

School Leaver Destinations and Personal Skills Development

Consultation Analysis

February 2020

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1. Background

1.1 Personal Skills Development (PSD) statistics

Scottish Government currently publish statistics on initial destinations of school leavers in *Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations* in February and follow-up destinations of school leavers in the publication *Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations* in June.

Following feedback from users of these statistics we consulted on a possible change to the way in which school leavers participating in Personal Skills Development (PSD) should be classified. The consultation document can be found in Annex A.

PSD includes a wide range of what will often be short-term learning and development combined with appropriate personalised support for young people not yet ready, or in the position (for any number of valid reasons), to participate in school, further education, higher education, training or employment.

Historically, young people participating in PSD were mapped to a destination category in school leaver destination statistics based on details of the activity recorded on the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) shared dataset. Depending on the evidence they may have been recorded in a positive destination or in an unemployed destination. This required a judgement to be made by SDS and SG staff based on detailed consideration of specific cases and differed from the approach taken in the Annual Participation Measure reported by Skills Development Scotland, which reports all PSD activity as participating.

1.2 Stakeholder consultation scope

The stakeholder consultation sought views on the proposal to record all school leavers undertaking Personal Skills Development as being in a positive destination in a new category.

The questionnaire incorporated two sections:

- Background information of respondents
- Views on possible change in recording Personal Skills Development

The stakeholder consultation ran from the 3rd to the 25th of October 2019. The consultation was circulated to Local Authority Directors of Education, ScotStat users with a registered interest in education, and other known users of school leaver statistics.

2. Summary of findings and future reporting plans

The consultation responses (see Section 4) indicated that there was a consensus amongst users, supporting the proposal for Scottish Government to record all school leavers undertaking Personal Skills Development as being in a positive destination in a new category.

As a result, a new Personal Skills Development category will be included as a positive destination in the *Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations 2018/19* publication in February 2020 and the *Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations in June 2020*, and all future publications.

3. Consultation findings

3.1 Background information

Of the 31 people responding, 29 per cent responded as an individual, and 71 per cent on behalf of a group or organisation. Of those responding on behalf of organisations, the majority were from local government (89%).

3.2 Proposed changes to the school leaver destinations

Respondents were asked if they agree with the proposal for Scottish Government to record all school leavers undertaking Personal Skills Development as being in a positive destination in a new category. All of the respondents (100%) agreed with the proposal.

Respondents who supported the proposal stated that this recognises the benefits and positivity of pupils undertaking Personal Skills Development, while providing greater continuity and eliminating individual interpretation in reporting leaver destination.

4. Conclusion

Based on the responses to the consultation a new Personal Skills Development category will be included as a positive destination in the *Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations 2018/19* publication in February 2020 and the *Summary Statistics for Follow-up Leaver Destinations in June 2020*, and all future publications.

We would like to thank everyone that responded to the stakeholder consultation.

If you have any further comments on Scottish Government school leaver destination statistics please contact school.stats@gov.scot

Annex A – PSD Consultation Proposal

Proposed change: Record all school leavers undertaking Personal Skills Development as being in a positive destination in a new category.

Impact on headline statistics: The proportion of school leavers counted as being in a positive destination would increase by around 0.2 percentage points per year (estimate, based on historic data).

Background and rationale for change

Personal Skills Development (PSD) includes a wide range of what will often be short-term learning and development combined with appropriate personalised support for young people not yet ready, or in the position (for any number of valid reasons) to participate in school, further education, higher education, training or employment.

Young people participating in Personal Skills Development (PSD) are currently mapped to a destination category in school leaver destination statistics based on details of the activity recorded on the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) shared dataset. Depending on the evidence they may be recorded in a positive destination or in an unemployed destination. This requires a judgement to be made by SDS and SG staff based on detailed consideration of specific cases and differs from the approach taken in the Annual Participation Measure reported by Skills Development Scotland, which reports all PSD activity as participating.

The table below shows the number of school leavers undertaking PSD as per the over-arching category under which they were presented within the school leaver follow-up destination publication.

Table: Number of school leavers with a follow-up destination as Personal Skills Development and the category they are placed in the follow-up destinations publication, 2012/13 to 2017/18

Destination	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Positive Destination (HE/FE/Training/Emp/Voluntary work/AAs)	79	100	130	116	114	78
Other Destination (Unemployed seeking/Not seeking)	70	40	69	97	117	92
All	149	140	199	213	231	170

Some users have expressed concerns that school leavers from special units within mainstream schools, specifically those with severe and complex needs, are not categorised as being in a positive destination. Concern has been expressed regarding a perception that this has meant that staff and young people have not been given credit for their efforts.

National Statistics destination categories should not be used to judge success or otherwise of individual young persons' efforts, nor of the staff working with these young people. However, we have been giving consideration as to how PSD is presented in the statistics.

Proposed change and impact on statistics

Our proposal is to introduce a new Personal Skills Development leaver destination category within positive destinations and to count all school leavers engaged in PSD activity within it.

If implemented, we estimate that this change would increase the proportion of school leavers counted as being in a positive destination by around 0.2 percentage points per year, based on historic data. This is illustrated in the table below (note that the table suggests a 0.1 percentage point change – this is due to rounding).

There would also be associated changes to some categories within the positive destinations group. For example, those undertaking PSD activity who were previously recorded in the Further Education category would be removed from this category.

The time series would be revised to reflect these changes.

Table: Illustration of 2017/18 school leaver follow up destinations based on existing and proposed new destination categories

<u>Current Approach</u>		<u>Proposed New Approach</u>	
Destination Category	2017/18	Destination Category	2017/18
Higher Education	39.0	Higher Education	39.0
Further Education	22.7	Further Education	22.6
Training	1.7	Training	1.6
Employment	28.3	Employment	28.3
Voluntary Work	0.6	Voluntary Work	0.6
Activity Agreement	0.9	Activity Agreement	0.9
		Personal Skills Development	0.3
Positive Destinations	93.2	Positive Destinations	93.3
Unemployed Seeking	3.9	Unemployed Seeking	3.8
Unemployed Not Seeking	1.9	Unemployed Not Seeking	1.8
Unknown	1.1	Unknown	1.1
Other Destinations	6.8	Other Destinations	6.7

National Statistics on the initial and follow-up destinations of school leavers are published routinely, in February and June respectively, each year.

We are proposing a change to these statistics which, if agreed, will be implemented for the February 2020 publication associated with 2018/19 school leavers. The proposed change is based on stakeholder feedback around how school leavers participating in Personal Skills Development are recorded within the school leaver destination statistics.



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