

James Dornan MSP
Convenor of Education & Skills Committee
T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

30 September 2016

Dear Mr Dornan

Thank you for inviting SDS to attend the Education & Skills Committee's evidence session on 7th September 2016. I hope members found our written submission and contribution to discussions helpful.

Following the meeting, we were asked to provide Committee members with the following information:

- Web link to Strategic Skills Pipeline
- Web link to our Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships
- Modern Apprenticeship statistics on individuals with protected characteristics

Web link to the Strategic Skills Pipeline

During the Committee session I explained that the Scottish Government's policy structure includes a strategic skills and employability skills pipeline, which is segmented into Stages one to four. Details of the employability skills pipeline can be found at the following link:

<http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/employability-pipeline/the-employability-pipeline/>

I thought it would also be helpful to also provide some context on the stages and interventions within it. The Strategic Skills Pipeline (SPP) has been developed as a framework to support the effective delivery of employability services in Scotland. Please refer to Appendices A and B which provide more detail on each stage and the types of provision offered.

Employability Fund activity aims to support employability, vocational training and employment opportunities linked to the local labour market which fall within Stages two to four of the strategic skills and employability pipeline. Employability Fund activity facilitates the progression of participants along the SPP into sustainable employment. Activity is differentiated to meet the needs of individual participants and job opportunities available, and complements other publically funded provision available within the Local Employability Partnership (LEP). We work closely with partners to ensure that Employability Fund services are developed and delivered at a local level.

Web link to Modern Apprenticeships Equalities Action Plan

Our Equalities Action Plan, published in December 2015, is available at the following link:

https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/40691/2869_sds_equalities_action_plan_digital_v7.pdf

The action plan demonstrates our proactive approach to delivering our Equality Outcomes and National Training Programme Equality Impact assessment action plans, by setting out our equality strategy for the next five years. We are the first UK nation to devise an action plan such as this.

It was developed using stakeholder feedback from employers and partners (such as BEMIS, Close the Gap and Capability Scotland) working with young people, to learn from their experience and offer practical steps towards creating more diverse workforces that are inclusive and supportive. We also used existing evidence highlighting factors affecting participation in Modern Apprenticeships. Many of the issues that create inequality are society-wide and one agency alone cannot address the challenges and barriers faced by under-represented groups in relation to the world of work. Delivery of the plan will therefore rely on strong, sustained partnership working with educational partners, 3rd sector and employers.

The plan outlines the challenges faced and the actions we will undertake with partners to remove some of the barriers, real or perceived, that have traditionally prevented young people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups or those who have come from a care background, from participating in Modern Apprenticeships. Alongside this, it will address gender imbalance within Modern Apprenticeships, while embracing the wider goal of improving equality of access for all. By targeting these key groups we can deliver equality and diversity within Modern Apprenticeships and the young workforce in Scotland generally.

Specific objectives exist for the four target groups and are as follows:

Disability Objectives

Support young disabled people through transition periods in their education and into employment

Improve the successful uptake of Modern Apprenticeships by young disabled people

Gender Objectives

Reduce gender stereotyping and gender segregation in career choices and occupational routes chosen by young people in education

Reduce gender segregation in Modern Apprenticeship frameworks

Minority Ethnic Groups Objectives

Broaden the range of career pathways taken by young people from Scotland's Minority Ethnic communities

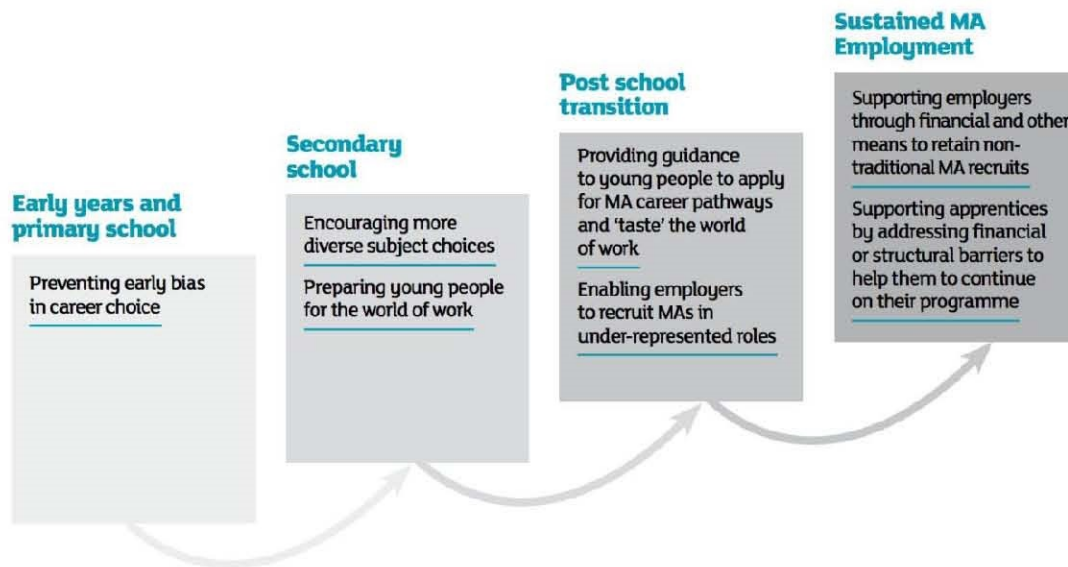
Improve the successful uptake of Modern Apprenticeships by individuals from Minority Ethnic communities

Care Leavers Objectives

Support young people in care and leaving care through transition periods in their education and into employment

Improve the successful uptake of Modern Apprenticeships by young people in care and leaving care

Given that the plan also embraces the wider goal of improving equality of access for all, it includes activities that will influence the career choices of young people. Activities in the Equalities Action Plan map to the Skills Development Scotland regional partnership pipeline. This pipeline approach is built around equality of access to support work based learning pathways and we are working with partners to realise the strengths of a joined-up regional approach. Please refer to graphic below for more information.



Modern Apprenticeship statistics on individuals with protected characteristics

Our latest equalities Modern Apprenticeship Statistics (Quarter 1 2016-17) can be found on the statistics page of our website at the following link:

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/42017/modern-apprenticeship-statistics-q-1-2016-17.pdf>

I would recommend that members refer to tables in the main summary document accessible from the web link above.

I hope members find the additional information useful. We look forward to meeting members again at the budget scrutiny section in November. If in the meantime you have any additional questions regarding the information above please do not hesitate to contact me at corporate.affairs@sds.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Gordon McGuinness
Director of Industry and Enterprise Networks
Skills Development Scotland

Appendix A- Strategic Skills Pipeline Stage and Indicative Nature of Provision

Stage	Aim	Work Experience Requirements *	Output measures**
1	Reaching out to individuals, supporting them into regular activity and positive routines, and helping them to connect with others.	Work experience not mandatory at this stage.	Progression to Stage 2
2	Build employability skills, personal development and core skills.	Some form of work experience is mandatory, the nature of which can vary.	Individual achievement of SCQF credit rated personal development/ employability/ core skill provision of at least 18 SCQF credit points at SCQF Level 3 or above
3	Support individuals to prepare for and sustain employment, including entry to Modern Apprenticeships.	A work experience placement is a mandatory requirement at this stage.	Individual achievement of SCQF credit rated vocational/employability/ core skill provision of at least 18 SCQF credit points at SCQF Level 4 or above or; Individual achievement of a Group Award where employer opinion is integral to attainment of at least 34 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4.
4	Enable individuals to access sustained employment through industry specific training.	Work experience may be incorporated, as appropriate.	Achievement of SDS approved industry-led certification as entered on the Individual Training Plan

* Work experience includes: work experience placement; work shadowing; work taster; job experience; volunteering experience.

** Although not mandatory, SDS will continue to encourage the delivery of appropriate certification at every stage of the EF activity through output payments. For Stage 2 and 3, the SCQF provides assurance that learning is being measured and is informing progression; reflecting the Scottish Government's position as articulated in the Post 16 reform programme.

Skills Pipeline

