

Social Justice and Social Security Committee – Inquiry into Child Poverty and Parental employment

Additional information provided by Universities Scotland following evidence session on 15 June 2023

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During the evidence session I confused the Upskilling Fund with the National Transition Training Fund which has come to an end. My apologies for the error.

I'm pleased to say that The Open University in Scotland continues to offer learners access to a range of high-quality short course provision via the Upskilling Fund. Our robust application and selection process that ensures funded places are awarded to those with highest upskilling / reskilling needs, i.e., those facing redundancy, those who are looking to step back into the workplace as well as applicants who fall under one or more protected characteristic definitions.

With applications now closed for **AY222/23** we have once again been able to allocate, in full, the **£254,250** of Upskilling funds awarded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Key highlights for AY22/23 include.

- **505 learners** awarded places on OU courses
- **32%** of learners residing in the most deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD 1&2)
- **7%** indicating their ethnicity as BAME on their application
- **11%** indicating they had a disability on their application
- **66%** of learners falling in the age category of between 30-49
- **77%** of learners noting they were in either part-time or full-time employment
- **320+** different employer organisations from across Scotland engaged, ranging from SME's through to multinational organisations
- **All 32 local authority areas** across Scotland had Upskilling learners registered with the OUIS

In each year the Upskilling Fund has been offered through the Open University, there has been a significant oversubscription in the number of applications received versus the number of places offered, with AY22/23 being no exception. Of the **505 funded places** awarded by the Open University during AY22/23, **853 applications were received** and vetted.

We received confirmation in June 2023 that the total amount of Upskilling Funding being made available from the SFC for AY23/24 will be **£204,304** meaning a reduction of approximately 100 funded places being offered next year.

I hope that this sets the record straight.

Best wishes

Keith

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