

## DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

### Purpose

1. Bring to CAB members' attention the recent publication of the Developing the Young Workforce's Fourth Annual [Report](#), and its key messages.
2. Highlight the publication of the [report](#) on the inquiry by the Parliament's Education and Skills Committee on DYW, including the challenges identified around pace of progress.
3. Seek CAB commitment in key areas in ensuring that schools and their partners are jointly maximising the flexibility of the curriculum to create a work-relevant educational experience for all learners.

### Background

4. Developing the Young Workforce is Scotland's youth employment strategy and through DYW, we aim to reduce youth unemployment levels by 40% by 2021.
5. We are over halfway through the programme, and seeking to increase the pace of change to ensure that DYW is fully embedded as an integral part of the curriculum by 2020/21.

### Summary of Progress

6. The Programme's headline target, *to reduce youth unemployment in Scotland*, was met in 2017, four years ahead of schedule.
7. Headlines this year include:
  - an increasing number of senior phase enrolments on vocational pathways, at SCQF level 5 and above, since DYW was introduced;
  - a year on year increase in the number of school leavers achieving vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above;
  - an increase in the number of young people starting Foundation Apprenticeships;
  - an increase in the number of Modern Apprenticeship starts;
  - an increase in the proportion of looked after children in positive destinations;
  - an increase in the employment rate for young disabled people.
8. The report also explores a number of ongoing challenges in ensuring consistent outcomes for all young people, including the need to:
  - continue to support a partnership approach to help expand the number of Foundation Apprenticeship opportunities available next academic year (including addressing challenges around timetabling and logistics and ensuring the breadth of the curriculum offer to support the embedding of vocational options);

- recognise the importance of developing and promoting diverse pathways within the Broad General Education at S1-S3, as well as in the Senior Phase
- improve collaboration between schools, colleges and employers;
- further develop school-employer partnerships to ensure quality work placements are available in line with the Work Placement Standard.
- ensure that parents fully understand the place of the DYW offer;
- better support ongoing professional development;
- prioritise those young people who continue to face barriers to enable them to achieve.

### **Education and Skills Committee Inquiry Report and Recommendations**

9. On 27 November 2018, the Education and Skills Committee published its report following an Inquiry into young people's pathways. The Committee recognised the significant amount of progress made since the DYW programme commenced in 2014 but also highlighted 30 recommendations for Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and other agencies to consider.
10. The Committee expressed concern that work-based (vocational) learning opportunities and progression pathways are not always equally valued and promoted amongst learners and parents alongside traditional (academic) equivalent pathways, and highlighted the role that schools and parents can play to address their concern. The Committee requested more be done to reach out to parents to inform them of post school options, focusing on the benefits these pathways offer young people. The Committee also requested further information on performance indicators for vocational pathways.
11. The Committee noted the importance placed by young people on practical experience through work placements and the range of benefits work placements, based on young people's preferences, can have. Evidence collected through the Inquiry suggested that the provision of work placements continued to be variable, with a number of young people's needs not being met despite the creation of the Careers Education Standard and Work Placement Standard.
12. Evidence gathered during the Inquiry further reflected the fact that early and varied work placements can be of particular importance and value for those who choose to leave school on the statutory date. The Committee recommended that, where it is possible to identify in advance students who are clear that their intention is to leave school at this stage, these young people should be offered an enhanced opportunity for work placements
13. The Committee's report also recommended additional focus on Careers Information and Guidance provision, more work experience opportunities and the need to support businesses seeking to engage with schools and provide apprenticeships as well as expanding our support to care experienced and disabled young people.

## More opportunities for all young people

14. DYW also aims to make an important contribution towards Scotland's Economic Strategy in promoting inclusive growth. We recognise that we need collectively to encourage diversity in the workforce by removing real and perceived barriers for young people. We have therefore implemented gender and equality action plans through Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council. We are building on existing approaches to support equalities activity, such as The Stepping Up Programme, run by Enable Scotland to support disabled young people. We have also seen the DYW Regional Groups support disabled and care-experienced young people onto work-experience placements and employment.
15. As work advances on equalities, we would also expect to see developments in addressing gender imbalance in work and a decrease in the disability participation gap, in addition to improved outcomes for care-experienced young people.

## Next Steps

16. Moving into year five of the programme, the focus will be on:
- Ensuring the messages within the Careers Education Standard 3-18 and Work Placements Standard are reaching the classroom;
  - Expanding the college offer in schools and with it the uptake of Foundation Apprenticeships. SFC is developing an outline of the principles of active School-College partnerships;
  - Doing more for disabled young people;
  - Strengthening school/employer partnerships in all secondary schools.
17. The recent [review](#) of the 15-24 learner journey will act to intensify the focus within the Senior Phase. The Review highlighted the need for additional focus on employability and ensuring young people make the learning and career choices that are right for them. We continue to engage with all key stakeholders for the implementation of the Learner Journey Review recommendations in support of DYW and the broader Senior Phase.

## Recommendations

18. The Board is invited to:
- Note the progress made to date;
  - Provide advice on how to enhance the pace of change to ensure that all young people are able to access work-relevant educational opportunities and pathways, and to ensure that all pathways are equally valued;
  - Offer views on addressing the challenges identified above. Members may wish to consider:

- How we strengthen school/employer partnerships in all secondary schools, particularly strategic partnerships where employers are influencing the co-creation and delivery of the curriculum.
- How to increase the uptake of Foundation Apprenticeships across all of areas of Scotland (we have a commitment for up to 5,000 Foundation Apprenticeship places to be available across Scotland by the end of 2019).
- How do we as national partners collaborate to ensuring the messages within the Careers Education Standard 3-18, Work Placements Standard, the forthcoming Framework on school-employer partnerships etc. are reaching the classroom?
- How do we ensure that the DYW priorities for disabled, care experienced and young people from BME backgrounds are fully realised throughout and beyond the remainder of the programme duration?