to make informed decisions when faced with subject choices and education and employment beyond school;
- Emphasise and further develop the links between CMS and the Curriculum for Excellence;
- Foster strong relationships between employers and schools, making room for the employer voice in curriculum design and engaging employers with their potential future workforce;
- Ensure that parents and carers of young people are integral to and have access to CIAG resources so that they can help their children to make informed decisions;
- Create clear career pathways for young people, giving them options beyond the traditional academic choices with increased focus on work based learning;
- Offer extended options to those young people who are most at risk of disengaging and least likely to progress;
- Provide interactive, accessible tools that enable young people, teachers and parents to connect with CIAG services 24 hours a day.

Last year the Scottish Government provided an extra £3m funding for 2014-15 to SDS to enable us to take work forward in respect of the Commission recommendations on MAs, careers and underrepresentation with immediate effect.

Q1. If the Wood report were fully implemented, what the likely impact on attainment in schools would be and which pupils would benefit most.

All pupils can benefit from the implementation of the report’s recommendations. An ongoing emphasis on vocational education has a positive impact on attainment regardless of an individual’s aptitude. We would however anticipate that pupils who prefer more practical and contextualised teaching methods will be more likely to maximise their potential. This is because young people who follow both vocational and academic pathways at school better understand what they are learning and can make more sense of the curriculum because they can apply it to the world of work. Academically successful pupils should therefore also be offered the opportunity to undertake vocational pathways in parallel/tandem with their academic learning. In our answer to question two, below, we outline how the foundation apprenticeship pilots we are already delivering with partners in Fife and West Lothian are enhancing vocational options in schools.

Earlier CIAG Intervention

In terms of raising attainment and encouraging pupils to consider all available pathways, recommendation two of the Commission provides the opportunity for SDS to provide earlier advice to pupils: “SDS, working with schools and local authorities, should aim to provide some early careers advice and world of work knowledge in S1 and S3 prior to the subject choice towards the end of S3.” Recommendation 13 also suggests that support for young people at risk of disengaging from education, and for those who have already done so, should focus on early intervention and wide ranging, sustained support. This should relate to labour market demand and should be focused on helping young people engage in labour-market-relevant pathways.

In an early response to these recommendations, we are already working closely with Education Scotland to create a framework that outlines the offer to young pupils from P7 onwards throughout the entirety of their remaining school career. We have already begun to engage with groups prior to S4 in order to prepare them for the world of work.

Research has found that 96 per cent of school Head Teachers report that SDS services have had either a major, or moderate, impact on school outcomes and that 87 per cent of pupils have achieved at least one employment, training or education benefit as a result of using SDS services. We however look forward to being able to do more as a result of earlier intervention. Offering a more comprehensive careers service earlier in schools will act as a catalyst at a crucial juncture in pupils’ lives, and provide them with early information on a combination of pathways, both

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4 Careers Advice in Schools (2014) [https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/1278787/head_teachers_tel_survey_2014_november.pdf](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/1278787/head_teachers_tel_survey_2014_november.pdf)
vocational and academic, with the aim of enhancing the career opportunities available to them post school. It will equip them with a greater understanding of Scottish industries and occupations that may otherwise have remained unconsidered.

Individuals will have multiple iterations in their career and there is a need for people to manage their own career and think about the currency of their career skills throughout their working lives. By working with partners to embed career management skills within the Curriculum for Excellence we can enable young people to build the skills and competencies required to move from school into their first transition and beyond.

By working in partnership with schools we can continue to work towards moving away from the idea of “prematurely categorising” pupils into “academic” and “non-academic” groups, and through this, realise the potential of all pupils, regardless of their aptitude. Young people can always achieve more, and should be presented with multiple pathways to success, taking into consideration the current and future needs of the labour market.

Targeted intervention, within a blended service model, is the most widely recommended option for CIAG. Our current offer provides all pupils from S1 to S6 with access to a Career Coach via school drop-in sessions, and to our customer contact centre, as well as 24/7 access to CIAG services through our careers web-service, My World of Work. From S3, the allocation of a Career Coach to young people with a coordinated support plan enhances the support provided by SDS.

In addition to our existing offer, our ambition going forward for CIAG is in line with the objectives of the Scottish Government’s Youth Employment Strategy and will assist in raising attainment for all pupils. We intend to:

- Roll out earlier careers intervention in schools, understanding that there are key points where SDS should be involved, e.g. during subject choice;
- Further develop our web based careers service My World Of Work to make it even more accessible to all groups;
- Develop tools for teaching staff to aid them in gaining their own career coaching skills;
- Be more actively involved with parents, given their key influencing role in their child’s life;
- Work more closely with parent bodies such as the National Parent Forum and the Scottish Parent Teacher Council.

Employer engagement will also be very important. Learning Through Work Week, held in November last year, saw SDS, training providers, MAs, employers and partners promote the benefits of work-based learning, with a focus on Modern Apprenticeships, to over 300 schools across Scotland. This was just the first step in increasing awareness of the different pathways available to young people, assisting schools to offer enhanced vocational provision and establishing employer/school links. SDS is uniquely placed to support both employers and schools to make these links. Going forward we have ambitious plans to create multiple employer links with schools. We also provide additional marketing materials for schools which highlight routes into work, showcasing employers and young people.

**Challenging career perceptions and raising attainment of all pupils**

**Parity of esteem**

A challenge to raising attainment for all, as a result of offering both vocational and academic pathways, is the considerable attitudinal change which is needed towards the value and worth of vocational education by Education Institutions and key influencers of young people, including school staff and parents. Altering perspectives will be very important. Currently vocational pathways, including MAs, are highly valued learning routes for some of the traditional industries,

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but there still remains a perception in many occupations that the work-based route is of lesser value. There is frequently a lack of recognition of vocational qualification value for entry to Further and Higher Education Institutions and a lack of understanding amongst them, of the worth of such qualifications by employers. Yet, this is set against a dichotomy of employers placing a great deal of value on work-readiness (attitudinal and behavioural skills) and practical skills in their new recruits which are already well-proven to be gained through such work-based learning routes.

The higher tariff scores which schools attract for academic achievement could be considered as a barrier to achieving parity of esteem. For example, a young person going onto study the Certificate of Work Readiness will attract 50 per cent fewer tariff points for a school than a pupil taking Highers. We know that an average of 10 per cent of those who go to University will drop out in the first year, demonstrating that an alternative - perhaps a combination of vocational and academic pathways - might be more suitable for some pupils.

The Commission highlights that there is scope to highlight the quality and value of college provision to parents, schools and employers to improve perceptions and understanding of how colleges contribute to the Scottish economy and development of our young workforce. SDS will aim to take an increasing role in the promotion of this important message. We know that one of the biggest influencers on a young person’s career is their parents, and the Commission acknowledges this “close contact must be maintained with parents who can significantly influence career choices.” However, as there is still a long way to go in terms of schools being in a position to place more value on vocational education, it will be challenging to change the perception of parents and their children towards it.

SDS work to make an impact on perceptions includes promoting the benefits of vocational education to parents and carers of young people through a dedicated site on My World of Work, called My World of Work for Parents. The site provides information to help parents and carers of young people to support their child as they go through school and make choices about their future. It includes information on key dates in the school calendar, subject choices, university courses, MAs, advice articles and videos. The site encourages parents to look at the content with their child.

Learning Through Work Week and our MA Ambassadors, as well as Scottish Apprenticeship Week, are all key initiatives and ways in which we can aim to challenge and change perceptions. These initiatives directly link to Q6 of the Committee’s call for evidence “closer links should be established between schools, colleges and employers (for example, “all 363 secondary schools in a long term partnership with employers within 3 years”)."

Gender segregation

Recommendation 26 suggests that schools, local authorities, employers, SDS and equality groups should develop materials to deliver career management skills which demonstrate and emphasise diversity in the workplace.

By further broadening the horizons of young women in schools, through earlier careers intervention and Foundation Apprenticeships, we can encourage them to widen their skills base and move into careers which they may not have previously considered, such as traditionally male-dominated sectors. Opening up these opportunities in the world of work can help to raise attainment amongst young women who may have wanted to enter a sector, but did not have the confidence to do so. We have been undertaking a considerable amount of work aimed at addressing gender bias in certain career pathways with schools, Training Providers and with employers for some time. However perceptions in this area are difficult to change and require a concerted effort, with partners, over time.

6 https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-services/certificate-of-work-readiness/
8 http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/section/parents-and-carers
Foundation Apprenticeships offer pupils the opportunity to take part in work-based learning while in full-time education, boosting their employability skills and increasing their chances of moving into the workplace upon leaving school. More information on our foundation apprenticeship pilots in Fife and West Lothian is outlined below. As part of the pilots we have been working closely with employers to improve gender balance in their recruitment from schools and colleges. The programme should produce more role models who will encourage young people from both genders to progress into careers where gender imbalance has long been the norm.

SDS are undertaking some baseline research to frame the challenge of occupational segregation in relation to the MA programme and identify, more specifically, areas for further investment for us. This research will be completed by the end of March 2015. In the meantime, we are investing in a small number of projects which are at various stages of completion. They will all be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in both attracting young women to and supporting them into non-traditional careers including through MA programmes, particularly in STEM subject areas where women are traditionally very under-represented. This evaluation will look at both quantitative as well and qualitative findings (for example, what can be done to change mindsets about career choices and consider traditionally male dominated options, what can be done to influence employers about the benefits of a diverse workforce). Longer term project activity will depend upon the findings and recommendations from our baseline research, identified above. However, there will be a focus on actions aimed at addressing longer-term cultural and attitudinal issues - from both the supply side (young people and their key influencers) and the demand side (employers) - as well as a range of targeted interventions aimed at boosting representation. SDS is very clear about the importance of avoiding the creation of multiple, un-related and isolated initiatives in relation to this challenging problem. We are therefore working closely with partners and stakeholders to look at how a joined up approach to these issues can be tackled through a systemic approach. To this end, we work closely with stakeholders and experts with expertise in this area including gender-representing organisations (such as Close the Gap, Engender, Equate) and Education bodies. For example, we are working closely with Education Scotland in relation to the STEM agenda within the school phase and with the Scottish Funding Council in relation to the challenges faced within college and University provision.

Marketing campaigns are also important. As of 9 March we will be running a campaign to promote the range of opportunities open to young people and encourage them to consider MAs in roles traditionally regarded as male dominated. By highlighting the stories of female apprentices we want to inspire young women to consider Modern Apprenticeships and work-based learning as valuable career options.

We also have a network of MA Ambassadors from across Scotland who, as well promote MAs to young people, parents and other companies, specifically highlight equal access to MAs. The Ambassador Programme provides a network of people who can share their experience and knowledge with others and help others to understand the benefits of earning-while-you-learn. Ambassadors are individual MAs or businesses who can promote MAs through media opportunities, events and supporting campaigns.

This work is also in line with Recommendation 12 of the report that STEM should sit at the heart of the development of Scotland's young workforce.

Q2. The report aims to significantly enhance vocational content “without splitting young people off into separate streams at school age”. What are the disadvantages of such an approach would be and how it could be avoided.

The Commission highlights that the range of provision in schools could be improved for those less suited to academic pathways that are staying on at school beyond S4 and have little option for

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11 http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-services/modern-apprenticeships/modern-apprenticeship-ambassadors/
progression. There is a general call for industry recognised vocational qualifications to be phased into senior schools, in tandem with equivalent academic qualifications, delivered in partnership with colleges and included in school performance reports.

To this end, SDS has worked with partners to lead on the creation of Foundation Apprenticeship pathways (pilots) to support work-based learning career pathways. The introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships will give all pupils, of all aptitudes, the opportunity to develop employability skills and ensure they are not split into different streams. Learning is in conjunction with academic qualifications and open to all pupils, broadening all of their career pathways. They should also therefore go some way to helping achieve parity of esteem between vocational and academic education.

Two Foundation Apprenticeship pathfinders in engineering are already providing a wide range of pupils in their senior phase (S4 to S6) the opportunity to complete elements of an MA, while still at school, giving them a qualification that sits at the same level as Highers on the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) (nationally recognised qualifications at SCQF Levels 5 and 6, and align with the requirements of the existing MA framework at SCQF Levels 6 and 7). Qualifications are industry recognised and employer engagement provides enhanced work experience. Young people who complete these qualifications should still be able to make choices of either seeking full-time employment as an MA and entering the workforce on this programme with advanced standing or choosing another route.

Around 50 pupils from six schools in the Fife area have started Foundation Apprenticeships with Fife College, with 32 pupils from four schools in West Lothian having started with West Lothian College. SDS is already working with these schools and colleges to support their next intake.

Foundation Apprentices in these pathfinder projects are able to complete ‘core’ elements of apprenticeships in school during two half days per week or one evening at college campuses. A significant number of employers, schools, colleges and Training Providers have expressed an interest in the programme.

Although our pilots only started in the summer of 2014, their initial success means that we are keen to build on this momentum. We are having conversations with over 40 stakeholders about their further roll out. Following evaluation of the pathfinders, it is hoped that further demand-led apprenticeships in key sectors will be made available to a number of other local authorities.

The sectors being considered initially are:

- Engineering
- Energy (including oil and gas)
- Financial services
- Health and social care
- Construction

We would estimate that there would be around 20 to 40 pupils following each pathfinder, though the number will vary depending on the geographical area they are being rolled out in.

Our Skills Investment Plans identify the future skills needs within Scotland’s key sectors by working with partners and using labour market information. The industry sectors selected for Foundation Apprenticeships reflect our aim to align educational and training opportunities with employment projections, as per recommendation 18\textsuperscript{12} of the Commission.

\textit{The challenge of recognition of work-based learning qualifications}

\textsuperscript{12}p51, DSYW Final Report \url{http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00451746.pdf}
The learning of young people undertaking these foundation apprenticeships will widen their skill sets to include many of the features sought by employers, including employability skills and experience of the workplace. The academic parity of the programme should by recognised as equivalent for entry to other more traditional academic routes should young people not progress to an MA. Vocational qualifications are recognised and highly valued by industry, as they are designed by the sector in order to meet skills demand. The recognition of non-academic qualifications by the Higher Education sector as part of their conditions for entry will be important to the success of foundation apprenticeships and their take up by pupils of all aptitudes.

Q3. Whether any measures other than those advocated in the report are needed to ensure more young people leave school with “high level vocational qualifications which have strong currency in the labour market”.

Working with key influencers

We have discussed the significant challenge of achieving parity of esteem between academic and vocational pathways above. Work with key influencers in the school system will be crucial to the successful implementation of the recommendations in this respect. We are currently in the process of mapping who would be best to engage with and in what manner.

Further prescriptive guidance

We would suggest that further prescriptive guidance for partners on the implementation of the recommendations would be helpful, especially in order to ensure a consistent approach across the country, where appropriate.

Commitment of adequate resource

Vocational education can often be expensive and therefore it needs to be adequately resourced by partners, both in terms of timetabling, transportation, industry standard equipment and resources. There is also often a requirement for low staff:pupil ratios for practical based activity, as well as a requirement to ensure that suitably qualified and trained staff are delivering the vocational programmes. Given that vocational courses on offer will target school pupils, there may also be additional health and safety requirements for schools, employers and colleges to take into account. Strong and synergistic partnership working between schools, Local Authorities, colleges, private Training Providers, SDS, third sector organisations and, of course, employers, will be required to ensure a scalable system can be sustained in local regions.

Furthermore, past-learning from vocational delivery has shown some evidence of pupils having to contribute financially to ensure their participation (e.g. purchase of protective equipment) it is therefore particularly important to be mindful that those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds could miss out on opportunities if programmes are not adequately resourced.

Q4. Whether the report – which includes a section on improving equalities – places enough emphasis on pupils’ socio-economic inequalities and how these could be overcome.

Enabling employer links with schools in deprived areas

SDS uses a risk matrix approach to CIAG which is based on a range of social, economic and geographical data, to identify customer need and determine the level of service offer required. This allows us to target those who need the most support, with the aim of providing intensive intervention to pupils who need extra help. This would include pupils form areas of multiple deprivation. Earlier CIAG intervention in schools will continue to utilise this approach.

Contacts with schools are often made as a result of parent/employer connections. SDS has a key role in assisting schools to make links with employers in catchment areas where socio-economic
inequalities exist. Some schools in deprived areas struggle to make employer links because there may not be a parent who is working in the household. Other schools, by comparison, can organise work experience placements relatively easily because the majority of parents are closer to the job market. A lack of employer connections in poorer areas also affects pupils' access to career networks. Our career coaching approach emphasises the importance of building networks as part of an individuals’ career management skills, to assist pupils in their career path beyond school. This will continue to be a key focus going forward, and extra assistance will be given to pupils who would be less likely to find opportunities to engage with employers. We work closely with schools, parents and partners, such as the Federation of Small Businesses and the local Chamber of Commerce, to help build local networks. Learning Through Work Week, as outlined above, was also a first step in creating stronger links between local employers and schools across Scotland.

Enabling those from under-represented groups to enhance their career prospects

In deprived areas there are typically more young people from BME communities, those who are disabled, young carers and young people in care. In order to support those from these groups to enhance their career prospects, we are undertaking activity to help address under-representation in our training programmes and challenge perceptions about vocational education. This work is being done in alignment with the recommendations of the Commission and was underway prior to its commencement.

The aim is that by challenging perceptions about vocational pathways, that we can increase their numbers on our programmes. Unsurprisingly, parity of esteem is a particular challenge for us in terms of some BME communities. It is also difficult to raise awareness among young people from BME backgrounds as there are a number of different of small organisations with short-term funding working in various geographies, often working in isolation from one another and statutory services. We however continue to engage small organisations working with the BME groups and raise awareness of the different pathways available.

We have undertaken a significant amount of activity on advancing equalities in alignment with the Commission’s recommendations, focussing on actions aimed at addressing longer-term cultural and attitudinal issues - from the supply side (young people and their key influencers) and the demand side (employers) - as well as a range of short term, targeted interventions aimed at boosting representation. These activities have been determined through engagement with and listening to key stakeholder and community groups thus far:

- **Pilot work** - Funding developmental, pilot work to trial approaches to increasing attracting those from underrepresented groups to our employability and Modern Apprenticeship programmes. The overall ambition of our pilot activity is to shape our future activities by capturing, recording and sharing good practice in engaging individuals, communities and employers in training. Pilot activities and projects have been shaped through our continuous engagement with and listening to key partner organisations;
- **Capacity building** - Developing the capacity of our contracted Training Providers through a range of activities encompassed within our “Get Connected” initiative - including CPD workshops and awareness raising of equalities issues; Supporting all SDS colleagues to increase their current understanding and awareness of equalities issues;
- **Research** - To ensure that our activities are well informed and effective, we are undertaking research to frame the challenge of, and identify what further actions SDS and partners should take in, widening participation on our various programmes;
- **Targeted marketing campaigns** - marketing and communication activity is underway to promote employability programmes and Modern Apprenticeships to underrepresented groups.

One of the main challenges for our work with employers is around emphasising the benefits of a diverse workforce and therefore influencing their recruitment to take positive action. As it is the employer selects the MA for employment, a great deal of our work will be around supporting
employers in relation to the benefits of positive action in their recruitment practice. This requires effort and commitment with partners over time, which makes this a long term commitment.

Whilst it is relatively straightforward to record information in relation to gender, historically it has been difficult for us to accurately record equalities information due to self-declaration of other protected characteristics. We work with Training Providers to build their skills in supporting young people to record accurate equalities information when registering on a programme, the information remains self-reported and young people can record “prefer not to say” against most categories. Evidence gathered from Training Providers suggests young people often do not declare they have a disability or an additional support need for fear of it affecting their employment opportunities or disadvantaging them in some other way such as creating a barrier to entry and/or progression. Support needs can emerge (e.g. literacy support or undiagnosed dyslexia) but the young person may not feel this is a disability and could record ‘no’ against the category “Do you consider yourself to have a disability?”. It is therefore very likely that our figures for those with a disability are actually much higher than currently reported. Work is being undertaken to encourage a culture where disclosure of a disability and additional support needs is encouraged and supported.

A specific action for us going forward is therefore to support Training Providers to give more help to young people during the registration process on training programmes. We also aim to use our learning from the collection of this data to ensure that we address any issues of underrepresentation in foundation apprenticeships at an early stage.

Q5. Whether there would have to be significant reorganisation in schools to accommodate all the proposed changes (for example, to enable more links with colleges/ to have a greater focus on work placements);

**Timetabling**

Differences in timetabling - between schools, and between colleges and schools - is an issue which we would suggest needs some consideration. In order for schools to more easily accommodate work experience placements and/or vocational training with colleges and employers, it may be sensible to consider a review of the current school timetable structure. A flexible, but consistent approach to school and college timetabling across Scotland, and within local authorities or regions where needed, could avoid duplication of resource and provide more options to pupils. For example, one school may act as a central point for pupils from many schools, but their timetables need to coincide with each other and with the regional college in order to make it work. West Lothian Council and North Lanarkshire Council are examples of where this approach is already working well. As a national body with a local focus, SDS is uniquely placed to act as a broker between schools, colleges and employers on this issue.

**Consistent approach to work placements**

SDS’s remit does not extend to sourcing work placements for schools, as this is the responsibility of schools and local authorities. However, as outlined above, we would intend to commit to helping establish a minimum number of links with schools in our school partnership agreements. We have a role in facilitating work based learning with employers, including as part of the delivery of foundation apprenticeships, towards which we will take a consistent and strategic approach.

A consistent and centrally co-ordinated (at Local Authority or regional level) approach to work experience placement operational arrangements for schools would be a positive development. This would place less pressure on the same local businesses to provide placements (especially in remote areas) and make it easier for schools to source appropriate opportunities for pupils, allow the development of good quality health and safety induction procedures for work places and the development of regionally supported databases of participating employers. Again, there are many examples of where this is already working well, such as in Fife and Dumfries & Galloway. In terms of remote areas where there are evidently fewer opportunities for work experience, partners and
schools may need to think more creatively, such as running a school fete as a business, so that pupils can still experience the world of work without having to travel further afield.

Q6. What action and resources would be required to deliver the specific recommendations aimed at schools and teachers, for example:
  o teachers’ skills and knowledge may need to develop in certain areas (for example, “to better understand employability and modern work skills”);
  o closer links should be established between schools, colleges and employers (for example, “all 363 secondary schools in a long term partnership with employers within 3 years”).

Labour Market Information

Over the past year we have put significant effort behind the drive to improve the evidence base on skills, particularly at a regional level, through the development of further Skills Investment Plans\(^{13}\) (SIPs) in the key sectors and Regional Skills Assessments\(^{14}\). The RSAs were published in October last year. We have engaged extensively with partners, industry leadership groups, Sector Skills Councils and other employer representative bodies across Scotland to gather the range of economic, labour market and education and training data available. This knowledge informs career advice and the content of My World of Work, as well as helps to inform investment decisions, particularly those made through the Scottish Funding Council’s Regional Outcome Agreements (ROAs) with regional colleges.

It is important to ensure that the acquisition of skills and careers knowledge does not become an unnecessary burden for teachers. Our aim is to provide teachers with up to date and easily digestible information on the local and national labour market so that they can gain a more in depth knowledge of employability and modern work skills, without experiencing an increased workload.

Bringing careers to life for teachers

Connecting education to the world of work is a key link which needs to continue to progress. A blended curriculum will only be successful if teachers have knowledge of different industries and jobs. In addition to SDS, key partners such as Local Authorities and Colleges have a role in bringing careers into the classroom and allowing teachers to undertake taster courses in various industries so that teaching staff can gain hands on experience of the world of work. Many colleges run these types of courses already.

We propose to offer teachers the opportunity to build their own CIAG coaching and management skills through learning modules with the SDS Academy, as outlined in our answer to question one.

Learning Through Work Week, Scottish Apprenticeship Week, My World of Work Partnerzone and My World of Work Live at the Glasgow Science Centre\(^{15}\) are all other ways in which we currently promote the world of work and different careers to teachers.

Conclusion

We hope that this has provided the Committee with an insight into the breadth of our activity with schools going forward, in alignment with the recommendations of the Commission, as well as some of the challenges which we, and our partners, may face in the implementation of the recommendations. We look forward to following the inquiry going forward.

Skills Development Scotland
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\(^{13}\) [https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/resources/skills-investment-plans/](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/resources/skills-investment-plans/)

\(^{14}\) [https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/resources/regional-skills-assessments/](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/resources/regional-skills-assessments/)

\(^{15}\) [http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/gsc](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/gsc)