

Report

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Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	19 June 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	The 15-24 Learner Journey – Scottish Government Review
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an update on the recently published Scottish Government review of the 15-24 Learner Journey.

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/15-24-learner-journey-review-9781788518741/documents/00535273.pdf>

(Copies have been made available in the Members' Areas)

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Scottish Government report entitled '15-24 Learner Journey Review' (May 2018) be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. This review was established in 2016 to: 'review education provision for all 15-24 year olds so their learning journey is as efficient and effective as possible and provides stepping stones to success for those needing most support', as set out in 'Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland' in 2016.
- 3.2. A Learner Journey Review Group was established to provide advice at three stages of the programme: at its initiation, informing key values and scope; at the mid-way point in tackling early challenges; and in conclusion to shape final policy propositions to Ministers.
- 3.3. Project teams were established to consider 5 strands of activity: three focused on careers, choice and application and the other two on the system (provision, transitions and progression) and its funding. The Scottish Government led each project, with agency, stakeholder and user involvement, and it used critical friends to provide advice.
- 3.4. Through these mechanisms, the review prioritised engagement from across the whole education and skills system. Each project worked with a range of representatives including from agencies, schools, colleges, training providers and

universities. Engagement was supplemented by a programme of regional events, delivered across Scotland, including with the regional Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) employer groups and with Colleges and their partners.

- 3.5. The core values for the review were developed, in discussion with partners, to enable an education and skills system that:-
- puts the learner at the centre
 - prioritises access and works for all learners, so that non-linear and part-time journeys are supported and joined up
 - is straightforward, connected and designed for the learner

4. Executive Summary

4.1. The key findings set out in the report are:-

1. The Scottish Government's ambition is for a world class education and skills system. A system that delivers the best value to the learner, wider society and the economy where all learners are on the right route to the right job, through the right course via the right information.
2. To achieve this, and reinforcing the ambitions for inclusive economic growth, social justice, and equity and excellence in education, there is a need to make sure that every individual young person in Scotland can fulfil his or her potential.
3. To maximise their talent, every young person needs the system to provide high quality guidance, advice and support so that they can be sure they are making the right decisions about their education and skills in line with their aspirations and abilities.
4. Equally, in order to ensure all young people have access to the choices that are right for them, we need the right balance and blend of learning options in our post-15 education and skills system – with parity of esteem between vocational and academic learning/pathways across the system as a whole.
5. Even against a backdrop of historically low youth unemployment rates, the review reinforces the importance of the DYW programme, the youth employment strategy.
6. Stakeholder engagement throughout this review has confirmed that many of the key component parts of a high quality 15-24 education system are in place:-
 - A strong starting point in school with entitlements for all young people set out in Curriculum for Excellence – particularly those on the Broad General Education, senior phase curriculum, personal support and skills for learning, life and work.
 - DYW's greater focus on employability, increased access to vocational qualifications and work-based learning, and stronger partnerships between schools, colleges and employers.
 - A focus through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding that will ensure schools are better able to meet the individual needs of young people and provide a more personalised curriculum.
 - A wide range of youth-work opportunities, particularly important in supporting young people most at risk of disengagement.
 - A successful college sector which has been reconfigured to better meet the needs of industry, the economy and communities.
 - An internationally renowned university sector of distinctive universities, including some of the world's oldest and most prestigious institutions as well as world-leading modern and specialist institutions.

- An apprenticeship programme which has grown almost threefold over the past decade and which continues to evolve and innovate in line with industry needs.
 - A qualifications framework, in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, which can support a flexible learner journey.
 - A national careers service delivered locally, underpinned by a well-established online information service.
 - A wide range of advice, support and resources available across educational sectors to support and assist young people, parents/carers to make informed choices.
 - A body of evidence and data that tells us how young people are doing at the different stages of their journey.
 - A historically low youth unemployment rate which places Scotland among the best performing countries in Europe.
7. The best way to ensure that each young person makes the best choices for them, and to make our system as efficient and effective as possible, is to ensure that learners are supported to make the correct choices in the first place; to improve connections across the system and with employers; and to ensure that the right options are open for those who need additional support at any time in their learner journey.

4.2. The report sets out 5 areas for improvement as:

1. Information, Advice and Support

Making it easier for young people to understand their learning and career choices at the earliest stage and providing long-term person-centred support for the young people who need this most.

2. Provision

Broadening our approach to education and reframing our offer, doing more for those who get less out of the system and ensuring all young people access the high level work-based skills Scotland's economy needs.

3. Alignment

Making the best use of our four year degree to give greater learner flexibility for more learners to move from S5 to year one of a degree, more from S6 to year 2, and more from college into years 2 and 3 of a degree where appropriate.

4. Leadership

Building collective leadership across the education and skills system.

5. Performance

Knowing how well our education and skills system is performing.

4.3. The report also sets out short to medium term goals as: developing a shared vision and smoother transitions across sectors, and in the longer term: to establish a fully aligned 15-24 education and skills system.

4.4 This fully aligned system is described in more detail as the need for:-

- Scotland to see itself as possessing a unified learning system in which practitioners across all sectors are working toward the same vision. This includes Community Learning and Development (CLD), training providers and all teaching that takes place outwith the classroom.
- Leaders of sectors, institutions and agencies to guide and support staff toward contributing to this shared goal and make decisions to achieve it. This will

require a strengthening of behaviours to prioritise a learner's entire journey and the development of cross-sector collaborative practice in support of this.

- Greater shared understanding and a common language fully embracing the SCQF to describe and chart progress of our young people as they move through the different forms of learning.
- The measurement of the system to consider the added value of each part with an equal focus on the shared ownership of impact, rather than a focus on institution or agency success; and, that this is used to foster collaboration, measuring SCQF attainment rather than specific qualifications.
- A balanced curriculum across the Learner Journey that gives sufficient value to work based learning and is well matched to local and national current and projected economic needs that avoids duplication and makes maximum use of shared approach to estates, resources and expertise.
- A curriculum offer that is mutually agreed by partners in the system and informed by need and opportunity.
- The delivery of the curriculum that maximises blended approaches, with digital solutions embedded as appropriate for different groups of learners, and which is structured and scheduled together from the outset.
- That this curriculum is underpinned by an embedded approach to learner support and guidance and partnership working with business.

5. Recommendations of the Review

- 5.1. The report includes a series of recommendations under the headings in 4.2 above. The full list of recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.2. The report goes on to indicate how the recommendations will be taken forward and indicates which groups or agencies will be involved.

6. Education Resources

- 6.1. Education Resources takes cognisance of the recommendations of the report and will consider how best to engage with partner agencies in taking forward these recommendations.
- 6.2. It is recognised that the ambitions of this review is supported by current activity within Education Resources in respect of: DYW, the Senior Phase Curriculum, Employability Strategy, 16+ partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) and by the ongoing focus on delivering excellence and equity in schools and educational establishments.
- 6.3. As previously reported to Committee, Education Resources provides a range of supported vocational routes through and beyond school. The vocational offer has been extended through the additional provision of Foundation Apprenticeships, resulting in a 5-fold increase in applications for places from around 50 in session 2017-18 to over 250 for the session coming.
- 6.4. Through partnership with Glasgow University, and, more recently, with the Strathclyde University Engineering Academy, more young people from backgrounds of deprivation are able to access degree courses through 'widening access' programmes.
- 6.5. The Council's ongoing commitment to supporting positive destinations for all young people is reflected in the SLD (School Leaver Destination) statistics previously reported.

6.6. The range of opportunities in the Senior Phase is increasing as a result of DYW activity. As a result, the need for better information at an earlier stage for young people (and their parents) is recognised and is being addressed through the implementation of careers education and careers management skills programmes within the context of personal support programmes in schools.

6.7. Learner Journey is a priority area of focus for the West Partnership and is led by the Council's Executive Director of Education Resources.

7. Employee Implications

7.1. There are no direct employee implications in terms of the information contained within this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. There are no direct financial implications in terms of the information contained within this report.

9 Other Implications

9.1. There are no significant risk implications in terms of the information contained within this report.

9.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

10.2. There was no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained within this report.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

25 May 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ The 15-24 Learner Journey Review, Scottish Government, May 2018

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Stewart Nicolson, Head of Education (Curriculum and Attainment)

Ext: 4475 (Tel: 01698 454475)

E-mail: stewart.nicolson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Recommendations of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review

Information, Advice and Support

1. We will ensure every learner in Scotland has an online learner account to link their skills and attributes to better course choices. This work will start in 2018.
2. We will support practitioners, parents, carers and learners to have access to an online prospectus setting out the learning choices available in their region, building toward a one-stop shop approach. This work will start in 2018.
3. We will ensure learners in schools, colleges and universities receive a joined-up approach to careers, information, advice and guidance. This work will start in 2018.
4. We will take account of the outcomes of the PSE (Personal Social Education) Review, due to be published later this year, and consider what further improvement is needed on wider personal support for young people in schools.
5. We will work with the college sector to improve the ease with which learners can apply to college.

Provision

6. We will develop a national communication strategy to explain and promote the breadth of choices in the 15-24 learner journey. This will build on the promotional activity undertaken during Scotland's Year of Young People and be ready by the end of AY19-20.
7. We will raise our aspiration and improve the offer and support for statutory leavers and looked after young people. We will want improvements to be in place from AY19-20.
8. We will better align financial incentives to encourage continued participation in school for young people at risk of disengagement and we will ask Young Scot to assist us with this. This work will start in 2018.
9. We will embed DYW in the school curriculum by 2021, having achieved the headline target for DYW four years early.
10. We will support and enable the Foundation Apprenticeship and other vocational qualifications to be embedded, providing a range of options for all learners in the senior phase by 2021.
11. We will support colleges to maximise the vocational routes learners and employers need.
12. We will improve choice through the expansion of Graduate Apprenticeships to provide new higher level technical skills as part of a better balanced education and skills system. This work will start with impetus in 2018.

Alignment

13. We will minimise unnecessary duplication at SCQF level 7. We will make maximum use of the flexibility of the four year degree to enable learners to move, where appropriate, from S5 to year 1 and, through greater recognition of Advanced Highers, from S6 to year 2 of a university degree programme.
14. We will support colleges and universities to ensure more learners progress from college to all our universities without unnecessary duplication of SCQF credit.

Leadership

15. We will provide system leadership to ensure there is a shared vision about the purposes of post 15 education.

Performance

16. We will support greater alignment and collaboration across the education and skills system making best use of the Scottish Candidate Number to help support effective transitions .
17. We will develop better data and improve how existing data is used to support learners make the right choices for them. We will also develop a performance framework to drive improvements across the system as a whole.