

Mr Stephen Kerr
Convenor
Education, Children and Young People Committee

10 June 2022

Dear Mr Kerr

I am writing in response to points raised by Mr Bob Doris, MSP, during Education Scotland's evidence session to the Education, Children and Young People Committee on 11 May 2022.

Members sought additional information on positive destinations for school leavers, and ongoing participation. In particular more information was sought on how data is maintained and monitored on the subsequent participation in education, employment or training by young people.

Young people's participation in positive destinations beyond school is measured through the Annual Participation Measure (APM). This indicator measures the proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment over the whole year (1 April - 31 March). The APM is published by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and uses the shared data set held by SDS on their Customer Support System (CSS). The headline participation status is based on the classification with the highest number of days over the year.

Participation is defined as: School pupil; Further Education; Higher Education; Modern Apprenticeship; Full-Time Employment; Part-Time Employment; Self-Employed; Employability Fund Stages 2-4; Activity Agreements (2016-2019); Other Formal Training; Personal/ Skills Development; and Voluntary Work. The indicator provides a measure of the status of the wider 16-19 cohort – not just those who have left school. This helps to inform policy, planning and service delivery. In practice, this means that each young person from aged 16 is counted/tracked annually in every subsequent year until they reach age 19. It therefore allows for a degree of longitudinal tracking.

The Participation Measure data set is the shared status data for young people aged 16-19 held on the SDS CSS. Partners who input to the shared data set are SDS Corporate Funding Information & Processing System, Local Authorities, Schools, Colleges, Student Awards Agency Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and Department for Work and Pensions. Central to the creation of the shared dataset is the sharing of information to allow partners to identify what young people are doing in 'real time' throughout their 16-19 journeys. The data allows SDS and partners to

improve service delivery and provide a more tailored offer, helping to identify the right time to engage with and support young people as they move between destinations and make transitions. It also allows for intervention planning when a young persons' circumstances change and they are no longer in a positive destination.

SDS undertake (in partnership through Opportunities for All) tracking of progress of 16-19 year olds, and for publishing the APM based on the data they hold. It is possible to track cohorts through the use of APM, to a certain extent. However, there are limitations in the system as it does not fully reflect changes in address e.g. where a young person relocates to another local authority area. The use of the system also varies across the country, albeit there is increasing dialogue with school/local authority staff, college/university and SDS to consider circumstances in each locality.

The monitoring of destinations is in place. In principle, every 16-19 year old who can be contacted will receive support either from within their destination or from SDS as they drop out or transition to continue to participate positively. For example, the APM is used to highlight withdrawal from college and university courses, access to high quality career advice and guidance, and the sustainability of destinations overall. There are clearly links to the wider learner journey and a young persons' experience and preparation at school. There is growing awareness for post-16 providers to use the information to tailor provision and support in the context of meeting needs. Similarly schools are increasingly tailoring their curriculum to meet the needs of young people (not least those with additional support needs) to provide appropriate pathways for young people. This includes using a wider range of vocational awards and foundation apprenticeships.

We believe that there are opportunities to utilise Scottish Attainment Challenge funding creatively to enhance current arrangements and address identified local requirements (including destinations/participation for those in SIMD quintile 1). One of the stretch aims is a Participation measure: proportion of 16 – 19 year olds in education, employment training based on AMP produced by SDS. Including this particular aim will help ensure a holistic approach is adopted by LAs and their partners and will feature in dialogue between each LA and Education Scotland colleagues.

I trust the above is of assistance. Should you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact.

Yours Sincerely

Craig Clement
Strategic Director
Education Scotland