

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

THE SENIOR PHASE OF SCHOOL: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE PURSUE THE RIGHT PATHWAY FOR THEM

Scottish Guidance Association

The committee members of the Scottish Guidance Association raised the following points at their meeting on 2nd June 2018.

- Will there be government funding for the mentioned new vocational qualifications?
- National Guidance will be necessary in order for a consistent approach to be provided across the country, authorities and providers. Strategic leadership within authorities is necessary in order to provide the basis for this approach but is often lacking.
- Improvements in communication between colleges and schools require to be implemented.
- Will the Foundation Apprenticeships provide UCAS points, and is there evidence that they will be considered as equivalent to the Highers which a pupil would otherwise have gained?
- We would welcome an opportunity for sharing best practice e.g. we are aware of the approach taken by Lochgelly High School.
- DYW remit is a huge undertaking in practice – there is a need for a consistent approach within schools regarding this. For example, some schools have new posts for DYW, and in others, it appears to be added on to existing remits.
- National frameworks are needed to implement the suggested strategies - the continual push of new strategies is currently having a demoralising effect on staff who are unable to keep pace due to increasing demands of the role.

SPICe Survey

- It was felt that the questions could be seen as unclear for pupils - too direct perhaps due to schools embedding DYW within the PSE and whole school curricula - pupils often unclear that what they have done fits under certain criteria, despite completing the work.
- We were very surprised by the suggestion that schools are putting undue pressure on pupils to apply for university. All the teachers at our meeting agreed that they take an individualised approach, as do all their colleagues, and a sustained positive destination that suits the pupil is what is sought. By contrast, there has often been a concern regarding pressure from parents, for pupils to go to university. We would be interested to know why the pupils are under this impression.
- There was discussion regarding the focus on UCAS in PSE lessons. It was agreed by our members, that this could depend on whether the survey covered pupils' experiences in S4 or S6. For example, there is very little discussion of UCAS in S4, as pupils are not in a position to be making an application (though qualifications required for certain courses/professions would be covered). By contrast, there is a high proportion of pupils who intend to apply to university in S6, and a very specific process, with clear deadlines, and so it would be

understandable that pupils feel the emphasis is disproportionate. A number of pupils also apply to college, but as the application process is not so rigorous, and does not involve the teacher so directly, then this is not highlighted to the same extent. In addition, the college application process will have been covered in S4 and S5. It would be difficult to promote applications for jobs and apprenticeships in the same structured way, as there is not one body managing the situation, and jobs become available throughout the year.

- Work experience – there is currently an inequitable approach, both within schools and across authorities, due to timetable, remits, support from work experience units within authorities and availability of placements.
- Throughout the survey it is unclear what options were given to pupils when answering. Eg Pupils asked about support during transition periods - were they asked what support was given by 'teachers' or 'Guidance teachers' as this would be expected to give significantly different results.