

## **Discussion Paper** – Developing the Young Workforce – Building a bridge between Education and Employers

**Host:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

**Facilitators:** Debra Nichol-Storie – The Scottish Salmon Company and Chair of the Outer Hebrides DYW Regional Groups; Iain Steele, SP Energy Networks and Chair of the Dumfries and Galloway DYW Regional Group

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### **Overview**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The independent Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, chaired by Sir Ian Wood, published Education Working for All! in June 2014, making 39 recommendations to create a world-class vocational education system in Scotland.

The Scottish Government welcomed the report and accepted all the recommendations and published Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy in December 2014. This included full implementation plans agreed and jointly led with local government and set a range of activity through to 2021.

The report of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, received widespread cross-sectoral support and its recommendations formed the basis of the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy. The establishment of the industry led National Group and Regional Groups are a fundamental element of moving the broader strategy forward.

Developing the Young Workforce National Group was formed on 9 November 2014 and first convened on 8 December 2014. The Group, chaired by Rob Woodward, previous Chief Executive of STV and currently Chair of Court at Glasgow Caledonian University has been tasked with identifying and working with key individuals and business organisations across Scotland to establish up to 21 Regional Groups.

The Developing the Young Workforce National Group alongside private sector leads and key public sector players (Local Authority regional colleges) have been overseeing and supporting the establishment and on-going development of industry led Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Regional Groups across Scotland.

In conjunction with Recommendation 14, this is part of the wider Developing the Young Workforce Programme being taken forward in partnership by Scottish Government. The ultimate aim of the DYW Regional Groups is to provide private sector leadership that will explore innovative approaches to building the bridge between employers and education.

In June 2017, the network of 21 DYW Regional Groups was established. DYW Regional Groups have been established in Glasgow; North East; Fife; Ayrshire; North Highland; the West Region; Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian; Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee and Angus; West Lothian; Inverness and Central Highland; West Highland; Forth Valley; Moray; Perth & Kinross; Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire; Argyll and Bute; the Borders; Shetland; Orkney; and Outer Hebrides. The Groups are at various stages of development but all are supported by a Board of Private and Public Sector leaders within the region.

Originally the DYW Regional Group were to be supported by 3 years of Scottish Government funding, however after feedback following the imposition of an Apprenticeship Levy by the UK Government, in June 2017 the Minister for Employability and Training announced all

DYW Regional Groups would be supported with Scottish Government funding until 2021 to coincide with the end of the DYW Strategy.

## **THE AMBITION**

There are many factors which impact on the choices made by young people and how they identify the opportunities available to them in education and the labour market.

We know from our learning of other economies, successful labour markets have a close and integral relationship between education and employers. So we know key to Scotland's Success is building that bridge here too.

This Government wants a Scottish education system that employers play an active role in shaping so that they benefit directly by recruiting from the talent pool they create. Forging stronger links between education and employers is vital to enrich learning and help young people to improve their understanding and readiness for later life.

## **PRIORITIES**

As set out in the Developing the Young Workforce 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual report published in January 2018, the following milestones are due for completion in the next year to 18 months:

- Meaningful and productive school/employer partnerships operating in all secondary schools
- Introduction of supported work placement programme for young disabled people
- Employer satisfaction driving parts of the system nationally and informing regional curriculum planning fully.
- Delivery of a matching platform to aid and support increased volumes of work inspiration activity.

In order to deliver these milestone DYW Regional Groups have been given the following set of National Key Performance Indicators for 2018/2019:

- Increase the number of employers engaged with education to support young people with work preparation (career advice, work inspiration, work experience placements etc.)
- Increase the number of strategic partnerships between employers and schools
- Increase the number of employers offering apprenticeship opportunities (Modern Apprenticeships, Foundation Apprenticeships, Graduate Level Apprenticeships)
- Increase young people's exposure to meaningful work based activity in education

## **POSSIBLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How do we ensure we are creating an environment which employers directly engage with education with ease in order to meaningfully influence the future workforce?  
How does it differ for those Groups in our rural regions?
2. What main sectors offer the highest number of opportunities and challenges for the future workforce? Who should we be targeting?
3. How can technology support the Developing the Young Workforce agenda?
4. What are the barriers to engaging meaningfully and productively with schools in order to establish school/employer partnerships?

5. More than half our DYW Regional Groups have a rural dimension, how best do we support these Groups to ensure the additional barriers faced in those of rural communities are addressed?
6. How do we best support employers to recruit from a deeper talent pool of young people? E.g. those with a disability, further away from the labour market.
7. What might Scotland's education landscape look and feel like in 10 years when Developing the Young Workforce is embedded across the country?
8. What do employers need to do to engage with education?