

SENIOR PHASE CURRICULUM DESIGN & DELIVERY

Purpose

1. This paper aims to:
 - support a discussion on the design and delivery of the senior phase curriculum;
 - seek CAB members' views on what actions are necessary to ensure that schools and their partners are able to maximise the flexibility of the senior phase curriculum and meet the needs of all learners, in all areas of the country.

Background

2. We should not look at the senior phase in isolation and need to be mindful of:
 - how well prepared young people are in moving from the broad general education (BGE) to senior phase, in recognition of CfE as a 3-18 learning experience;
 - the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, which has been looking at how to ensure that education provision for young people is as effective and efficient as possible. Ministers are currently considering the evidence emerging from Phase 1 of the Review and CAB may wish to return to this once the review has reported;
 - the emergence of a school based apprenticeship offer as part of the growing Apprenticeship Family (pre-apprenticeships, Foundation Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships and Graduate Level Apprenticeships) and ensuring that young people experience appropriate work-based learning (pathways) that lead to these;
 - and the use of the National 4 Qualification within the wider suite of awards and qualifications offered in the senior phase (as per paper 01 (04) tabled at 6 December 2017 CAB meeting).
3. Building the Curriculum 3: A Framework for Learning and Teaching (BTC3)¹, 2008 provided a clear set of entitlements and a framework for learning for the senior phase curriculum. For the purposes of this discussion it is also worth noting that, alongside the overarching senior phase entitlements, BTC3 was clear that the senior phase curriculum should:
 - include ages 16 to 18 out of school;
 - meet the needs of all learners, whether aspiring to achievements at SCQF level 1 or at SCQF level 7;
 - comprise more than programmes which lead to qualifications;
 - have a continuing emphasis on health and wellbeing;
 - provide opportunities for personal achievement, service to others and practical experience of the world of work.
4. Updated guidance on Progression from the Broad General Education (BGE) to the Senior Phase² was also developed for local authorities, schools and teachers by the Assessment & National Qualifications (ANQ) Group in May 2016. This reinforced key messages that:

¹ <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/btc3.pdf>

² <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/progression-from-bge-to-the-senior-phase.pdf>

- the senior phase for students stretches over three years and the learning pathways for young people should be planned over this period;
- in terms of attainment, the main focus for all schools should be attainment for each learner at the end of the senior phase (exit qualifications), rather than on the individual year on year attainment pattern;
- in order to support a genuinely aspirational approach to presentation, schools should consider the variety of learner pathways through the senior phase.

5. Since publication of Building the Curriculum 3 in 2008, there have been a number of key national developments in Scottish education which have influenced the implementation of the senior phase curriculum for young people. Through: Building the Curriculum 4 (2009); Skills for Scotland (2011); Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy (2014); the National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 (2014); and the development of the How Good is Our School (2015) and How Good is our College (2016) self-evaluation frameworks, we have seen an increased focus on partnership approaches to planning and delivering a wider range of learning pathways for young people.

6. In Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland (2016), the Scottish Government set out a clear vision for securing excellence and equity for all young people in Scottish education. The Scottish Attainment Challenge, the Commission for Widening Access and the work of the Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality, have all supported delivery of that vision.

7. And through the National Improvement Framework, Insight and the development of the Participation Measure we have seen more of a focus on improvement, outcomes (rather than outputs) and sustained destinations.

Where are we now?

8. It is clear that the original aspirations set out in BTC3 and in the advice from the ANQ Group remain relevant today. Moreover, the aforementioned developments at a national level should have supported delivery of these. We are seeing many examples of creative and innovative senior phase approaches across the country, with increasing numbers of young people able to access more flexible learning pathways into Further Education, Higher Education, training and employment, which better reflect their learning styles and abilities. However, we need to ask the extent to which this is systematic and at a fast enough pace across Scotland?

9. The introduction of the new National Qualifications led to a particular, albeit important, focus in secondary schools on National Qualifications implementation. To what extent has there been a similar emphasis on learner pathways and the range of choices available across S1-S6? Schools must continue to embed and value the full range of pathways needed for their young people. Curriculum design must support progression and choice. Are we seeing the whole service, cross partner approach that we need to deliver a broad, ambitious and future focused senior phase curriculum?

10. Through a range of published reports, in particular Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education 2012 – 2016 (2017); engagement with stakeholders on Developing the Young Workforce, the 15-24 Learner Journey Review and National Qualifications (most recently with a focus on National 4); and, most importantly, through research with young

people themselves, a number of clear messages have emerged in relation to the design and delivery of the senior phase curriculum. A detailed overview of this evidence is provided at Annex A.

11. We are at an important point in time, with the recent education reforms providing the opportunity to develop and enhance regional collaboration between schools and with their partners and with the development of digital learning approaches, such as E-Sgoil, showing how this collaboration can be extended to all parts of the country. However, we need to remain clear and ambitious in what we want to achieve for our young people as they leave school.

12. We want a senior phase curriculum that provides: flexibility; parity of esteem; personalisation and choice; a focus on positive and sustained destinations; and equity and excellence for all our young people. The issues are set out under three main headings: culture; structure; and capacity.

The key messages can be summarised as:

13. Culture

Opportunities

- Many schools are working well with partners to broaden their senior phase offer, and ensure a range of pathways are in place for young people.
- Young people themselves are wanting to be involved in designing and shaping their senior phase pathways.

Future priorities

- Improving understanding (and therefore parity) of the value of different pathways, to address biases surrounding different post-school routes.
- Ensuring consistency in the extent to which schools have begun to deliver DYW and increasing the overall pace of implementation in the use of the Career Education and Work Placement standards.
- Ensuring that approaches to personalising learning to meet the increasingly diverse needs of learners are as effective as they can be, so that all groups of young people, including those with additional support needs, move on to a positive destination.
- Balancing the strong focus on attainment and qualifications within schools with the wider health, wellbeing and support needs of young people.

14. Structure

Opportunities

- In the best practice, schools are very clearly designing the senior phase curriculum as a coherent three-year phase. This is giving schools flexibility to offer more courses and levels to meet differing needs, including meaningful horizontal progression.
- Developing the Young Workforce has strengthened the focus on employability and work-based learning and is encouraging greater collaboration between schools and other partners, in particular colleges and employers.

- There is increasing evidence of effective partnership working between Community Learning and Development providers and schools, which is making a valued contribution to supporting young people's learning, in particular those who face additional challenges.

Future priorities

- Ensuring that all schools are able to make full use of the flexibility presented by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum which is dynamic and customised to the local context and needs and aspirations of children and young people.
- Addressing ongoing practical questions around transport, timetabling and funding models to support effective collaboration and choice.

15. Capacity

Opportunities

- Many schools are providing young people with a range of relevant contexts for their learning.
- Many schools have allocated a member of staff to act as DYW school lead, with senior staff holding policy responsibility for the strategic development work.
- In general, colleges are working proactively with schools, local authorities and SDS to support the ambitions of DYW.

Future priorities

- Ensuring all schools are significantly increasing the pace and depth of the work on developing the curriculum.
- Understanding why success rates for learners aged 15-18 in colleges are amongst the lowest and considering a range of potential factors for this, for example how young people are supported in making course choices and in their transition to learning beyond school.
- Ensuring that colleges can obtain advanced information from schools on young people who would benefit from additional support.
- Ensuring that S1–3 consistently provides sufficient depth and breadth of skills and knowledge to fully enable young people to get the most out of their senior phase.
- Developing a clearer understanding of progress and the curriculum levels achieved in the BGE to support learners' transition into the senior phase.
- Building the strongest possible employer links, stimulating employer, demand side led activity.
- Ensuring colleges are offering senior phase vocational pathways at all levels as appropriate for their learners, including below SCQF level 5.

What needs to be done?

The following section provides an overview of the actions needed to address the key issues outlined above. These are based on feedback from stakeholder engagement and messages coming through national evidence.

16. Culture

We need to:

- Ensure all schools offer the full range of pathways needed to meet the needs of all learners, whether that be university, college, university, work-based learning or other learning (i.e. full parity of esteem).
- Ensure practitioners, parents and learners understand and value different types of qualifications, assessed in different ways, for example internally assessed and ungraded qualifications.
- Expand our understanding of the term 'National Qualifications' to include the current and developing range of Vocational Qualifications.
- Focus on the value of qualifications and other awards in terms of their SCQF Levels.
- Ensure that the senior phase meets the needs of all young people, placing a focus on specific cohorts of learners for example: maximising achievement for statutory leavers; being as ambitious as we can for the "silent middle" group; and ensuring S6 is a valuable experience for young people on a range of pathways.
- Ensure that subject choices and presentation decisions are always made at the appropriate level and for the most appropriate qualification, including understanding the impact of aspirational presentation.
- Ensure that all teachers and schools understand the benefits and availability of wider achievement, youthwork and other CLD activities, and that young people, particularly the most vulnerable, are able to access these opportunities across the country.
- Understand how university admissions policies affect the curriculum e.g. the requirement of some high tariff courses for five Highers at one sitting.

17. Structure

We need to:

- Support schools and their partners to develop innovative curriculum approaches eg bypassing, multi-level learning, collaborative approaches, digital learning, building on emerging examples of practice across Scotland.
- Support schools and their partners to maximise the flexibility of the senior phase curriculum: planning S4-S6 as a single cohort; focusing on exit point qualifications and awards rather than the number of qualification in individual years; and ensure that the course option process is fully responsive, flexible and able to be personalised to individual pupil needs.
- Better enable all schools to work collaboratively to design and deliver their curriculum with relevant partners, to ensure that provision meets the needs of young people and that pathways articulate better to support progression and meaningful learning. DYW has highlighted the importance of partnerships with colleges and employers. We need to build on this and strengthen partnerships with universities and CLD. There is a strong willingness to work collaboratively and we need to ensure that approaches

to planning, reporting on outcomes and funding across the different sectors are designed to support this.

- Ensure a robust approach to planning and reviewing provision and its impact across partners.
- Support the transition from the Broad General Education to the senior phase, ensuring that young people are appropriately prepared to get the most from the senior phase and strengthening the quality of evidence in the BGE, on which teachers, learners and parents make informed choices for qualifications and pathways.
- Better understand: concerns around subject choice for young people, exploring the potential impact of curriculum structures on uptake of, for example, Gaelic and languages and the STEM subjects; and the equality of access to Advanced Highers across the country, particularly in rural areas. Overall presentations for National Qualifications (at certain levels) are increasing, but we need to better understand the pattern of this across all subjects. More also needs to be done to better understand the availability of these courses across Scotland.

18. Capacity

We need to:

- Better promote the significant number of existing qualifications available to young people in Scotland, at a range of SCQF levels, from SQA and other providers amongst practitioners, parents and young people.
- Develop the understanding within the teaching profession of the value of these courses and qualifications, as well as other non SCQF rated opportunities, so a greater range of these are made available to young people in their schools/ local authorities/ regions.
- Map out how these stack up to provide valuable progression pathways for further study or work for young people (for example in the case of Foundation Apprenticeships and National 4).
- Support professional learning across different parts of the education system.
- Ensure that schools are able to provide appropriate personalised support and impartial information to support young people to make better informed choices and more successful transitions.
- Ensure vocational pathways are available with a range of entry points to meet the needs of all learners.
- Improve understanding and promotion of employment pathways in schools, through My World of Work and collaboration with SDS staff, so that these are informing choices made in schools by young people and parents.
- Better understand and, where necessary, take action to address concerns about equality of access and credibility of the awards and qualifications gained by individual learners, in particular looking at equity of access in relation to Level 7 provision; and possibly provision a Levels 1 and 2 for learners with additional support needs.

Conclusions

19. In terms of culture, the evidence suggests the importance of clarity at a national level on our expectations for the senior phase curriculum; to ensure that it meets the needs of individual learners regardless of their ability, whatever their exit points or intended destinations; and the importance of ensuring equity of access and parity of esteem.

20. As regards structure, the evidence suggests the importance of directly supporting innovation in curriculum planning and design across partners and services, with a focus on supporting transition into and out of the senior phase curriculum.

21. And, lastly, on capacity, the evidence suggests the work that needs to be done at a national, local and school level to support full understanding, promotion and signposting of the full range of options available to young people in the senior phase curriculum.

22. In order to address the discussion points outlined above, a number of potential options are outlined below for the CAB members to consider.

Culture	
Potential Options	Approach
1. Set out a succinct and clear statement of ambition /vision for the (senior phase) curriculum	CAB members to work together and with partners (eg RICs), wider stakeholders and in particular young people to agree and endorse a shared statement of ambition/vision for the (senior phase) curriculum
2. Develop an overarching public communications and engagement campaign, (jointly with national partners and youth groups), to raise awareness of the range of pathways available to young people through the senior phase	<p>This would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be designed and developed by young people via YoungScot (and other youth organisations) - have all partners in CAB acting as sponsors with identified others working towards same goal - have significant employer input in its design - Use young people who have undertaken specific pathways, as role models/ champions - use the SCQF framework to support shared understanding. - be designed to sit across Ministerial portfolios, linking DYW, Learner Journey and COWA. - build credibility of specific qualifications and different assessment approaches, including National 4 and a range of work-based learning pathways - build on existing work by SDS, SQA and other partners to raise awareness of their awards -
3. Use current and emerging practice to exemplify the component pieces of the jigsaw that make up the national picture. Let them tell the story. Use this as means to give advice	<p>Invest time and resource to create a visual representation of the senior phase vision, which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has wide audience appeal - Is developed jointly with the people that have led and delivered the changes we know are currently in place and those that are emerging - is set within wider economic, social and global context - is clearly focused on the experience of the learner throughout - looks ahead to the end point of DYW programme, setting out what system will look like then

Structure	
Potential Options	Approach
4. Support innovation in curriculum design, facilitating and embedding the co-design and delivery of the senior phase across partners	Set up regionally based innovation hubs, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - draw together practitioners and partners from different parts of the system to learn from each other and collaborate on senior phase curriculum design - support people to bring ideas and work through their own challenges using, for example, service design approaches - should involve: schools; RICs; colleges; universities; CLD; and employers (through link with DYW regional groups, Business Organisations, City Deals and involve business development side of planning, as well as education.
5. Develop a systematic approach to effective cross partner review and planning for improvement	Build on the whole service review approach taken by Education Scotland in Moray as well as the new college review model to develop a partnership inspection model that will bring partners together to plan and review senior phase provision, complementing the joint planning/ design work (enabled by 4)
6. Work to identify solutions to ongoing transport/ logistical/ issues	Undertake work to understand the issues and if there are national or local policies that are having a detrimental impact eg health and safety legislation, transport etc or national policies that could be developed to overcome issues This could include focused work to look at how digital learning can overcome obstacles to accessing learning opportunities in the senior phase
7. Work to explore concerns around narrowing of choice and to fully understand the impact of curriculum design and the importance of the 3 year approach on choices for young people	Commission a longer term analytical exercise to understand impact of different curriculum models on outcomes for young people post school, building on existing research into subject choice by Stirling University
Capacity	
Potential Options	Approach
8. Develop a shared understanding of progress and priorities in curriculum redesign by schools and their partners	Building on the work already underway in DYW programme activity work with local authorities and their partners, existing curriculum design networks and national partners to draw together our collective intelligence on emerging senior phase provision. This will enable us to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - outline what we know about progress in improving curriculum design nationally and locally - identify what works well in developing and

	<p>implementing effective curriculum design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - determine what the overall system, RICs, local authorities and networks need to help build pace and creative thinking in better curriculum design - focus support to priority areas and schools.
9. Work with national partners to map out the range of relevant qualifications available nationally to young people in schools and how these align to form learning pathways, which support progression into further and higher education, training or employment	<p>Work with national partners to take a systematic approach to mapping and promoting a range of qualifications and learning pathways, building on work underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by SDS to map out skills pathways (North East College Scotland) and pathways into Foundation Apprenticeships - through SCQF and their School Ambassadors Programme - and by ES to exemplify senior phase approaches
10. Work with local authorities/ RICS/ colleges to develop regional senior phase prospectuses, clarifying the offer available to young people in all parts of the country	<p>Builds on work already done in a number of local authorities (Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire etc) to develop a senior phase offer across partners</p>
11. Put structures in place to enable cross-sectoral practitioner learning (CLPL)	<p>Build on early work being done to enable groups of staff across, for example, school, college, training providers and university sectors to learn together. Priorities might include increased and shared understanding of the senior phase offer and/or STEM given launch of recent national strategy.</p>
12. Support and enhance the confidence of the teaching profession in respect of assessment processes, particularly in respect of internal assessment	<p>Ensure schools are using benchmarking and assessment data to shape conversations with young people, parents/carers about their progress and to set realistic expectations around progression to appropriate suite of qualifications and awards.</p>
13. Provide a renewed focus on transitions into and out of the senior phase and the support and advice young people are accessing in relation to subject choice	<p>Undertake focused work to look at the totality of support young people are receiving through personalised support, CIAG and PSE</p>

Conclusion

23. Board members are asked to consider:

- Is this an accurate reflection of the current landscape?
- What further issues/ opportunities should we factor in?
- Is further evidence required, and how we would do this?
- Are these actions appropriate? What should we prioritise?
- What alternative/ additional work do we need to do/ support?
- What are our respective roles? Roles of CAB, National Partners, existing networks and young people?

ANNEX A: EVIDENCE SOURCES: KEY SENIOR PHASE FINDINGS

Extracts from [Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education 2012-2016](#), (Education Scotland, January 2017)

Opportunities:

- In most schools inspected, staff provided young people with relevant contexts for their learning. We saw good examples of schools, along with partners, providing a commendably wide range of learning experiences for young people, including work placements, college learning and career advice.
- Schools used a wide range of accreditation to recognise achievements.
- Schools have been reviewing and developing their curriculum structures to take account of their experience of delivering National Qualifications and the need to create greater flexibility in the senior phase to help meet the needs of all young people.
- Many schools have responded well to the challenges of designing pathways for learners through the broad general education and the senior phase, and explaining the changes to parents and learners. In the best practice, schools were very clearly designing the senior phase curriculum as a coherent three-year phase, including pathways involving providers beyond the school as appropriate.
- Since the publication of *Developing the Young Workforce* inspectors have noted a greater focus on developing young people's skills. This includes an increased commitment and drive in developing partnerships with families, local businesses and community learning and development organisations to contribute to young people's learning.
- We have also seen increasing evidence of effective partnership working between community learning and development providers and schools. We found that, in secondary schools, local businesses and community organisations are increasingly contributing to the curriculum, leading to a clearer focus in some schools on improving skills for learning, life and work.
- Inspectors identified a number of strengths which are evident within the college sector. In particular, colleges had well-developed arrangements to gather learner feedback on the quality of provision they receive. Learners were represented well at all levels within colleges and used a range of opportunities to contribute effectively to decision-making and development of college strategy.

Challenges

- There remains room for improvement, particularly in providing young people with appropriate levels of challenge and opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts. As yet, approaches to personalising learning to meet the increasingly diverse needs of learners are not always effective. Further work is required to ensure that all groups of young people, including those with additional support needs, move on to a positive destination.
- Providers now need to make full use of the new areas of flexibility presented by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum which is dynamic and customised to take account of the local context and to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people. This should include ensuring that all learners are sufficiently challenged and stretched by their learning with an emphasis on promoting deep learning and understanding rather than simply covering a large amount of content.
- Providers need to design a curriculum which provides progression pathways for their children and young people through the broad general education and senior phase which enable all learners to make the best possible progress. This includes

developing new pathways and customised programmes for groups of children who need additional support to ensure they are motivated and engaged in learning.

- Many schools need to do more to develop the quality of the broad general education offer, to ensure it provides sufficient depth and challenge to enable all learners to achieve to their potential.
- There is a continued need to focus on improving young people's attainment and achievement ensuring, for example, the curriculum provides suitably flexible pathways to meet young people's individual learning needs.
- The quality of learning that young people experienced varied too much within schools and between schools.
- Improving the consistency of learning and teaching needs to be a key priority for all secondary schools.
- In some cases we found that schools needed to increase significantly the pace and depth of the work they were doing on developing the curriculum.
- Some schools need to improve the pace with which they widen their provision to develop young people's experiences and progression in skills. In particular, schools need to work with young people and their parents to ensure that young people have a clear understanding of their own skills and their application and relevance beyond school.
- Across the college sector, almost half of learners on full-time programmes are aged 15-18 years. However, success rates for this group are amongst the lowest. This age group also has the highest number of learners withdrawing from their programme prior to completion, and the highest number completing with partial success.

Extracts from [Education Scotland Fieldwork Visits Summary Report November 2015 – March 2016](#) (Education Scotland, May 2016)

Opportunities

- Most schools have made changes to the structure of the senior phase, including reducing the number of subjects available to most young people at S4. Most of the schools visited now offer six or seven subjects at this stage. Almost all schools view S4 to S6 as one integrated phase.
- All schools recognise the importance of developing suitable progression pathways through the stages. A number of local authorities have organised a common timetable structure across secondary schools to support college and consortia school arrangements. A few have set up a campus model for local schools to share with each other and with other agencies or business connections. Schemes such as the Open University, Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) introduce the most able to higher education working. These strategies are helping schools increase the number of academic and vocational options. However, rural schools face real challenges in linking with other schools and providers. Digital options are offering a possible addition in some areas of the curriculum.
- Schools feel confident that tracking across the senior phase supports meaningful conversations about the future. A few schools have continued with a form of profiling in the senior phase to capture wider achievements.
- Schools feel that increased partnership working is helping them support young people into positive destinations. Schools are particularly positive about the impact of support from SDS and the Employability Officer, where this post exists.
- Almost all schools offer specific careers advice in the senior phase. A few have encouraged young people to investigate career pathways before S3. Schools support young people with applications for employment, further and higher education. Visits to colleges, local industries and universities support the decision-making process.

- Almost all schools are developing important links with local employers and partner providers such as colleges, universities and youth groups. Schools in rural locations face real and significant challenges in finding comparable curricular support.
- The extent to which schools have begun to address Developing the Young Workforce varies but schools are aware of the need for more strategic planning.
- All schools have a range of work relevant learning opportunities in place and opportunities for enterprising learning within the curriculum to develop skills for learning, life and work in young people.
- Almost all schools have a few vocational qualifications embedded in the curriculum. In the best situations, these are well linked to work opportunities in the local area.

Challenges (specific to the senior phase):

- Building progression pathways in skills for learning, life and work and profiling these.
- Continuing to develop progression pathways with sustainable partnership working.
- Demonstrating the impact of the curriculum on raising attainment.
- Lack of teachers in some subject areas and lack of supply staff.

Extracts from [Education Scotland review of the Career Education and Work Placement Standards](#) (Education Scotland, May 2017)

Opportunities

- The review identified many examples where schools are working effectively with partners to develop the young workforce using a range of innovative approaches and a strong focus on delivery. In most schools, however, this was at a very early stage of development.
- In most schools, the leadership team has embraced the DYW strategy and has made, or is planning to make, significant improvements to widening the curriculum and activities to help young people engage with career education in a diverse and meaningful way.
- Most schools have allocated a member of staff to act as DYW school lead, with senior staff holding policy responsibility for the strategic development work.
- Most schools have developed their links with local and national employers in order to provide meaningful work-based learning opportunities for young people. In some cases, schools have made significant progress on this agenda, offering a wide range of courses in consultation with employers, leading to the provision of relevant and meaningful industry relevant qualifications.
- Many schools are providing relevant opportunities and programmes, which actively challenge stereotypes such as gender bias, in a constructive way.
- The majority of schools are beginning to engage with parents more pro-actively around career education and flexible pathways and embrace the significant opportunities that flow from them.
- Many schools are beginning to benefit from a significant increase in the engagement of colleges with schools and the opportunities arising from this. However, the level of engagement can diverge significantly from school to school and between authorities.

Challenges

- In most schools, work placements are still very traditional in their nature, and in rural areas in particular, there are not enough placements available for young people.
- In the majority of schools, the provision of flexible pathways in the senior phase to support learners' career aspirations is at a very early stage.
- The offer of work-based learning pathways in schools varies significantly. This reflects the context of the school and how well teaching and pastoral staff in school

promote opportunities, such as college programmes, Foundation Apprenticeships and Modern Apprenticeships, to parents and young people.

- The traditional nature of timetabling and restricted column choices for young people in some schools, can also limit the chances that young people have to link their career aspirations to curriculum opportunities.
- In order to maximise the benefits for children and young people of on-going learning and improvements in their schools, and emerging developments and opportunities from the DYW programme as a whole, the review has identified a need to increase the overall pace of implementation in the use of the standards and guidance.

Extracts from [National Course Design and Assessment: SQA fieldwork visits 2016-17](#) (SQA, September 2017)

Opportunities

- It is clear there are many long-standing and developing contacts between schools, colleges and employers.
- Young learners in college spoke very positively about their enjoyment of college, sometimes after having had some difficult experiences in school.
- All senior managers in all colleges identified activities planned between colleges and local partner schools.
- Most centres continued to believe that they had appropriate provision in place to deliver a range of vocational qualifications, some in line with the aspirations of DYW, but a number indicated that this provision was continually under review.

Challenges

- Many learners expressed the view that they did not feel that S1–3 was a good preparation for the senior phase — both in the pace of work they had experienced and in the depth and breadth of the skills and knowledge they had developed to prepare them for the requirements of the senior phase.
- Over half of the parental responses reported that they did not have a clear sense of their child's progress and the curriculum levels achieved as they moved into the senior phase and many expressed concerns about the subject choice process
- Centres continued to cite geography, timing, costs and sustainability as issues that impacted on their provision under DYW.
- Almost three-quarters of schools reported feeling pressure from parents and carers to present at a level they did not feel was appropriate (usually higher). Over half of all schools reported taking an 'aspirational' approach to presentation (aiming high, with later decisions being made and learners 'falling back' to a lower level if necessary, for example from National 5 to National 4).

Feedback from engagement on National 4 Qualifications

As part of work to look at strengthening the National 4 Qualification (covered by paper CAB-01.04 at the December meeting), it was felt that the issues impacting on National 4 reflected wider issues in relation to the senior phase curriculum, namely:

- levels of understanding of the purpose and value of this qualification, as part of a broader range of pathways for learners;
- ensuring young people are appropriately assessed in the BGE and suitably prepared for the senior phase;
- a need to strengthen the quality of assessment in the BGE to improve the evidence of a learner's progress on which teachers, parents and young people can make choices for pathways and their transition to the senior phase;
- and ensuring that young people are presented for the level and type of qualification most appropriate for them.

Feedback from engagement on Developing the Young Workforce

From ongoing engagement with key stakeholders on DYW in recent years, in particular discussions between Scottish Government, Education Scotland, College Principals and Directors of Education in 2015/16, the following opportunities and challenges have emerged in relation to the senior phase curriculum:

Opportunities

- The implementation of DYW has had an energising effect on partnership working across Scotland, in particular:
 - Raising expectations and demand for more effective shared delivery
 - Increasing the focus on the development and delivery of senior phase entitlements
 - Strengthening existing partnerships and creating more opportunities for new partnerships and forums for discussion and collaboration
 - Improving the quantity and quality of vocational courses on offer
 - Raising the profile of work-based learning in schools
 - Being seen as a 3 to 18 development, and
 - Ensuring there is a focus on progression

Challenges

- Ensuring that the needs and aspirations of all young people in relation to work based learning and future employment prospects are addressed
- Ensuring that the specific needs of young people currently seen as furthest from employment and/or education are met
- Ensuring that all key stakeholders and in particular young people, parents and carers are participants in making change happen
- Agreeing common cause and vision for young people and the senior phase in particular across sectors, organisations and local authority services
- Addressing strongly held (traditional) perceptions about pathways and routes into employment amongst key influencers
- Sharing strategic planning across the necessary delivery partners
- Enabling often complex partnerships to work and deliver whilst balancing “competing” priorities
- Supporting leaders at all levels to design and deliver a fully realised senior phase
- Finding the most effective ways to measure success
- The need to look at longer-term learning and career pathways and at 15-25 learner journey more coherently, rather than just at the senior phase
- A sense that Higher Education is still driving what is provided in the school curriculum
- Finding new ways to address logistical issues such as timetabling, transport, funding models

15-24 Learner Journey Review: Engagement with Education Stakeholders

A significant programme of engagement and evidence gathering was undertaken with stakeholders from across the education system in summer 2017, as Stage 1 of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review. Whilst this evidence is currently being considered by Ministers and the review has not yet reported, clear messages have emerged from this on:

- The importance of CIAG and on-going personalised support for young people, throughout key points of their learner journey
- The need for more systematic collaboration between all partners involved in post-15 education

- The importance of ensuring that young people, parents and practitioners are aware of and understand the full range of learning options available

Extracts from [Young People's Experience of Education & Skills System in Scotland](#) (Report to the Scottish Government by Young Scot and SQW, September 2017)

As part of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review research was also undertaken by SQW and Young Scot which gave us a valuable insight into the experience of young people themselves through the senior phase and beyond, telling us that:

Parity of esteem

- There is still a strong focus on attainment and qualifications within schools, to the neglect of wider development and support needs.
- This focus on attainment and qualifications was reported to be resulting in high levels of stress and pressure on young people, particularly during exam periods.
- There is a perceived lack of parity of esteem between academic and vocational career pathways, with fewer options available to those who want to pursue technical subjects in the senior phase of secondary school, and an assumption that those who do well academically should go to university.

Subject choice influencers

- There was good support available within schools to complete college and university application forms, but less adequate support available to help young people decide for which subjects and courses to apply.
- For those going on to college, apprenticeships or employment, decisions about the next steps are often based on what is available locally at the time they are looking.
- Parents are key influencers on young people's career choices and learner journeys, both directly and indirectly.

Need for greater personal support

- That their learner journeys are often influenced by personal and social issues, such as their own and family member's health problems, economic drivers (a need to earn money) and the skills and confidence gained through sports and other hobbies.
- The consensus was that educational institutions were not always well equipped to deal with some of the external issues that young people might be facing and which can hold them back from progressing in their learner journey.
- Getting the right support at the right time was identified as key to enabling young people who are facing these types of issues to continue to progress in their learner journey.

Focus on skills/ practical experience:

- That they often felt unprepared for life after school and that this can hold them back in their learner journey. For example, many who go to university have to cope with living independently (often in a new town or city) for the first time. If they are ill-prepared to do that, their learner journey will falter, regardless of how well they are doing academically.
- Taking time out of formal education can provide an opportunity for young people to think about what they want to do, travel, explore different options and develop their confidence. However, this is often not a realistic or practical option for those who are not being financially supported by their parents or who are in poverty.