

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE
THE SENIOR PHASE OF SCHOOL: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE PURSUE THE
RIGHT PATHWAY FOR THEM

Skills Development Scotland

Introduction

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) welcomes the Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry into the delivery of recommendations one and two of the final report of *Education Working for All! Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce*. SDS has engaged widely with partners towards delivering both recommendations and is thankful for the opportunity to update Committee members on this work. As we move towards a new economic model, constructed around innate human skills, combining on-the-job learning with effective careers services is ever more important. With the recent publication of the Scottish Government's *15-24 Learner Journey Review*¹ containing further recommendations, offering the potential to enhance delivery, this is an opportune moment to reflect on the progress made to date.

Senior Phase Vocational Pathways

Recommendation 1: *Pathways should start in the senior phase which leads to the delivery of industry recognised vocational qualifications alongside academic qualifications. These pathways should be developed and delivered in partnership with colleges and, where necessary, other training providers. Their delivery should be explicitly measured and published alongside other school performance indicators.*

SDS's key contribution to delivering this DYW recommendation is the development and delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs), first introduced by SDS in 2014. FAs provide work-based learning opportunities for secondary school pupils as part of their senior phase subject choices. They have been designed and developed with industry and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), and are based on successful Modern Apprenticeship frameworks; enabling pupils to complete elements of a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) while still at school.

In developing the FA programme, SDS has learned from countries with low youth unemployment and high levels of productivity. Research highlights a strong correlation between economic prosperity and a school system offering a blend of work-based and more traditional academic learning. We engaged with parents, young people, employers, educational institutions and enterprise and education agencies to understand the appetite for additional learning pathways within our school curriculum, and to offer school pupils the opportunity to benefit from learning in a different way. FAs are envisaged as the first step in a more ambitious and integrated work-based learning system and the alignment of the Learner Journey.

FAs seek to provide a rich learning experience which offers young people the knowledge and skills for work in the 21st century and qualifications at the same level of learning as a Higher (SCQF level 6). They include SQA-certified qualifications at SCQF level 6 including National Certificates, National Progression Award units and SVQ units. FAs will be an integral element of the senior phase curriculum and form part of subject choices. They are designed to benefit a wide range of young people within the senior phase and to support attainment and achievement. Pupils can choose to pursue an FA as their only SCQF level 6 qualification or choose an FA to be undertaken alongside other qualifications, such as Highers and National 5s.

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00535273.pdf>

In order to co-design and co-develop with partners, FAs began with two small-scale pilots in 2014-16 and 2015-17, followed by two larger cohorts, resulting in 1,591 FA starts in total:

- There were 346 FA starts for Cohort 1 (2016-18)
- There were 1,245 FA starts for Cohort 2 (2017-19)
- The ambition is to have 5,000 young people start an FA in academic year 2019/20
- The number of frameworks has expanded from 8 to 10, aligned to key areas of skills demand in the economy
- Cohort 2 saw FAs made available in all 32 Local Authorities
- Cohort 2 coverage now spans all 13 college regions in Scotland, compared to 10 for Cohort 1
- Over 70% of secondary schools are now involved in FA delivery across Cohort 1 and 2

Further information is available in the SDS report: *Foundation Apprenticeships: Early Progress and Learning Insights Pathfinder Activity, Cohort 1 (2016-2018) and Cohort 2 (2017-2019)*.² A further update on progress will be published later in 2018.

The continued support and ongoing rollout of FAs and other vocational qualifications is covered by Recommendation 10 in the *15-24 Learner Journey Review Report*.

The programme is on track to deliver 2,600 starts (in 12 frameworks) in academic year 2018/19 and 5,000 in 2019/20, with FAs now offered in schools in all 32 Local Authority areas. We will continue to expand the number and range of FAs available in schools across Scotland, making more frameworks available to more pupils, with the longer-term aim of having FAs available in every school. However it must be recognised that this will take time and will require the leadership and buy-in of employers and industry, which is increasingly being driven through the newly-established DYW groups.

Current FA participants are likely to be on course for achieving at National 5 in S4. SDS is currently developing new vocational qualifications at SCQF levels 4 and 5, Craft FAs, which will help young people to progress successfully to FA courses at their own pace. Craft FAs aim to serve pupils from an earlier age who are not predicted to achieve at the same stage and level, but who, with earlier high-quality work-based options, incorporating project-based learning, could move on to achieve at SCQF level 6 (whether FA or MA.)

In the overall development of work-based learning across Scotland, it is important to highlight the key role played by the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB). Following the publication of the *Education Working for All!*³ Report, the Scottish Government asked for the creation of an industry-led group to oversee the future development of apprenticeships. SDS responded by creating the SAAB which is made up of employers and representatives from industry bodies across a range of sectors. It provides employer leadership and contribution to the development of apprenticeships in Scotland, ensuring they are aligned with industry and economic need, Fair Work, and job opportunities.

² <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/44472/foundation-apprenticeships-progress-report.pdf>

³ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00451746.pdf>

The SAAB is made up of five groups:

- **Group Board** – responsible for providing advice and making recommendations on the guiding principles, operational policy, systems and structures supporting apprenticeships
- **Frameworks and Standards Group** – oversees the governance and development of apprenticeship frameworks and standards
- **Employer Engagement Group** – listens to and communicates with employers, gathering insight on how to support and encourage employer participation in apprenticeships
- **Apprentice Engagement Group** – current apprentices who, as apprenticeship ambassadors, inspire the next generation of young people and employers to get involved in apprenticeships, as well as offer vital insight into the apprenticeship process
- **Employer Equalities Group** – The aim of this group is to address under-representation in apprenticeships, and support better access to and participation in apprenticeships

SDS works with the SAAB to ensure there is a demand-led, responsive and adaptive work-based learning system for employers and the Scottish economy.

Senior Phase Vocational Pathways

Recommendation 2: *A focus on preparing all young people for employment should form a core element of the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence with appropriate resource dedicated to achieve this. In particular local authorities, Skills Development Scotland and employer representative organisations should work together to develop a more comprehensive standard for careers guidance which would reflect the involvement of employers and their role and input.*

One of the core functions of SDS is the delivery of a national Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service. DYW Recommendation 2 noted the importance of providing careers advice and knowledge of the world of work significantly earlier than S4. Following the publication of *Education Working for All*, SDS, Scottish Government and Education Scotland worked jointly on the creation of the Career Education Standard (CES).

CES, which is owned by Scottish Government (SG), implemented by schools, overseen by Education Scotland and supported by others, including SDS, sits within the overall policy framework of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It sets out 10 entitlements for young people to prepare them for the world of work, and clear expectations of SDS, teachers/practitioners, industry/employers and parents/carers – all of whom play a critical role in the delivery of support for individuals. SDS does not operate alone in this space and it is important for the Committee to be aware of these various responsibilities and lines of influence which play a role in individuals' journeys through their careers. The ultimate drivers are SG policy imperatives, such as CfE and the 2011 CIAG Strategy, but we would like to emphasise the important roles played by all partners in taking this forward.

Careers service

SDS, and our network of Careers Advisers working in every school in Scotland, seeks to equip each individual with highly effective Career Management Skills which would empower them to proactively direct their career as well as the ability to manage key transition points throughout their lives. In a world experiencing constant

change some commentators suggest that young people could experience more career transitions than ever before.

All individuals will need greater Career Management Skills capacities to manage these transitions; equipping them with these skills is paramount as we move into the future and seek to adapt to the likely impact of Industrie 4.0. With the likelihood of regular disruption causing a need for individuals to manage successive transitions, Career Management Skills will be fundamental to developing the capacities which will support future workers.

SDS enhanced CIAG services in 2015 in line with the recommendations from DYW and the implementation of the CES. This resulted in earlier intervention for school pupils during P7/S1 transition, S2 and S3 including at subject choices, and enhanced support for those in S3 with the greatest need. Prior to 2015, CIAG services in schools were focused on S4-S6. The SDS service offer for young people in schools now includes:

- At P7/S1 transition, every young person is entitled to have a face to face engagement with SDS Careers staff to support their transition
- At S2/S3, every young person, including those making their subject choices, is entitled to have a face to face engagement with SDS Careers staff to support this key decision-making phase. This is in a group setting and then followed up with the entitlement of an individual 1:1 guidance interview. In addition to this, parents/carers are entitled to be part of this 1:1 or can have this at another time
- In S3, the school needs-based approach identifies those young people who require targeted enhanced support and these individuals are entitled to receive a 1:1 guidance sessions and case management support
- Continuation of the S4 through to S6 targeted support for young people who have been identified as requiring it
- All young people are entitled to a face to face engagement with the Careers Adviser in a group session throughout the senior phase during their preparations for leaving school
- Any pupil at any time can request additional support Parental engagement from P7/S1 to S6

My World of Work, our online CIAG platform, has been developed through engagement with customers and partners to underpin the development of pupil capacities within Career Management Skills and make available a range of tools to support individuals. This includes the subject choice tool that enables young people to explore opportunities and pathways relating to careers, jobs and industries; supporting them to make informed decisions during this critical transition period. The Skills Pathways tool is an interactive way of exploring labour market opportunities and the wide range of routes and pathways that can be taken to progress towards these.

Another key feature of My World of Work is Marketplace⁴ a matching tool for both teachers and employers to request opportunities to share knowledge such as workshops, talks, workplace visits or placements.

⁴ <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/supporting-scotlands-employers/marketplace/>

An early career education digital offer is available for P5-P7 via My World of Work. This includes lesson plans developed with teachers to be used in to the classroom, which support the early awareness and development of career management skills.

My World of Work offers a further suite of curriculum inserts, developed with teaching staff across all subject areas, which demonstrate how and when the world of work can be woven into teaching and learning. There is also a dedicated area for partners in My World of Work with resources aligned to CES, Career Management Skills and CfE.

To assess the effectiveness of our delivery, SDS undertakes a regular Senior Phase Survey to ensure we continually listen to their feedback and improve our services to meet their needs.

The 2017 survey of 3,573 young people found:

- 91% agreed that their Careers Adviser was friendly and approachable
- 83% agreed that their Careers Adviser listened to and valued their ideas
- 81% agreed that their Careers Adviser supported them to make their own decisions and take control of their career path
- 80% agreed that their Careers Adviser encouraged them to aim high for their future career
- 83% were aware of Career Management Skills
- 71% were satisfied with the ability to access support when needed
- 70% were satisfied with the amount of support available to them

Since April 2014, external reviews of Scotland's CIAG services by local authority area have been conducted by Education Scotland⁵, with 19 local authorities having been reviewed so far⁶. External review teams, including HM Inspectors and associate assessors, undertake independent reviews of the quality of provision of CIAG delivered by SDS on behalf of the Scottish Government, under a service level agreement between the Scottish Government and Education Scotland. The results of these reviews have been overwhelmingly positive for SDS.

Schools and teachers

Through the CfE and the CES, schools, including teachers, head teachers and pastoral care staff, all play a key role in developing children from early years, through the subject choice phase, to the senior phase.

SDS CIAG services are planned and agreed with all secondary schools on a yearly basis through our School Partnership Agreements. Every maintained secondary school has a dedicated Careers Adviser resource to deliver the SDS service offer. This enables us to integrate with improvement planning in relation to delivery of the 10 entitlements for young people. This developed as part of our demonstrator school

⁵ <https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors/careers-service/1200024>

⁶ <https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/inspection-and-review/about-inspections-and-reviews/Careers%20service%20reviews>

activity to enable a strategic planning conversation on how SDS supports schools to deliver the CES entitlements.

Some of these services, including the earlier intervention, were introduced to 36 demonstrator schools in academic year 2015-16, and following a positive impact, this suite of supportive measures was extended to all secondary schools in Scotland in academic year 2016-17.

SDS has worked closely with Education Scotland and Scottish Government to produce additional resources and support for teachers and practitioners to implement the CES. This includes the development of four career-long professional learning resources for teachers covering the CES, My World of Work, Labour Market Information and Career Management Skills. We have also worked with partners to develop a common skills language, which enables young people to recognise their skills development, progression and achieving from different learning environments, and we have delivered capacity building for school staff that promotes further embedding of the standard.

SDS commissioned research to measure the views of Scotland's Head Teachers. A survey in 2016 found high levels of satisfaction with SDS. Head Teachers were asked to rate their relationships and satisfaction with SDS on a scale of 1-10. Key findings include:

- 9.3 – overall rating of the working relationship with SDS over the last year
- 9.1 – overall satisfaction rating with quality of services SDS offers
- 9.1 – overall agreement that School Partnership Agreements lead to better planning of service provision

Parents and carers

Parents and carers play the key role in influencing the choices their children make, a fact recognised in a wide range of research and by the inclusion of parental engagement as one of the six drivers in the National Improvement Framework.

Responsibility for representation sits with forums such as the National Parent Forum of Scotland and Connect (formerly the Scottish Parent Teacher Council).

SDS has equipped parents with substantial resources, especially through My World of Work, to guide them as they support children through the critical transition points. This includes a series of nutshell guides developed in collaboration between National Parent Forum of Scotland and SDS which explore various aspects of career education including practical support with career conversations, future skills and the importance of creativity in employability, work-based learning and STEM (currently in production).

SDS has also worked closely with Connect to support their pilot of a uniquely Scottish version of the Partnership Schools approach. This aims to deepen and extend parental engagement and family learning and is now in its fourth year with external evaluation of impact planned in 2019.

SDS has supported Parent Network Scotland to pilot an innovative variation to their Family Routes programme involving schools in the Drumchapel cluster and focused on supporting parents facing significant barriers to build their own capacity and to better support their children's learning and career choices.

SDS is also represented on the National Parental Engagement Steering Group and is a regular contributor to conferences and events aimed at a parental audience.

Industry/Employers

Interaction between industry and school has been fully devolved by the Scottish Government to local Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) groups. The 21 DYW groups are responsible for ensuring Scotland's young people are supported into employment by bridging the gap between education and employers. The groups support employers to engage directly with schools and challenge employers to recruit more young people. The groups also have responsibility of ensuring work placement standards and entitlements.

SDS also supported DYW groups in the development of 'Marketplace'⁷ – an online tool connecting schools and colleges with business, intended to improve engagement between employers and education. Marketplace helps build young people's job readiness and increases their career options, whilst giving employers the chance to help shape young talent, address skills gaps and source their future workforce. SDS provides support through our representation on all regional DYW groups.

Employers and teachers can register on Marketplace in order to pass on or request the exchange of knowledge of sectors through workshops, talks, workplace visits or placements. Employers can meet young people at a school, college or invite them to their business. The opportunities on offer include:

- Skills sessions: Pupils and students learn a range of skills including employability, enterprise and soft skills like tips on how to find and keep a job
- Inspiration events: Employers offer site visits to their workplace, deliver workshops on specific jobs, offer work placements or provide young people with a real-life business challenge to solve
- Career insights: Employers explain the job opportunities and routes into a sector at career events, offer work placements to young people or hold sessions with parents, carers and teachers to give them more knowledge of Scotland's job landscape

Challenges and opportunities

Education Scotland reviews continue to recognise the work of SDS in the delivery of high quality, labour market-focused CIAG. They also recognise the partnership work undertaken with local authorities and schools to deliver the CES entitlements, and the strengths of this approach, with many areas of excellent practice being identified. However, they also recognise challenges around the pace of implementation of the CES at a school and local authority level, and areas where SDS services could be used more effectively in delivering the entitlements.

SDS welcomes the recommendations of the *15-24 Learner Journey Review* to further embed CES, Career Management Skills and work-based learning across the curriculum. SDS will continue to support local authorities and head teachers to develop, improve and integrate the services outlined within this submission to ensure young people receive their entitlements, are prepared for the world of work and can make informed decisions both now and in the future. We will continue to work with schools and local authorities in supporting the implementation of the CES using our expertise in delivering CIAG which is both evidence-based and labour market-focused.

⁷ <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/marketplace>

Future developments should focus on greater personalisation. Young people who may be at risk of not reaching a positive destination receive a highly intensive personalised CIAG service, which is effective, but comes at a cost. Looking ahead the challenge collectively is to determine how best to expand this level of intensive support to all pupils.

SDS welcomes the recent publication of the *15-24 Learner Journey Review*. Our CIAG services will continue to be expanded in line with its recommendations. An increasingly personalised experience for young people is central to this enhanced learner journey and the simplification of pathways and choices.

More authentic and richer employer engagement, coupled with better industry/occupational insights, will allow learners to make informed subject choices and offer a wider range of work experience and vocational education. A summary of our aspirations for this enhanced learner journey is included at the end of this submission.

The *15-24 Learner Journey Review* recommends that every learner in Scotland has an online learner account to link their skills and attributes to better course choices by the start of 2019. We will further enhance My World of Work to link fully with existing digital services in schools. This will deliver an online learner account that enables learners to record their attributes, skills and qualifications in a way that follows them beyond school and helps them plan their learner journey into work.

Other recommendations include:

- Ensuring learners in schools, colleges and universities receive a joined-up approach to CIAG.
- Working with the college sector to improve the ease with which learners can apply to college

In support of the first recommendation, SDS will work in partnership with colleges and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and Universities.

In support of the second recommendation, SDS will work with colleges and the Scottish Funding Council to further improve the way learners can search and access course applications; moving to the use of common information on all college applications, making it easier for learners who make multiple applications, and supporting a more standardised timetable.

The report also recommends raising our aspiration to improve the offer and support for statutory leavers and looked after young people, which dovetails with our enhanced Next Steps offer to young people who have not yet secured a positive destination, delivered through our network of public access centres across Scotland. Finally, the greatest challenge in the future will be the likely impact of Industrie 4.0, which we referenced earlier in our submission. The likely disruption this will cause to individuals may be considerable so it is imperative that all involved in the delivery of support in this space are fully committed to ensuring people are equipped with the necessary skills to manage this uncertain future.