

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

The Scottish Government responded to the independently chaired Student Support Review (SSR) in June 2018 with commitments for improvements across Further (FE) and Higher Education (HE). In 2018/19, we invested over £5 million to support an increase in the Care - Experienced Bursary to £8,100 per year for students across FE and HE. In 2019/20, we will increase bursaries for eligible students from the lowest income families in HE and increase the HE bursary income threshold to support access. In FE, all eligible students will see an increase to the FE bursary levels and we will introduce the 'FE Bursary Guarantee' system for eligible 18 and 19 year old students.

We are continuing to progress consideration of a number of recommendations made by the Review which require further work. These include working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to explore the recommendation for a 'Special Support' system for students eligible for social security benefits whilst studying. In addition, we are further considering the recommendation that loans should be introduced to FE, with external focus group research having taken place in colleges across Scotland.

We have also been considering the Review's recommendation that further work is required on considering all non-core and discretionary support and have been engaging extensively with stakeholders to inform this highly complex work. However, due to the current requirement to focus resource on student support issues related to Brexit, we are unable to confirm when further consultation will take place at this time.

The internal Student Support Review Programme Board met for the 6th time on 21 May 2019.

LEARNER JOURNEY

A Programme plan for the Learner Journey Recommendations had been agreed and approved by stakeholders and partners. We are now in early stages of implementation however we continue to work with relevant stakeholders to refine and develop these plans as work progresses.

We have commenced formal reporting for the Programme and the output from the first quarter's activity was compiled and discussed by the Learner Journey Directors Group on 9 May. Progress was noted and Directors fed back that overall progress within the programme is on track, however there is scope for increasing the pace of implementation.

In the year ahead we will be continuing work to: ensure every pupil in Scotland has access to an online account to collate their skills and experiences; enhance the personalised support available when choosing courses and planning a career; progressing work with Young Scot to create a national communications strategy promoting all pathways; and improve choice through the expansion of Graduate Apprenticeships to provide new higher level technical skills.

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE (DYW)

The most recent Developing the Young Workforce Programme Board meeting was held on 15 May 2019 at Larbert High School. The main focus of the session was on Foundation Apprenticeships with young people from the school sharing their own experience of undertaking or completing a Foundation Apprenticeship.

The seventh session of the DYW National Advisory Group took place on 28 March 2019 at Young Scot, co-chaired by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and Councillor Stephen McCabe from COSLA. The group discussed the impact of DYW in schools and explored progress made to establishing school-employer partnerships. Overall members recognised the positive work going on in both areas however were keen to reflect on the challenges which still remain as we approach the end point of the programme.

On 27 November 2018, the Education and Skills Committee published its report following an Inquiry into young people's pathways. The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills responded to the recommendations on 29 January 2019.

ATTAINMENT

Attainment Scotland Fund

On 30 May the Deputy First Minister announced the next tranche of funding from the Attainment Scotland Fund. A total of £50 million will be given to challenge authorities and schools to help them close the poverty related attainment gap in 2019/20. Within this £50 million, £43.1 million has been allocated to Scottish Attainment Challenge Authorities and £7.1 million to the Schools Programme. These funds will be used by the Authorities and schools to develop and deliver targeted interventions that will contribute to raising the attainment of children and young people living in communities affected by high levels of deprivation and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Pupil Equity Funding 2019/20

£120 million Pupil Equity Funding has been allocated for 2019/20. All schools should now be aware of their 2019/20 Pupil Equity Funding allocations which were published at the end of February on the Scottish Government website.

Headteachers Survey

The headteachers survey 2018 report and school case studies of the Attainment Scotland Fund was published online (on 30 May). Some key findings to note in relation to the headteacher survey:

- Most headteachers (88%) saw improvements in relation to closing the poverty-related attainment gap as a result of their interventions and almost all (95%) expect to see improvements over the next 5 years.
- 71% of respondents felt there had been an increase in collaboration as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- 90% of headteachers felt confident in the use of data and evidence.
- Both the school case studies and the headteacher survey report indicated that the autonomy made available through Pupil Equity Funding was welcome and 89% of headteachers felt they had the autonomy to develop a plan for Pupil Equity Funding.

Inspection of the Challenge Authorities

Education Scotland has conducted inspections of the 9 Challenge Authorities over the last financial year (2018/19). These inspections have looked at the progress of the 9 authorities towards closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The inspections found that 2 are making excellent progress, 3 very good progress, 2 good progress and 2 satisfactory progress in improving learning, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The links to each inspection report are below.

[Glasgow](#)

[Renfrewshire](#)

[West Dunbartonshire](#)

[Inverclyde](#)

[North Ayrshire](#)

[Dundee](#)

[North Lanarkshire](#)

[Clackmannanshire](#)

[East Ayrshire](#)