1. Background

1.1. The National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) is the leading charity in Scotland dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. In Scotland, we have a dedicated team based in Glasgow and led by Heather Gray, Director.

1.2. NDCS provides a dedicated Family Support Service across the country. Our early year’s project, Your Child, Your Choices, delivers family sign language courses across specific geographical locations. NDCS also commissions research to inform the sector and engages in policy and campaigning activity to help make deaf children and their families a political priority.

1.3. Please note that NDCS uses the term “deaf” to mean all types and levels of deafness.

This response will focus on the following question posed by the Education and Culture Committee:

(Question 5) Assessment of the impact of targeted measures to engage with those young people not currently achieving positive destination on leaving school (e.g. disabled and looked after young people)

2. Context

While the numbers of deaf young people reaching positive post school destinations has generally been improving, the pace of this improvement is slow and there is still a gap between their destinations and those of their hearing peers. It is critical that all young people are given the same opportunities to succeed after school and reach their full potential through training, employment or further and higher education.

The below graphs reflect the latest data from the Scottish Government’s school leavers’ destinations data for the past five years including the latest for 2013/14, published in 2015. The data reflects the destinations of ‘pupils with a hearing impairment’, ‘pupils with no additional support need’ and ‘all pupils’.

Higher Education

Last year, 24.7% of deaf leavers entered Higher Education compared with 39% of all pupils.
**Further Education**

Last year, 45.7% of deaf school leavers entered Further Education compared with 26.5% of all pupils.

**Employment**

Last year, 12.4% of deaf school leavers entered employment compared with 21.1% of all pupils.
Training, Voluntary Work or Activity Agreements

As the data below shows, there was a very low take up among deaf leavers in training, voluntary work and activity agreements in the 2013/14 cohort:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deaf pupils</th>
<th>All pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Agreement</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Modern Apprenticeships and Employability Fund:

Our understanding of the number of deaf young people undertaking Modern Apprenticeships and the Employability Fund is limited, as we are not aware of data that is collected on this particular category.

The under-representation of disabled young people on Modern Apprenticeships and the Employability Fund Programmes is well documented by Skills Development Scotland and across sectors. According to Skills Development Scotland’s Modern Apprenticeships Statistics: full year report 2014/15, “on the basis of self-reporting, the Skills Development Scotland Modern Apprenticeship management system found that in 2014/15, 103 (0.41%) of Modern Apprenticeship starts declared a disability”.

In order to measure the impact of targeted measures to engage with disabled young people, there is a clear need to improve data collection of individuals’ Additional Support Needs. There is scope to learn from practices in England where there is stronger data collection around categories of disability and a marked increase in numbers of disabled people participating in Modern Apprenticeships has been identified.

If data collection is to continue to rely on self-disclosure, it is crucial that young people feel like they are able to disclose disability without fear of negative implications. Riddell et al (2010) found that students in the UK were willing to disclose their disability while at university in order to receive additional support but chose not to disclose to a
subsequent employer.¹ According to Fordyce et al (2013) some deaf young people perceive employers’ lack of deaf awareness as a barrier to making successful transitions². NDCS welcomes the recent announcement that SDS will be carrying out further research to understand more about why disabled participants on Modern Apprenticeships do not disclose their disability.

There is scope for Skills Development Scotland to engage in more targeted work with employers and training providers to raise about how to support disabled young people. This could discussion about the support available to employers, and benefits such as Access to Work.

4. Careers guidance and information

*My World of Work*

Skills Development Scotland’s My World of Work website is an excellent resource for young people to help them find the right information and advice they need in their career development. How accessible this information is clearly has a significant impact in ensuring all young people, including those who are disabled or deaf, have an equal opportunity to benefit.

NDCS has welcomed the opportunity to work with SDS and other deaf sector organisations on developing the new version of the My World of Work website. We have recommended that the site improves its accessibility for deaf young people through: increased use of British Sign Language, more tailored information on useful topics such as additional supports and Access to Work, and more signposting to useful national and local organisations.

*Template for Success*

NDCS has worked in partnership with SDS and Donaldson’s School to produce the Template for Success, which is a toolkit for professionals supporting deaf young people moving on from school. The document has received very positive feedback from those using it, particularly Teachers of the Deaf.

NDCS has been working locally, particularly across the three Ayrshire authorities, to embed the Template for Success. However Teachers of the Deaf there have noted the challenge they face in making mainstream schools and practitioners aware of the document and supporting them to use it. Given that 80% of deaf young people are educated in mainstream schools it is critical practitioners there are aware of the tools available to help them support all young people. There is further scope for Skills Development Scotland to raise awareness of this resource and others like it.

The work NDCS has been carrying out locally in Ayrshire is part of our ‘Statement of Intent’ approach to supporting local authorities. This includes NDCS offers of support

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across three strands, to create improvement in how deaf young people moving on from school are supported to achieve positive destinations. This includes:

- Promoting positive **emotional health and wellbeing** for deaf young people. This is achieved by delivering a Healthy Minds programme for deaf young people.
- Supporting **effective transitional planning** for deaf young people by embedding the Template for Success document across sectors.
- Developing effective **local professional networks** which support deaf young people’s post school transitions. This is achieved by setting up a local transitions forum where professionals from across sectors can regularly come together to identify and address issues in relation to deaf young people. SDS representatives have been involved in this Forum.

NDCS is currently carrying out work to evaluate the impact of the Statement of Intent in Ayrshire. This evaluation will inform the next phase of rolling the Statement of Intent approach out to other local authorities, many of whom have already requested to take on the Statement of Intent.

We would welcome the opportunity to brief SDS and the Education Committee further, following the evaluation of this work. There is clear scope in the future for SDS to support the roll out of the Statement of Intent in order to broaden its reach and impact.

Katie Rafferty