

## **SG POLICY UPDATE**

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Access Delivery Group with regular updates on related policy developments within the Scottish Government. ADG members should notify SG officials of any additional policy areas that they would like to see covered within the update going forward.

### **INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF STUDENT SUPPORT**

In response to the recommendations made by the Independent Review of Student Support (November 2017), the Scottish Government (SG) announced on 12 June that over £21 million will be invested per year by the end of this parliament to improve the financial support available to students at college and university. As part of that, in 2018/19, SG will invest over £5 million to increase the bursary for care-experienced students in Further (FE) and Higher Education (HE) to £8,100. This brings care-experienced bursary support in line with the Living Wage as recommended by the Review. The FE care-experienced bursary will increase from £4,185 to £8,100 and the HE care-experienced bursary will rise from £7,625 to £8,100 per year. In 2019/20, SG will invest £16 million to increase and expand access to FE and HE bursaries for students from the lowest income families.

The Scottish Government recognises that there are a number of recommendations made by the Review that require further work and have committed to progressing those. This includes the work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the recommendation to ensure that no student is disadvantaged due to losing social security benefits whilst studying and conducting a review of non-core and discretionary support which will include support for part-time, disabled students and carers. Discussions with DWP colleagues have been progressing since the Minister's announcement.

Further to that, the Review recommended that loans should be introduced in FE. In response to that, SG has committed to undertaking independent research, focused on distinct groups of students, to provide evidence on demand and concerns amongst students. A contract for this work has been awarded after a tender evaluation exercise, with the successful contractor due to start working with students in the coming weeks.

### **15-24 LEARNER JOURNEY REVIEW**

Following the publication of the Learner Journey report and recommendations in May, we are scoping each of the recommendations and engaging with stakeholders to develop plans for implementation. We are continuing to develop these plans and we will be hosting a session with stakeholders and delivery partners on 28 September.

We are clear that taking the recommendations forward will require strong joint leadership, supported by the right evidence base, to ensure we continue to invest in the right qualifications and right types of learning to deliver the best outcomes for our young people and for the Scottish economy.

### **SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

£33 million from the Attainment Scotland Fund will be made available over the remainder of this Parliament to target and support the specific needs of care experienced children and young people, and improve their educational outcomes.

This will equate to £8.2 million for the remainder of 2018/19 and £12.25 million in each of the subsequent two years.

This funding stream will provide resources separately from, and in addition to, Pupil Equity Funding and Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes. It will be distributed to local authorities to allow them, as corporate parents, to make the best decisions in regards to improving the educational outcomes of care experienced children and young people from birth to the age of 26.

## **DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE (DYW)**

The most recent Developing the Young Workforce Programme Board meeting was held on 08 August 2018 at Edinburgh College with the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills in attendance. The Minister noted the significant progress made within the DYW agenda, including the achievement of the headline target, to reduce youth unemployment levels by 40% by 2021.

The fifth session of the DYW National Advisory Group took place on 24 May, co-chaired by the Deputy First Minister and Councillor Stephen McCabe. The group reflected on the progress of the programme. The group received a presentation from the Year of Young People programme team, covering the activity taking place throughout 2018. The group requested a more in-depth review of progress at their next meeting, expected to be held in October.

The Education and Skills Committee continues its Inquiry into DYW recommendations 1 & 2 and noted the positive reception the programme received from stakeholders across the education system. The Committee welcomed engagement across schools, colleges, apprenticeship expansion and with employer engagement. Also noted were the challenges which remain such as timetabling, rurality and the need to do more to support those who get the least out of the system.